

DOGWOOF

presents

Bunny Chow Know Thyself

A film by

JOHN BARKER

Running Time: 92 mins

UK Release Date: 21 March 2008

DOGWOOF

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Logline

“Know thyself... be thyself... so that they may see thyself...”

Short Synopsis

BUNNY CHOW: Know Thyself follows the often ridiculous weekend journey of four dysfunctional stand-up comedians, who embark on a road-trip to Oppikoppi, South Africa’s biggest annual rock festival. The four set out to perform stand-up, but get a bit more than they bargained for...



Dictionary definition: a loaf of bread is cut in half, the soft inside of the bread is pulled out and replaced with an assortment of curried meats and vegetables.

Our definition: Bunny chow is a metaphor for the film as it represents the melting pot of cultures, religions and sexual preferences of Johannesburg all thrown into a half loaf of bread that’s had it’s insides pulled out. To get to the good stuff you have to peel away the outside layers and mop up the juices. The joy of eating a bunny chow is that it’s designed to be eaten by more than one person so the ritual of eating the food is as interesting as the food. It’s the poor man’s version of the fondue.

Long Synopsis

Dave (David Kibuuka) is a 'dishwasher' who has set his mind on becoming a successful stand-up comedian despite his absolute lack of success on stage and the sensible advice from his neighbour, who urges him to focus on a more stable occupation like accountancy. Dave, however, is determined to succeed.

Kags (Kagiso Lediga), a more established comedian, is to some extent a mentor to Dave. With delusions of grandeur and a relentless womanising streak, he subjects his insecure girlfriend, the beautiful Kim (Kim Engelbrecht) to feelings of doubt and un-fulfilment in their relationship. She needs something more serious but he is far from ready to fully commit.

Joey (Yusuf Rasdien) is a comedian and a Muslim, whose devotion to his faith is questionable. He finds himself torn between temptations offered by his chosen vocation as an entertainer and servitude to his religion. His disgruntled and jealous girlfriend Angela (Angela Chow) does not make his life any easier.

These three friends are joined by Cope (Jason Cope), a weird and wandering acquaintance who epitomises aimlessness, and they slip out of the city for a journey to a big rock festival in the wilds where they hope to dazzle crowds with their comedy, and engage in unparalleled decadence away from their collective realities.

While the boys are away, Kim discovers something that could possibly change her life and serve as a catalyst in bringing her and Kags closer together. She cannot contain herself so she ventures to the festival to confront Kags with the news. Meanwhile at the festival, amid constant mockery from his comrades, Dave finds a potential love interest and an opportunity to finally find his voice on stage.

South Africa is finally emerging from the cinematic dark ages and its restrictive past, which saw the prevalence of angst-ridden post-apartheid dramas, and the rise of parochial slapstick comedies. These slip-on-a-banana hidden camera comedies have characterized South African comedy and cinema for decades, become ultra successful locally, but do not truly reflect the psyche of contemporary urban South Africans.

South African culture is going through a resurgence and experiencing new-found freedoms, but also, alarmingly, new censorship. Cultural practitioners are discovering their voices in their individual disciplines, from musicians to comedians, writers to critics, artists to poets – all are under-funded and struggle to get a platform. These ingredients all make for an exciting and challenging time.

Stand-up comedy is currently taking South African audiences by storm. Comedians are playing to packed audiences across the country, in small sleazy venues through to large casino theatres. The comedians have quickly become household names. David Kibuuka, Kagiso Lediga, Joey Rasdien and Kim Engelbrecht are all at the cutting edge of a new pop culture.

From this melting pot comes a new wave of cinema, undertaken by mostly urban filmmakers, who are ready to delve into real lives to find personal stories. Cinephiles, influenced by a wide array of global cinema, are not letting a lack of funding stand in their paths - armed with borrowed equipment, a willing crew and an ability to candidly tell a story, they are taking a revolution to their thirsty audience. And they want to make them laugh, and feel.

Director's Treatment – John Barker

Set in Johannesburg, the film is loosely based on the lives of four stand-up comedians who embark on a road trip to a predominantly white music festival, Oppikoppi.

The film is character-driven with strong contemporary dialogue. I employed a dark comic palette while exploring many of the banal idiosyncrasies of daily life, the quirky entanglements of personal relations, and the over-the-top social taboos.

The characters reveal wry, ironic and subversive stories through their relationships with each other and the characters they interact with throughout the film. Many scenarios are drawn from their own experiences and are told in an unconventional, deconstructed style, which reflects the South African society of today. Many of the scenarios and relationships in the film were formulated over the two years that I have worked with the comedians.

Shot on location (Johannesburg, the road trip and the Oppikoppi festival) with Steadicam / handheld cameras, we only used natural light. The film was unconventionally produced; eschewing traditional scripts in favour of detailed scene outlines from which the comics improvised. We employed a technique called "retro-scripting".

The urgency was to get a cast and crew together in three weeks and to get to the Oppikoppi festival to take advantage of the thousands of festival-goers and use them as the backdrop of the film. And thereby also give the film production value.

The show's natural, quasi-documentary style - and the fact that David, Kagiso, Joey and Jason Cope play "themselves" – further blurs the distinctions between fact and fiction.

The film has three very distinct acts. The first establishes our characters' relationships with each other, set against a gritty urban Johannesburg. The second is a road trip where these relations are tested, and the third is the resolution set against a music festival aesthetic.

People from different religions and ethnic groups living and surviving together are a contemporary reality, especially in Johannesburg, yet we don't often see this interaction reflected in South African cinema.

Production Notes – John Barker and Kagiso Lediga

Taking into account the massive cost of regular filmmaking, from the development of the script, to the pre-production, to the shoot and later with post-production, it's no wonder that so few films get made in South Africa, actually it's a miracle that any films gets made at all.

After completing a successful TV sketch comedy show, **THE PURE MONATE SHOW**, John Barker and Kagiso Lediga formed Dog Pack Films, and along with the top writers from the show (David Kibuuka, Salah Sabiti and Joey Rasdien), began writing two screen plays, **THE DICTATOR** and **THE LAST DAYS OF ANNA VAN STORM**. After a frustrating year of trying to raise funding, the team decided to just go out and shoot a low budget film.

Instead of staging a music festival with thousands of extras, we went to a real music festival. The problem was that the festival was only four weeks away, so we adopted the retro-scripting technique. This allowed us to write broad outlines of scenes and keep them quite loose so that we could change them when performances or locations did not work.

We had a pool of very talented writers, performers, cinematographers and editors who were very hungry to make a feature film. The talent was never the issue. Trying to convince investors that we would be able to deliver a feature film was. Our sponsors pulled out the night before we left for the festival. We scraped what little personal ready cash we had and just began shooting. We also killed my wife's credit card!

We retro-scripted, shot and edited for the next eight months taking on other production work to support ourselves and save money for the production. We were happy with the two hour offline but we now needed to take the film to the next level. We approached Jeremy Nathan and Joel Phiri from DV8 Films and independent producer Michelle Wheatley. The guys liked the film and agreed to partner Dog Pack and finish the film to an internationally acceptable standard, to raise the post-production finance, and get the film distributed. We together got the cut down to its final length, 93 minutes.

We chose a very urban soundtrack to match the contemporary themes of the film. Most of the music on the soundtrack is South African with Joel Assaizky providing and scoring most of the tracks.

Filmmakers

JOHN BARKER – Director, Scriptwriter, Producer

John Barker qualified as a graphic designer in 1996 at ML Sultan in Durban, and after a stint in stop motion animation John's career took a new path. While

working as a graphic designer in Cape Town, a friend recommended working on a film set. He immediately fell in love with the world of film and changed career paths. John has never looked back since and has developed into one of the most sought after young up-and-coming directors in the country. His unique vision has seen him directing various productions ranging from the comedy sketch show – **THE PURE MONATE SHOW** - to directing the prestigious South African Music Awards. John produced and directed South Africa's first music mockumentary, **BLU CHEEZ**, before writing and directing his first feature film **BUNNY CHOW: Know Thyself**.

KAGISO LEDIGA - Actor, Producer

Born in Pretoria in 1978, and educated at the University of Cape Town, Kagiso Lediga is best known nationwide for his work as a stand-up comedian and actor. But his passion lies in filmmaking. He has a flair for writing brave and entertaining content and is working towards producing content that is going to shake up the South African film industry. He has been touted as a prodigious talent and is on the verge of cementing himself as one of South Africa's hottest young talents. His greatest achievement thus far is producing, writing and performing in two seasons of his brainchild, **THE PURE MONATE SHOW**, a comedy sketch show commissioned by SABC 1. Kagiso recently produced and starred in his first feature film, **BUNNY CHOW: Know Thyself**.

SALAH SABITI - Scriptwriter, Actor

Salah 'Black' Sabiti was born in Cairo, Egypt in 1978 and graduated from Rhodes University with a degree in Journalism in 2000. He worked at Red Pepper Pictures writing scripts for the entertainment programme **CRAZ-E**. He later moved to **THE PHAT JOE SHOW** where he first worked as a researcher and later as head writer and content producer as well as website editor. He became writer and performer on **THE PURE MONATE SHOW**. His work appears in prolific publications including the urban youth publication Y-Mag. He also works as a film reviewer for Metro FM.

DAVID KIBUUKA - Scriptwriter, Actor, Comedian

David Kibuuka was born in Uganda on the 22nd August 1980 and has lived in South Africa for most of his short but eventful life. He is a stand-up comic and writer with interests in film, music and business. He has performed as a stand-up comic in most of the comedy clubs in and around Johannesburg as well as in theatres and in the corporate world. He was a writer and actor in both the first and second series of **THE PURE MONATE SHOW**. He attended Wits University where he obtained a B.Com (Hons.) degree in Insurance and Finance.

JOEY RASDIEN - Scriptwriter, Actor, Comedian

Joey Rasdien is the epitome of South African comedy today. His endearing stage persona is intellectually absurd, physically hysterical and visually beside himself. This belies his other profession... high-level fund management and financial advising. Joey has since become a scriptwriter and performer on the hit comedy sketch show, **THE PURE MONATE SHOW**, on SABC 1. He has starred in two feature films, **DOLLARS AND WHITE PIPES** and the soon to be released **RUNNING RIOT**.

MICHELLE WHEATLEY – Co-Producer

Michelle Wheatley co-produced **BUNNY CHOW** on behalf of Dv8 Films, and has previously produced **THE FLYER** by Revel Fox, production managed **MAX & MONA**, and before that produced Channel O, Africa's 24 hour music channel on DSTV.

JEREMY NATHAN - Exective Producer

Jeremy Nathan has been involved in the South African film and television industries for nearly twenty years. He has produced numerous features, television dramas, documentaries and short films. These include **BOESMAN AND LENA** (with Danny Glover and Angela Bassett) by John Berry, **PROMISED LAND** by Jason Xenopoulos, **IN A TIME OF VIOLENCE (aka The Line)** by Brian Tilley, **THE FOREIGNER** by Zola Maseko, **THE QUARRY** by Marion Hansel, **PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG MAN DROWNING** by Teboho Mahlatsi, **HUSK** by Jeremy Handler, **JUMP THE GUN** by Les Blair, and the **AFRICA DREAMING** series. He also produced the 5 hour documentary series, **ULIBAMBWE LINGASHONI (Hold up the Sun)**, an in-depth history of the ANC.

JOEL CHIKAPA-PHIRI - Executive Producer

Joel Phiri is one of Africa's leading entrepreneurs in the film and television business. He has produced numerous feature films which include Ingrid Sinclair's **FLAME** (selected Quinziane Des Realisateurs Cannes 1996), Ramadan Suleman's **FOOLS**, with JBA Productions, Jean Pierre Bekolo's **ARISTOTLE'S PLOT** with JBA and The British Film Institute (BFI) and Idrisa Ouedreago's **KINI & ADAMS**, which was selected for Official Competition in the Cannes Film Festival in 1997. Joel also has the distinction of having co-produced the ground breaking short film series **AFRICA DREAMING** and **MAMA AFRICA**. Phiri has also produced documentaries which include 13 part documentary series, **AFRICAN RENAISSANCE**, Rehad Desai's **MY LAND MY LIFE**, and Francois Verster's **A LION'S TRAIL**.

BOBBY ALLEN

Bobby Allen, until recently Head of Production at MTV Films Europe, has held senior executive positions in international film sales and acquisitions at companies such as PolyGram, Lions Gate Films and Mayfair Entertainment. He was MD of Lions Gate Film's UK office where he successfully developed and acquired a number of projects. Bobby was Head of Acquisitions at Film Four Limited where he managed and negotiated all acquisitions and co-productions and was production executive on a number of projects including 'Buffalo Soldiers' starring Ed Harris and Joaquin Phoenix for which he received an Associate Producer credit. Bobby has recently joined Celluloid Dreams.

MTV FILMS EUROPE & DOG PACK/Dv8 FILMS

PRESENT

A CO-PRODUCTION WITH

FILM I VÄST SOUTH AFRICAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION (SABC2)

AND IN ASSOCIATION WITH

NATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FOUNDATION STER-KINEKOR PRODUCT DISTRIBUTION MINISTRY OF

ILLUSION

MAGUS VISUAL TERRAPLANE

A JOHN BARKER FILM

BUNNY CHOW: Know Thyself

Cast

Dave David Kibuuka
Kim Kim Engelbrecht
Kagiso/Kags Kagiso Lediga
Joey Joey Rasdien
Cope Jason Cope
Carla Keren Neumann
Salah Salah Sabiti
Angela Angela Chow

Crew

Editor Saki Bergh
Cinematographer Zeno Petersen
Composer Joel Assaizky
Co-Producers Michelle Wheatley / Henric Larsson / Karin Fröderberg /
Tomas Eskilsson / Bobby Allen / Jonathan Zilli
Story by David Kibuuka / John Barker / Salah Sabiti / Joey Rasdien
Writers John Barker / David Kibuuka
Executive Producers Marilyn Barker / Jeremy Nathan
Produced by Kagiso Lediga / Isaac Kaminsky / Leanne Callanan
Directed by John Barker

Music

Mari Hakuna
Artist: Louis Mhlanga
Album: World Traveller
Record Company: Sheer Sound
Composer: Louis Mhlanga
Publisher: Shumba Music / Sony/ATV Music
Publishing (Pty) Ltd

Burning Desire
Artist: Watkin Tudor Jones
Album: "Watkin Tudor Jones - The Fantastic
Kill" (FKE001)
Music by Simon Ringrose
Lyrics by Watkin Tudor Jones and Spoek
Mathambo
Publisher: African Dope Publishing
© 2005 Fantastic Kill Entertainment

Drunk By Name
Artist: Watkin Tudor Jones
Album: "Watkin Tudor Jones - The Fantastic
Kill" (FKE001)
Music by Simon Ringrose
Lyrics by Watkin Tudor Jones and Spoek
Mathambo
Publisher: African Dope Publishing
2005 Fantastic Kill Entertainment

Dub Vaults / Malume
Music & Lyrics by Gavin Eckhart and Paulo
Chibanga

This Time (Moman)
Performed by Troy Shondell
Published by Sony/ATV Tree Publishing Co

Sister Kunjani
(Lokwe/Mcleod) . Performed by MXO
Published by MLOK Music / Unity Publishing
/ Sony/ATV Music Publishing
(Pty) Ltd

Touch In The Night
(Mahola/Hawks/Sigauque). Performed by
Freshly Ground.
Published by Freeground Records / Sony/ATV
Music Publishing (Pty) Ltd

Burnt By The Sun
(Solomon/Peterburski).
Performed by Sophia Solomon
Published by Polskie Wydawnictwo /
Sony/ATV Music Publishing (Pty) Ltd

Good Old Fashioned Loving
Performed by Max Normal
Album: Max Normal – Songs from the Mall
Music by Sean Ou Tim, Mark Buchanon,
Simon Ringrose
Lyrics by Watkin Tudor Jones
published by Chameleon Records

That Don't Do It

Signal Hill Dub
Band title: African Noise Foundation
Composed by: Joel Assaizky
Published by: SAMRO (IN MS)

The "O" Song
Band title: Junior Musicians Yacht Club
Composed by: Joel Assaizky, Farryl Roth,
Erik Pilani

Lyrics by: Farryl Roth
Published by: SAMRO (In MS)

The Boat
Band title: Joel Assaizky
Composed by: Joel Assaizky
Published by: SAMRO (In MS)

Mom With Pram Ska
Band title: Joel Assaizky
Composed by: Joel Assaizky
Published by: SAMRO (In MS)

Drop (Hot Days)
Band title: Junior Musicians Yacht Club
Composed by: Farryl Roth, Joel Assaizky
Lyrics by: Farryl Roth
Published by: SAMRO (In MS)

Joely Hookah
Band title: Joel Assaizky
Composed by: Joel Assaizky

Loneliest Boy In Joburg
Band title: Ish
Composed by: Amos Levin
Lyrics by: Amos Levin
Published by: SAMRO (In MS)

When You're Smiling
Artist: Louis Prima
M Fisher / J Goodwin / S Larry

Yellowwood
Blu Cheez
Didgeridoo: Aubrey the great
Lead Vocals: John Barker
Backup singers: Dog Pack

Publisher: 340ML Music cc

Dub Vaults / Dub Too Much
Music & Lyrics by D Carikas, Y Adler
& A Beleiza

Publisher: The Rudimentals

Ghir Enta (Je N 'Aime Que Toi)

Artist: Souad Massi
Publisher: Sony,
ATV Music Publishing (Pty) Ltd

Band title: Junior Musicians Yacht Club

Composed by: Joel Assaizky

Lyrics by: Farryl Roth

Published by: SAMRO (In MS)

Beat Track

Band title: Junior Musicians Yacht Club

Composed by: Joel Assaizky, Farryl Roth, Erik

Pilani

Lyrics by: Farryl Roth

Published by: SAMRO (In MS)

Published by: SAMRO (In MS)

Joely Hookah (Rock)

Album: None

Band title: Joel Assaizky

Composed by: Joel Assaizky

Published by: SAMRO (In MS)

Laniel Devi Dub

Album: None

Band title: Joel Assaizky

Composed by: Joel Assaizky

Published by: SAMRO (In MS)