



A FILM BY **JAHMIL X.T. QUBEKA**

SEW THE WINTER TO MY SKIN

INSPIRED BY TRUE EVENTS

**"One man's bandit
is another man's champion."**

SOUTH AFRICA'S OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE
2019 ACADEMY AWARDS®
FOR BEST FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"...an energetically enigmatic
masterpiece of visual
storytelling"

- *Screen Anarchy*

"Qubeka displays instincts for both
political allusion and
big-screen entertainment"

- *Cinemascope*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"...an operatic mix of
Western-style manhunt thriller
and boldly experimental biopic"

- *The Hollywood Reporter*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

YELLOWBONE ENTERTAINMENT in association with DIE GESELLSCHAFT DGS present
in partnership with THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY - INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION - THE NATIONAL EMPOWERMENT FUND
THE NATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FOUNDATION - THE BERLINALE WORLD CINEMA FUND a JAHMIL X.T. QUBEKA film
EZRA MABENGEZA with KANDYSE MCCLURE - PETER KÜRTH - ZOLISA XALUVA - BOK VAN BLEEK - MANDISA NDUNA - DAVID JAMES - BONGILE MANTSAI - ANTONETTE LOUW
"SEW THE WINTER TO MY SKIN" costume designer PIERRE VIENINGS sound design BARRY DONNELLY edited by LAYLA SWART production designer EMELIA WEAVNO
director of photography JONATHAN KOVEL associate producer CAROLYN CAREW co-producer MICHAEL HENRICH'S executive producers WILLIAM SMITH - MAIJANG MPHERWANE
NIKKI WILTON - PHILISWIWE MTHETHWA - HLENGWE MAKATHINI - SONYA SWARTZ
produced by LAYLA SWART written and directed by JAHMIL X.T. QUBEKA
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Yellowbone Entertainment
presents

A film by
Jahmil X.T. Qubeka

Sew the Winter to My Skin

EZRA MABENGEZA
PETER KURTH
KANDYSE MCCLURE
ZOLISA XALUVA
BOK VAN BLERK
MANDISA NDUNA
DAVID JAMES
BONGILE MANTSAI
BRENDA NGXOLI

Directed by
JAHMIL X.T. QUBEKA

Written by
JAHMIL X.T. QUBEKA

Produced by
LAYLA SWART

Editor
LAYLA SWART

Director of Photography
JONATHAN KOVEL

Production Designer
EMELIA WEAVID

Synopsis

A cinematic period tale of indigenous outlaw John Kepe (Ezra Mabengeza), *Sew the Winter to My Skin* explores the story of the Robin Hood legend and stock thief who, from the 1920s to the 1950s, is said to have stolen livestock and supplies from rich white people and given to the poor, indigenous people of the Karoo. The film, a South African Western-style epic, is set in a time when apartheid was being written into law and Afrikaner nationalism was rising.

Local farmer and Ossewabrandwag General Helmut Botha (Peter Kurth), an embittered World War II veteran, becomes obsessed with the capture of the notorious Kepe and leads an epic manhunt for him through the mountains, where he is rumoured to occupy a mysterious cave. Evading capture for more than a decade, outwitting Botha and his posse, Kepe's raids become ever more brazen and his escapes from the authorities ever more daring.

The outlaw's legend grows in the hearts and minds of the poor and marginalised indigenous population, and the self-proclaimed "Samson of the Boschberg Mountains" emerges as both an enigma to his pursuers and a romantic object of adoration for his fellow victims of oppression.

With Kepe's very existence representing a threat to the inevitable march of colonial displacement, the hunt to capture and kill the outlaw reaches a desperate crescendo, and his mythological status as a folk hero and symbol of resistance is cemented forever.

Sew The Winter To My Skin has been selected as the country's official submission to be considered for a 2019 Oscar nomination. The 91st Academy Awards will take place on 24 February 2019.

The film, starring Zolisa Xaluva, Bok van Blerk, Mandisa Nduna and Bongile Mantsayi, made its debut at the Toronto International Film Festival.

Director's Statement

Growing up in a South Africa on the brink of major revolutionary transition, my need to create a version of reality that encouraged the possibility of dreams was essential to my development as a storyteller. Decades later, I have found my voice, and the world has affirmed it.

Spending time in my mother's hometown of rural Somerset East exposed me to the legend of John Kepe, and the epic nature of his capture, the spiritual poetry of his calling, the impending horror of Apartheid and the power of the man's fervent belief in something greater than himself drew me to his intriguing tale.

Kepe's story remains embedded in the town of Somerset East, well established as a symbol of revolution. Members of the black community in this town, still impoverished, continue to build upon the narrative with increasingly creative versions. Sadly, today's continuing division along racial lines in the indigenous population of Somerset East still enforces the relevance and necessity of a figure like Kepe, a symbol of resistance to oppression.

My earliest memory of film was from the age of 6. Residing in Mdantsane Township in the Southern Eastern region of Apartheid South Africa, my father brought home a VHS machine and two flicks. One was the spaghetti western *The Unholy Four* by Enzo Barboni; the other a kung fu picture called *Little Superman* (go figure). Enthralled by the premise and promise of the cover art, I started imagining what would happen, and fell in love with film iconography before watching a single film.

Pushing myself stylistically, narratively and visually to aim for the full potential of concepts and artistic methods I touched on in my sophomore feature film *Of Good Report, Sew the Winter to My Skin* takes the potential of minimal dialogue to enhance the power of visual storytelling to its full manifestation. In its purest essence, this film is a motion picture driven by sensory and emotional experience. With this film, I am endeavouring to create a visual experience that crosses the boundaries and limitations of spoken language.

It is my intention with projects like this to explore and to dissect the impact of the Apartheid experience on the psychology of self. The very roots of external struggles such as land redistribution are inherently imbedded in an internal meditation or yearning. Dignity seems to be the pursued pot of gold at the end of this rainbow.

I wanted to offer some insight into what I believe to be mankind's inherent need to feed into mythologies that conveniently suit the order of the day.

Telling an uniquely authentic South African tale in the epic scale of the action adventure films of my childhood like Spielberg's *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, Kevin Costner's *Dances with Wolves*, Kotcheff's *First*

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Blood and Mulcahy's Highlander and fusing this with elements of the grandiose American westerns of John Ford, Sew the Winter to My Skin is a dream manifested.

Shooting the film

My choices for aesthetic approach and style of Sew the Winter to my Skin are primarily related to the communication of an image and an icon. I wanted to offer a view of South Africa that goes beneath the surface of our beautiful landscapes and interrogates what is lost in the translation of spoken words in a nation so inherently diverse.

Watching the films of Jean - Jacques Annaud, I was inspired by the profound impact particularly of Quest for Fire and The Bear, both of which are very plot driven yet have no dialogue - the plot was made so clear visually that there was no need. I love films that have a visceral, visual narrative because for me story is everything.

To take story and strip it down to its bare essentials is something I am riveted by - I wanted to make a film that was clear in its communication to such an extent that it didn't require too much spoken word, a celebration of cinema and an ode to the visual medium.

Shooting the film in the town where the legend took place had its challenges. We were entering a region that is unaccustomed to film production, in a town that still struggles with divisions along racial lines. Our main set for the Botha Farm, belonged to a farmer who was alive when the capture and hunt for Kepe took place, and in fact the very farm where he was captured.

The shooting of the riot scenes and scenes of brutality brought up intense emotions for the locals in the black townships, who recalled these days all too well. There were mixed reactions to us filming this story as the wealthy farming population still do not see Kepe as a hero, and he is not a figure the majority of this population look upon with any reverence or respect. They consider him a cold-blooded murderer who deserved to be hanged.

Kepe's essence and restless energy affected all cast and crew as we made the long one hour journey up the Boschberg Mountains every day throughout what was a very tumultuous shoot. With the summer elements in the Karoo South Africa challenging us constantly with freezing, misty, and even snowy days, his bold resilient spirit kept us pushing to the end.

It is unjustifiably rare still within our South African film industry for a black director to have the opportunity to frame his own history through film, and the black perspective of black heroes in South Africa is almost non-existent within this medium. This film is as important for the canon of South African cinema, as it was important for the population of Somerset East who had never truly reflected on the impact of this rebel hero upon their collective psyches. The palpable discontent and discomfort within

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this divided community touched the very fabric our film and made the re-telling of this story all the more profoundly necessary.

Biographies – Crew

Jahmil X.T. Qubeka – Writer/Director

Award-winning filmmaker and screenwriter Jahmil X.T. Qubeka's body of work has spanned over 15 years, covering a broad spectrum of disciplines. His documentary and feature film work has received accolades, awards and critical acclaim at prestigious international film festivals including Toronto International Film Festival, International Film Festival Rotterdam, London Film Festival, and Pusan International Film Festival, amongst others. In 2005 an AIDS documentary he directed for Sesame Street won a prestigious Peabody Award in America. Among his many successes, Jahmil was the 2014 South African Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year in the Film category.

His second feature film *Of Good Report* (2013) has the inauspicious reputation of being the first feature film banned in post-Apartheid South Africa. The first African film in Official Competition at the London Film Festival, it went on to win the BAFTA LA Best Feature Prize at the Pan African Film Festival and numerous awards at the Africa Movie Academy Awards including Best Feature. It also received an unprecedented seven awards at the South African Film and Television Awards, including Best Film and Best Director.

Jahmil is currently working on several directorial projects, including the gritty South African boxing story *Knuckle City* which has just completed production and the large-scale *Hell's Bells* - about the sinking of the SS Mendi.

Layla Swart – Producer/Editor

After obtaining a post-graduate degree in film production from the University of Cape Town, Layla has been senior editor on numerous feature films and her writing work has enjoyed success at international and South African festivals. 2015 saw her move into production full-time as coordinator on large-scale international television projects such as ABC's *Kings and Prophets* and Paolo Sorrentino's HBO series *The Young Pope*. By age 30, she had produced three films, the acclaimed Xhosa Sci Fi Short *Stillborn*, *Sew the Winter to my Skin*, and the gritty township boxing film *Knuckle City*. Layla, through her company *Yellowbone Entertainment*, has three other feature films in development, two green-lit.

She is one of South Africa's most exciting young producers, churning out a litany of impressive film work in record time. She is a creatively attuned producer who has an eye for a great story.

Jonathan Kovel – Director of Photography

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Jonathan Kovel has been based in Johannesburg for the past 18 years. A graduate of Columbia University Film School in New York, he has worked in Canada, Mexico, Peru, Curaçao, Ireland, France, Namibia, Botswana, Mozambique, Swaziland, Nigeria, Kenya, Malaysia, and Indonesia. He is involved in commercial work as well as documentary and narrative features across the African continent and internationally.

Emelia Weavind – Production Designer

Emelia Weavind is an experienced production designer, set decorator and art director with strong on set and location skills. She has worked locally and internationally including Ethiopia, Morocco, Uganda and Colombia on genres ranging from period African, (Bang Bang Club, Winnie) to period international (The History of America) and science fiction (Mad Max Fury Road, Dredd). Her work has garnered many award nominations, including Oscar winner Tsotsi, an Emmy nomination for Best Art Direction in TV Series for Generation Kill and an Art Director's Guild nomination for Excellence in Production Design for District 9. Her credits also include The Lost City of Z, The Queen of Katwe, Chappie, and 10 000 BC.

Pierre Vienings – Costume Designer

Pierre's early love for costume design led to the completion of a couture design course under the leadership of Prof. Victoria Toma at the International Institute of Design and a theatre design course at the Performing Arts Council of the Orange Free State (PACOFs). He spent three years working under the leadership of acclaimed costume designer James Parker at PACOFs. He then went onto the SABC where he designed the ground-breaking TV series Ballade vir 'n Enkeling. He designed over 30 television dramas, including Generations and Jackpot. This led to the natural progression to TV feature films and feature films. He designed the Oscar winning Tsotsi. He also designed Drum - Stories from Soffiatown, Master Harold and the Boys, Winnie Mandela, Five Fingers for Marseilles and Knuckle City.

Biographies – Crew

Ezra Mabengeza – John Kepe

Ezra Mabengeza is an artist, photographer and actor, known for ER (1994), Miracle at St. Anna (2008) and 419 (2012).

Peter Kurth – General Helmut Botha

Peter Kurth is a German actor, best known for known for the acclaimed television series Babylon Berlin (2017), A Heavy Heart (2015), and Good Bye Lenin! (2003). He has appeared in more than 70 films.

Kandyse McClure – Golden Eyes

Kandyse McClure is a South African-born Canadian actress known for her roles in TV series Battlestar Galactica (2004), Hemlock Grove (2013), and from the movies Carrie (2002) and Seventh Son (2014).

Zolisa Xaluva – Black Wyatt Earp

Zolisa Xaluva is best known for his roles as Jason on the SABC1 soapie Generations, and as Lwazi Mboweni on the fourth season of the SABC1 drama series Tsha Tsha. He studied drama at Pretoria Tech, graduating in 2003. He has also appeared in the e.tv soapie Rhythm City, and the SABC1 mini-series uGugu no Andile (Gugu and Andile).

Bok van Blerk – Simon Potgieter

Bok van Blerk is a South African musician who sings in Afrikaans. He became famous in 2006 for his rendition of "De la Rey" by Sean Else and Johan Vorster. He has appeared in the films Platteland, (2011), As jy Sing (2013), Vrou Soek Boer (2014), Leading Lady (2014), and Blood and Glory (2018) (Modder en Bloed).

Mandisa Nduna – Birthmark

Mandisa Nduna first rose to fame as one of the final four contestants on the second season of the SABC1 reality competition series Class Act, in 2011. She starred in Between Friends (2014). That same year, she starred with an all-female cast in the stage production of Animal Farm, Neil Copen's adaption of the novel. In 2015 she starred in the Mzansi Magic movie Thank You Miss. In 2016 she landed her first starring role in television in the eKasi+ drama Hustle. In 2017, she appeared in the film She is King.

David James – The Frontiersman

David James is film, theatre, and television actor known mainly for playing the villainous Kobus Venter in

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the 2009 Oscar-nominated science fiction film District 9. He is also known to South African audiences for his 2004-2006 appearance as "Mad Dog" on the long-running soap opera Isidingo, for his portrayal as Joel Joffe in the large-scale and well-received 2010 and 2011 stage productions of Rivonia Trial, and for current role as radio station manager Hermanus Meyer on the soap opera Rhythm City.

Bongile Mantsai – Fearless the Rabble Rouser

Bongile Mantsai is an actor, dancer and musical director. His theatre credits include Big Dada, House of Holy Afro, Orfeus, Amaza, Karoo Moose, Woyzeck, Love Affair, and Mies Julie. He was the musical director of Medea, Udaba Bafazi and the Exclusive Women's Club, Karoo Moose and Woyzeck. In 2016 he directed the Cape Malay stars in their production called Liedjies van die Kaap. In 2018, he starred in The Wound (Inxeba).

Brenda Ngxoli – Mole

Brenda Ngxoli is a director and actress best known for her role as Vuyo in the SABC1 drama series Home Affairs. She is also a public speaker and motivational speaker, and she facilitates workshops on issues such as business proposal writing and health. She graduated from the University of Cape Town with a BA in Theatre and a Performer's Diploma in Speech and Drama.

In 2010 she was named as one of the new presenters of the SABC1 celebrity gossip show The Real Goboza for the show's fourth season, alongside Phat Joe. In 2013 she replaced Thuli Thabethe as host of the Mzansi Wethu reality show Our Perfect Wedding.

CAST

THE FRONTIERSMAN	DAVID JAMES
THE SAMSON OF THE BOSCHBERG	EZRA MABENGEZA
THE SKETCH ARTIST	ZAPIRO
THE JUDGE	ROUEL BEUKES
GOLDEN EYES	KANDYSE MCCLURE
SIMON POTGIETER	BOK VAN BLERK
DEAD MAN WALKING	GABRIEL FREDERICKS
BLACK WYATT EARP	ZOLISA XALUVA
FEARLESS THE RABBLE ROUSER	BONGILE MANTSAI
BLACK WYATT EARP'S WIFE	LINDA VAN DER MERWE
BIRTHMARK	MANDISA NDUNA
THE MATRIARCH	NOMHLE NKONYENI
MOLE	BRENDA NGXOLI
GENERAL HELMUT BOTHA	PETER KURTH
THE SCAR-FACED KID	DAVE WALPOLE
BEADS	SHOKI MOKGAPA
THE RIDER	CARLO RADEBE
MRS BOTHA	ANTOINETTE LOUW
OLD MAN PRISONER	YULE MASITENG
MAN OF INFLUENCE	ROBERT WHITEHEAD
SLEAZY BANKER	ANDREW WORSDALE
HIGH SOCIETY GIRLS	HAYLEIGH EVANS
	NICOLA PILKINGTON
	CAROLINE JANSE VAN RENSBURG
BOTHA'S BODY GUARD	FANIE VAN AARDT
THE MILITIA	ROY SPARKS
	JANNIE GEYER
	SIMON SPARKS
	CJ LOTTER
	GERTINA STRYDOM
	PIETER VAN ROOYEN
	JULIAN JORDAAN
	MICHAEL VAN AARDT

XHOSA STICK FIGHTERS	JARRED LANDMAN
RUBY NECKLACE GIRL	ANDY KOTZE
BOTHA'S GATEKEEPER	PIETER BOTHA
XHOSA INITIATES	ALWYN GRIEBENOUW
TAXI RANK HAWKER	GAVIN MEY
MOLE'S CHILDREN	SIVUYILE DUNJA
THE MOONSHINE MAN	LUBABALO NONTWANA
COURT POLICE OFFICER	SINOVUYO DWILI
HORSE RIDING DOUBLE	STEVEN BOTHA
DIVING DOUBLE	THULANI DAVID
VOICE ARTISTS	SIKHULULE KHEDAMA
	VUYELWA TIKITI
	SIBABALWA CAKANE
	SIMBONILE TOM
	XHANTI & INATHI
	AMAHLE NONKE
	OOM IGNATIUS
	ARNO DURANDT
	ALEX ZULU
	PAUL VOLLMER
	ROUEL BEUKES
	ROBIN SMITH
	FANISWA YISA
	AWETHU HLELI
	ARMAND AUCAMP
	THEO FUBA
	THINA HASHE
	NOXOLO BLANDILE
	ELONATHEMBA BREAKFAST
	EMMANUEL NTSAMBA
	DIHAN SCHOEMAN
	JO-MARI MALAN
	THINUS VILJOEN
	RYNO LEONARD NORTJE
	LIZAAAN PELSER

ASIAN FAMILY

MING HAO CHENG

MIN YEN LIAO

KRISTEN CHENG

OLIVER CHENG