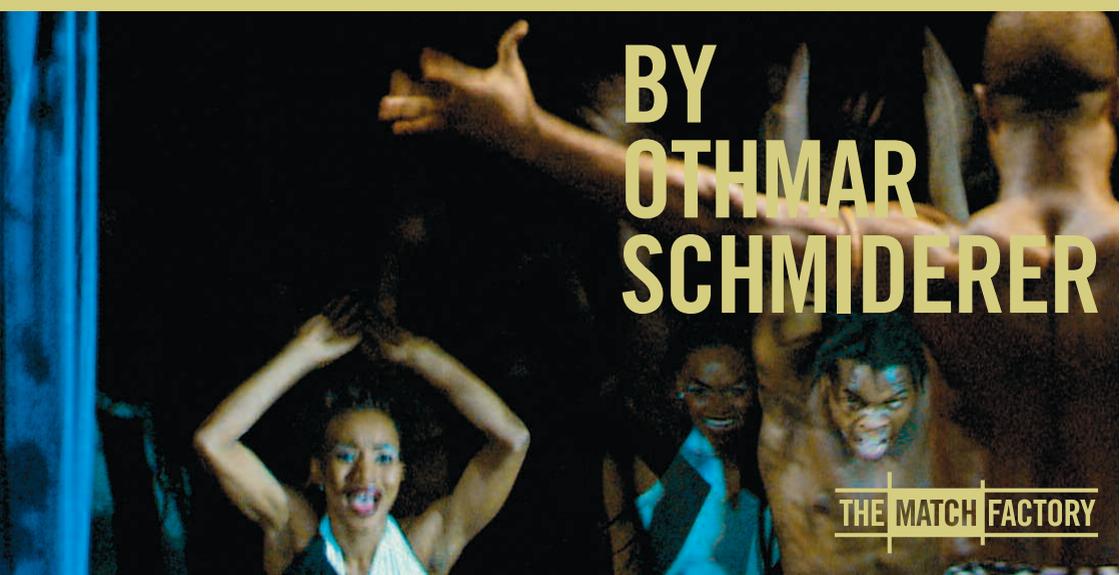




BACK TO AFRICA



BY
OTHMAR
SCHMIDERER

THE MATCH FACTORY

BACK TO AFRICA



CAST

EBRAIMA Tata Dindin
JOBARTEH
MINGUE DIAGNE SONKO
MAKAYA DIMBELOLO
GEORGES MOMBOYE
DICKSON OPPONG

TECHNICAL DATA

FORMAT

35 mm / 1:1,85 / Colour /
Dolby Digital

LENGTH

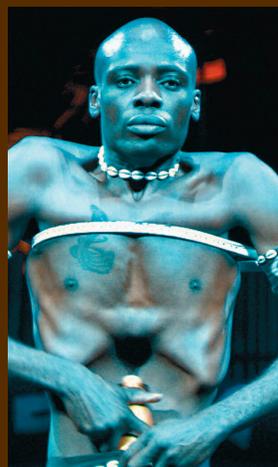
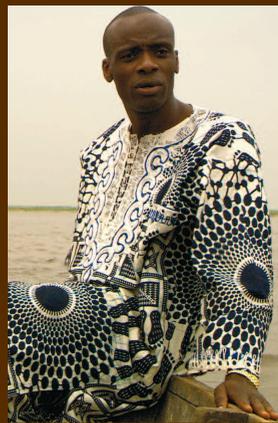
97 min.

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE

Mandinka, Wolof,
Lingala, Akan/Twi,
French, English

SUBTITLES

English



SYNOPSIS BACK TO AFRICA BY OTHMAR SCHMIDERER

Tata, Huit Huit, Sonko, Waterman and Georges are successful artists both in Africa and in Europe, where their performances in "Afrika! Afrika!" have greatly contributed to the success of this André Heller circus show. BACK TO AFRICA follows the five protagonists over a period of one year: during rehearsals, in the show – but mostly during their visits to their home countries in Africa. Set in their cultural and personal backgrounds, the performers, musicians and dancers become real. The film explores the extraordinary energy and adventurous life stories of these artists, conveying very personal insights into the African way of life and, using spectacular images, showing their immediate environments and the vast landscapes in which they live. Carried by the spellbinding African Sound of Music, BACK TO AFRICA is a veritable account of vitality, culture, inspiration and hope. The traditional African music of the Cora virtuoso Tata and the intoxicating drum rhythms of the various dance groups accentuate the single scenes and offer an impression of the diverse dimensions of African culture. BACK TO AFRICA reveals exceptional insights into the soul of Africa, moving far away from common clichés, and portrays a different positive image of this continent and its strength.

In fascinating images shot in Senegal, Ghana, Gambia, Congo, Guinea and in Europe, Othmar Schmiderer's documentary film tells a story of a love for life and of everyday culture, of dance and music, of hope, diversity and inspiration.

OTHMAR SCHMIDERER DIRECTOR

Othmar Schmiderer gained his greatest international acclaim for his documentary film **BLIND SPOT. HITLER'S SECRETARY** (2001, co-director André Heller). The film won the Gold Plaque for Best Documentary at the Chicago International Film Festival, was nominated for the European Film Awards (Best Documentary Film) and received the Panorama Audience Award at the Berlin International Film Festival.

Othmar Schmiderer entered the film world through theater and assisted on diverse feature and documentary film productions. He worked as a cinematographer and sound engineer before he began making films independently since 1987. Othmar Schmiderer lives and works in Vienna, Austria.

2008: **BACK TO AFRICA**, documentary (writer and director). 2005: **JESSYE NORMAN**, feature film (writer and director with André Heller). 2001: **IM TOTEN WINKEL – HITLERS SEKRETÄRIN** (Blind Spot. Hitler's Secretary), documentary (camera and sound, co-director: André Heller). 1997–98: **ECHO FROM EUROPE**, documentary (writer, director, cinematographer). 1995–97: **AM STEIN**, documentary (writer, director, cinematographer, co-writer: Bodo Hell). 1992: **MOBILE STABILE**, essay documentary (writer, co-director: Harald Friedl). 1988: **JOSEF HAUSER – KLANG UND RAUM** (Sound and Space), documentary (writer, cinematographer, editor, co-director: Heinz Ebner).

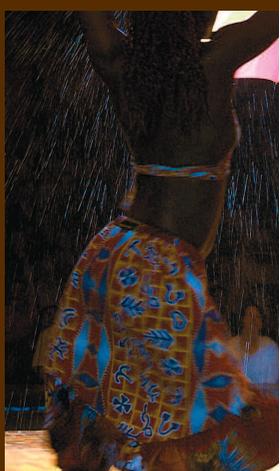


DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

"You cannot escape the power of dance and music in Africa"

TRACING THE SOURCE OF ENERGY

I happened to be present at the beginning of the rehearsals for "Afrika! Afrika!" in a warehouse in Mannheim. 150 artists from different countries in Africa presented their art for the very first time. The energy that was released absolutely blew me away. In that moment, I got the idea to trace the source of this energy in the form of a film. I was less interested in the show itself and more in the background and the environment of the artists in their home countries. How did they become who they are today? What were the circumstances? I was fascinated by the various biographies of the selected protagonists and by the inner necessity that fueled their aspirations to break out of their normal lives in Africa.



FILMING IN AFRICA

Over a period of one year, we traveled to six African countries – Guinea, Gambia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Senegal, and Congo. The greatest challenge for this film was to get close enough to the protagonists in a very short period of time (during the show breaks, they only had six to nine days to visit their home countries) so that they could open up to the camera and were prepared to reveal deeper layers of their being and their essence. This was not always easy or self-evident as these trips were the opportunity for the artists to see their families again after being a long time in Europe.

MY FASCINATION WITH AFRICA

Africa is in every way unlike anything I have ever known or seen before. It is somewhat confusing but it also puts into perspective the significance of how we Europeans attach value to ourselves, our regulations and norms and our civilization; regardless of whether it is how we deal with life and death or simply how we deal with time. In Africa, there is a completely different perception of time; it is not linear as in Europe but one that is self-determining and elastic. A bus, for example, doesn't drive off at a particular scheduled point in time but rather when all the seats are full. It is not the time but the presence of people that determines time. Or take the chaos that is ubiquitous all over Africa. It never ceases to amaze me how out of what seem to be hopelessly tangled and complicated situations there is in the end always a solution that works for all those involved. It is difficult for me to see through this, it is quite impenetrable. I regard the people in Africa to be masters of improvisation.

A VITAL BREAK-DOWN OF PREJUDICES

The film for me deals with the process of approaching a culture that is foreign to us, a culture from which we Europeans could immensely learn – if only we would allow it. It was also important for me to counteract all the negative pictures of Africa with positive ones. I regard it as vital to break down prejudices, to be open-minded when perceiving foreign cultures, and to conduct a serious and open exploration. This also means that we have to challenge our own culture and ourselves.

CREW

DIRECTOR AND WRITER

OTHMAR SCHMIDERER

PRODUCER

KURT LANGBEIN

CO-PRODUCER

PETER ROMMEL

CINEMATOGRAPHERS

HERMANN DUNZENDORFER

MORITZ GIESELMANN

OTHMAR SCHMIDERER

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SARAH J. LEVINE

PETER PRZYGODDA

SOUND EDITOR / SOUNDDESIGN

NILS KIRCHHOFF

MUSIC

EBRAIMA Tata

Dindin JOBARTEH

A PRODUCTION OF

LANGBEIN & SKALNIK

MEDIA, ROMMEL FILM

IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH

WDR

IN COOPERATION WITH

ORF and ARTE

SUPPORTED BY

FILM INSTITUTE AUSTRIA,

EURIMAGES,

MEDIENBOARD BERLIN-

BRANDENBURG,

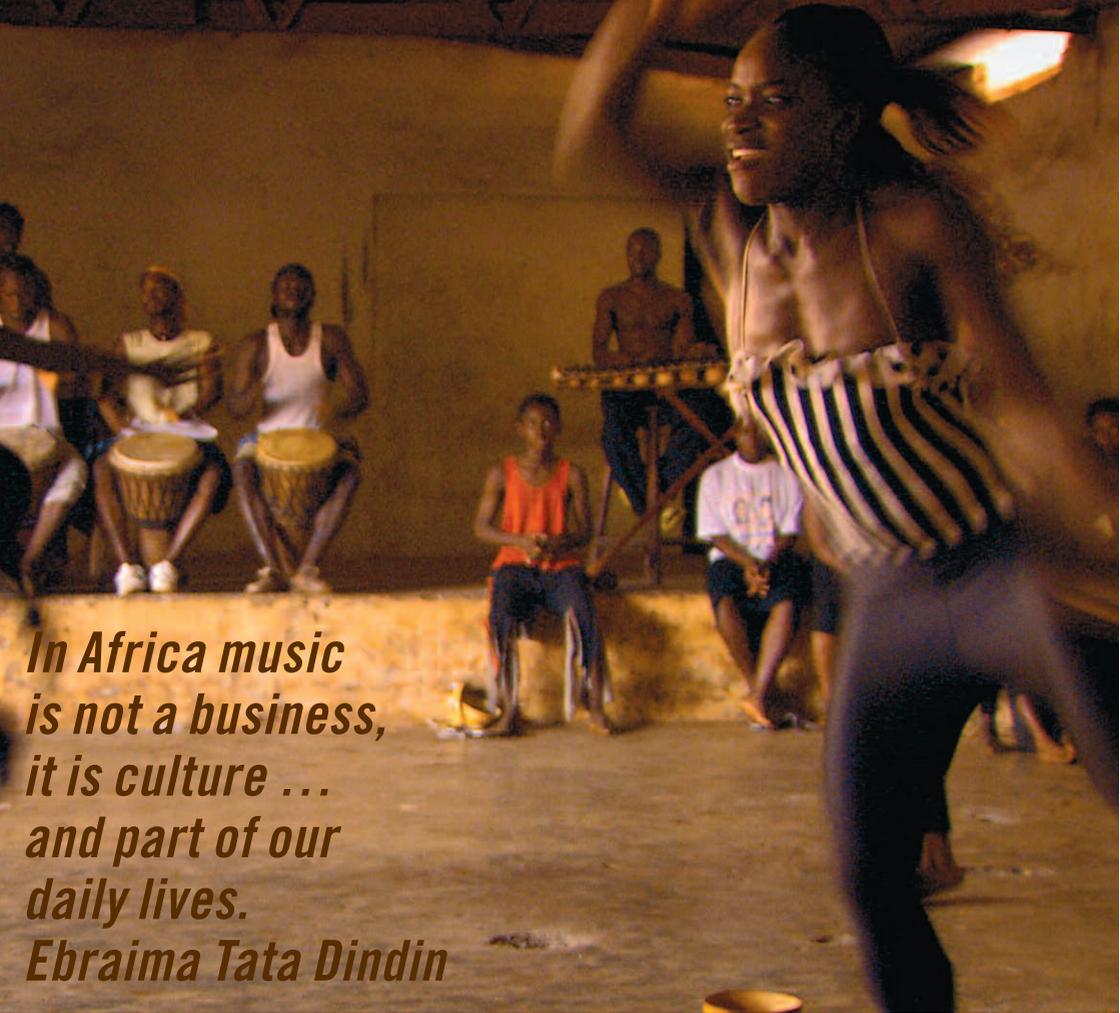
DEUTSCHER

FILMFÖRDERFONDS

CIRCUS SHOW

BY ANDRÉ HELLER





*In Africa music
is not a business,
it is culture ...
and part of our
daily lives.
Ebraima Tata Dindin*



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