

The Main Feature

Season 32 - Issue 13 (screening 22.3.12)

Germany 2002
 Cert 15 140 minutes
 (UK release Apr 2003)

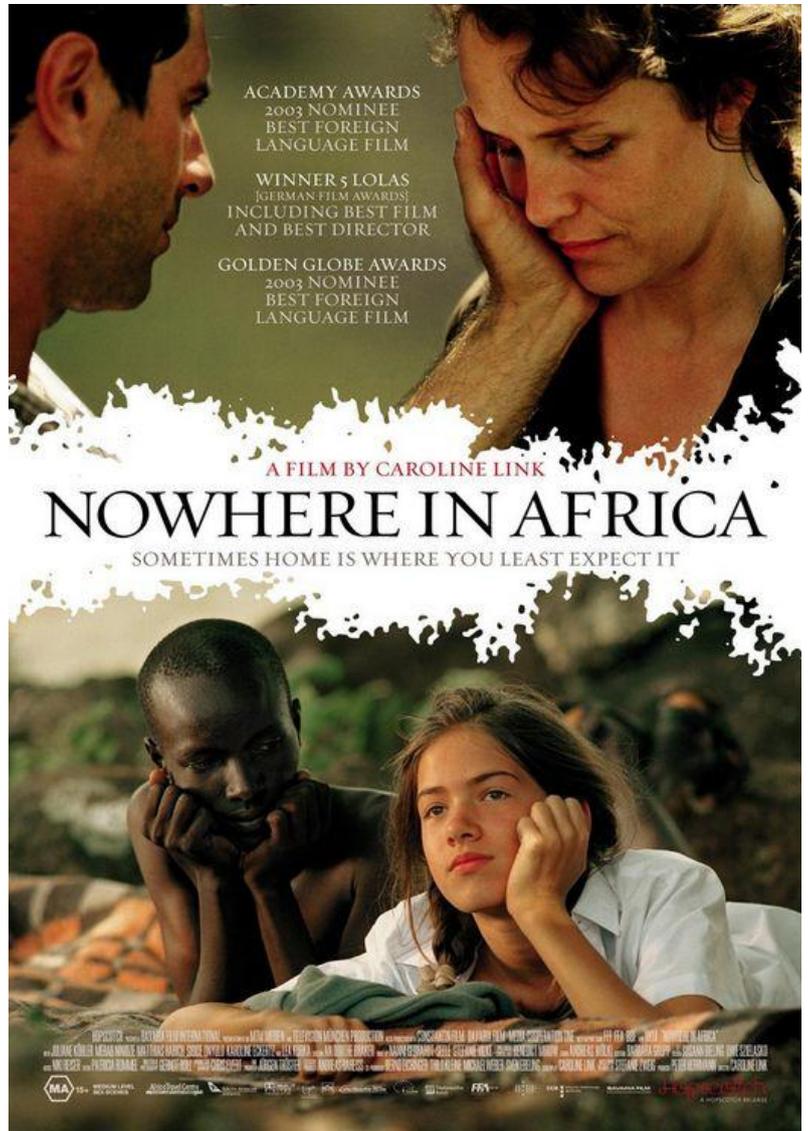
Director and Screenwriter Caroline Link
 Director of Photography Gernot Roll
 Music Niki Reiser

Based on the book by Stefanie Zweig

Cast:

Juliane Köhler	Jettel Redlich
Regine Zimmermann	Käthe
Merab Ninidze	Walter Redlich
Matthias Habich	Süßkind
Gabrielle Odinis	DienstMädchen Klara
Karoline Eckertz	Regina
Diane Keen	Mrs Rubens
Herbert Knaup	Walter Redlich
Lea Kurka	Regina
Sidede Onyulo	Owuor
Andrew Sachs	Mr Rubens

Directed with supreme confidence, Caroline Link explores themes of isolation, the pain of unknowing, and the beauty of cultural diversity. Giving equal weight to both the natives and the German Jews her portrayal is wholly unsentimental. By combining the rustic beauty of Africa's landscape with a heart throbbing score of drums and strings, the result is heart shifting.



This was the highest grossing film in Germany in 2002 and in addition to winning the 2003 Oscar for Best Foreign Language film, it garnered several other awards.

Commenting on what attracted her to the story, the director replied *“After reading the book by Stephanie Zweig, I knew I wanted to do it. There were really three different reasons: one, I could get to make a movie in Africa. I wrote the screenplay in Africa and I stayed on a farm. I was really looking forward to discovering the country. Second, the fact that the Jewish family had gone all the way to Kenya was so interesting. Germans today know that Jews went to England or America, but they don't really know that they also traveled to places as far away as Africa, Shanghai, or Peru, and these were just average people, not adventurers. I could identify with the woman who wasn't comfortable there, who didn't want to be there. Third, I wanted to find a personal aspect I could investigate, and I decided to concentrate on the marriage, and the problems the two people had once they arrived in Africa. Their world breaks down after their conventional lives -- which worked so well together-- no longer exist. They had to find something new in each other, because the old things about their life aren't there. I want to see how they could still love each other when things get so difficult, when the circumstances change. This personal aspect is what interests me the most. I'm fascinated with discovering a new world, but what really makes people identify with the story is really the inner conflict.”*

Looking at the success of the film she said *"I think it has a lot to do with the fascination with Africa. But it's also because people can identify with this family. They're not like Isaak Dinesen (author of "Out of Africa"), who went to Kenya to have an adventure. This family didn't want to go. They were ordinary people living their lives, and then all of a sudden they had to go to the desert to try to make a living. The wife thinks she's wasting her time in Africa. She thinks: "We're surviving, but what for? To live here and stare and the desert. That's not a life." Some people think that the Jews who left Germany early were lucky because they survived. But many of these people died in exile with broken hearts. It fascinates me how average, small people made a living under these circumstances. I think people can identify with that, because it's believable."*

Link had been determined to film in the actual location where the story was set, and use actors from those same locales. As she put it, *"I don't think it's a good idea to dress up Zulus as Masai or vice versa. Those details have to be true because, after all, the people tell much about their country and lend a special atmosphere and sense of place to the film."*



The producer Peter Herrmann recalled *"Caroline Link and I knew that Kenya as a place of movie production would be more difficult, complex, riskier and definitely more strenuous than other locations in Africa (like South Africa). Nevertheless we opted for Kenya. We were sure that the film would be more authentic, atmospheric and better if we shot close to the original locations."*

The director agreed *"Authenticity was very important to us. The rain ceremony of the Kikuyu council of elders really lasted for hours, though, and so we had to cut most of it. The same goes for the savanna ceremony of the Pokot, during which Jettel and Regina walk into the night. That's really a rite of passage for young men of a specific age group. The only thing we influenced were the clothes. Nowadays the young men also wear T-shirts and colourful shirts, of course."*

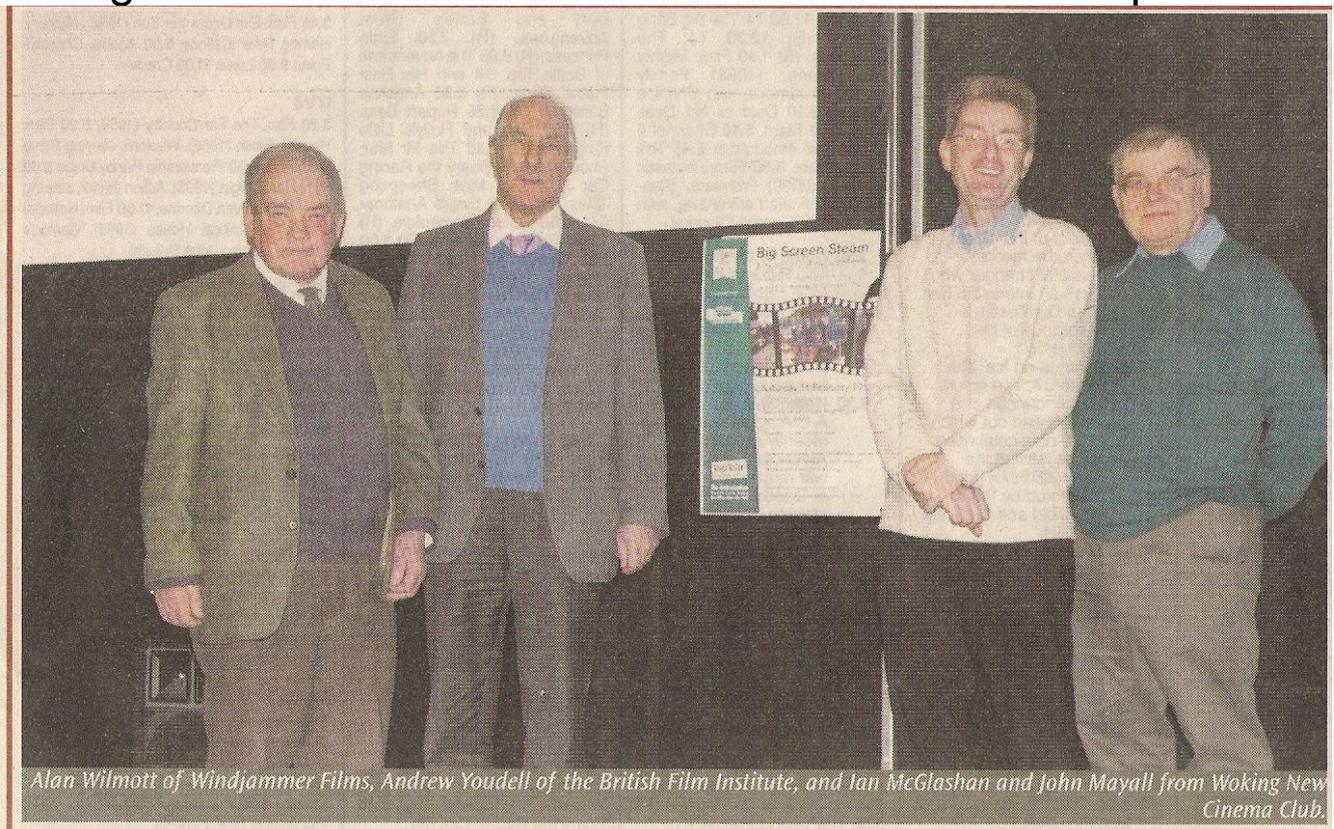
Link explained how the tribes were compensated: *"The tribal elders sat under an acacia tree and talked about it. They decided it wasn't a good idea to pay individual people money because that creates tension. Instead, they told us what they wanted for the community—a road connecting them to a bigger village nearby, which we're building together with the Kenyan state government."*

"In my version of the story I concentrate very much on the relationship of the parents, their love for each other. They suddenly find themselves in difficult circumstances; their love falters and must be re-found. Stefanie Zweig tells the story from the perspective of a child. She describes her own experiences and memories. But for me, Regina's mother Jettel is the most exciting character. What is most fascinating is her development into an independent and mature woman, who not only has to rethink her own position and priorities in life but also her relationship towards her family."

"I've made two movies before, and in both there was a girl in the center of the story who explains to the adults how life is. I didn't want to make a third movie like that. In the book, Stephanie Zweig is the centre of the story. She fell in love with Africa right away. I wasn't sure how interesting that would be. I decided to look at it from a different perspective, because the other characters are more conflicted about the place."

Link said *"I am keenly aware that the subject matter of the film—dislocation and relocation of a Jewish family due to the ugliness of war and all its political, social and emotional ramifications—is as relevant today as it was more than 60 years ago, when the story actually occurred."* She *"wanted the viewers to slowly fall in love with this alien world, just like my protagonists."*

Big Screen Steam from 11 Feb 2012 hits the local press:



Alan Willmott of Windjammer Films, Andrew Youdell of the British Film Institute, and Ian McGlashan and John Mayall from Woking New Cinema Club.

All aboard for a journey back to steam train age

RAIL buffs and film enthusiasts boarded a journey back to the steam train archives with a special film night.

Big Screen Steam arrived into Woking at the Rhoda McGaw Theatre on Saturday February 11 for two different shows.

In association with Woking's New Cinema Club, the event displayed footage and films dedicated to the age of steam.

Alan Willmott, formerly of British Transport Films and Andrew Youdell, of the British Film Institute, guided the trip

back in time with expert commentary.

The afternoon voyage featured a story of a farmer's relocation from Yorkshire to Sussex by rail, narrated by writer and broadcaster, A.G. Street, and a look at the move from steam to diesel.

The evening excursion showed a rarely seen extract from a 1952 staff instruction film detailing operating procedures for maintenance closures. The evening finished with a comical glimpse into the frolics on steam railways.

The printing of the notes for each film is undertaken by Reppoint free of charge

Reppoint

15 Poole Road, Woking Tel: 01483 596280

sponsors photocopying of *the main feature*

Reactions to **An Angel with Dirty Faces** 8 March

Score **0** **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**
Votes ~ ~ ~ ~ 2 5 5 14 8 3 ~

Total received – Average Score – 6.87

Your Comments

Stood the test of time – very exciting
 Surprisingly moving! A film to remember
 Definitely stands the test of time – more oldies please
 Talked more like Daffy Duck than Daffy Duck!
 Where are the Bowery boys now?
 Rather dated but interesting
 Vintage stuff: like listening to a foreign language!
 Cinema 1938 style – news, cartoons and a big picture
 In 1938 scenario, good characters but stilted production
 Had not seen this film before, is of its time, but enjoyed very much
 The good end happily, the bad end unhappily – that’s what fiction means
 Michael Curtiz is one of the great unsung directors – very well made - a Hollywood gangster classic

Truly a “black and white” film
 Highly watchable
 Very good quality
 Really enjoyed this film
 A classic of its time
 Great stuff
 Was Rocky really the good guy?
 An evening of nostalgia!

Position	Film	Average Score
1 st	The Secret in their Eyes	8.69
2 nd	The Kings Speech	8.66
3 rd	Made in Dagenham	7.94
4 th	Etre et Avoir	6.94
5 th	The Illusionist	6.92
6 th	An Angel with Dirty Faces	6.87
7 th	Machan	6.81
8 th	Night of the Sunflowers	6.67
9 th	Harvey	6.3
10 th	Public Enemies	6.16
11 th	Black Swan	5.88
12 th	Heartbeat Detector	3.95

Our next film:
8pm on
Thursday 12
April 2012

*“Will put a smile on
 your face, a spring in
 your step and joy in
 your heart”*

