



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

We have been delighted to hear messages of interest and analysis from our members about our last film, *The Last Night of Amore*. We try to choose films which intrigue and are not obvious in plot line, and this Italian film was certainly well received. It created sympathy for the police and the structure of the sequencing of scenes was admired.

Please keep your eye on recent films at the Empire. They have chosen some excellent films, too. I cite *Touch* and *Lee* among others.

Could we please remind you that our membership is full. We regularly have heart-felt requests for leniency and we have taken a vow of intransigence until next May when vacancies may occur.

Best wishes to all,

Roz Garwen



FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

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ACE INTERNET SERVICES HIGHLAND CREATIVE

FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

10.00 am Sunday 17th November 2024

8.15 pm Tuesday 19th November 2024

Goodbye Julia

[Sudan 2023]

Spoiler alert : You may prefer to read this review after the screening

DIRECTOR : Mohamed Kordofani

RUNNING TIME : 120mins

RATING : M

Synopsis:

Set in Sudan's recent past, the film tells the story of a fraught friendship between two very different women. In doing so it serves to illuminate the fault lines that divide nations... rich/poor, Muslim/Christian/, north/south, light-skinned/dark...

Review: Jessica Kiang

With recent conflict in Sudan in mind, one could be forgiven for approaching Mohamed Kordofani's *Goodbye Julia*, which takes place in Khartoum during the six years prior to the 2011 secession of South Sudan, as a worthy, topical history lesson. And it certainly does have merit as a primer for the class, ethnic and religious unrest that besets the troubled state. But what actually transpires is far more engaging, in the vein of Asghar Farhadi, wherein a tight, high-concept moral core unravels into strands of widening, deepening social consequence. Telling the story of a fraught friendship between two very different women, Kordofani's intelligent, compassionate scripting ensures that the political never overwhelms the personal. Yet it also illuminates just how well the fault lines that divide a nation can map onto the rifts within a human heart divided against itself.

Mona (Eiman Yousif) is a wealthy Muslim from northern Sudan who abandoned her singing career at the behest of her husband Akram (Nazar Gomaa) and lives in a gated house in a well-to-do district. Julia (Siran Riyak) is a poor Christian southerner who, along with her husband Santino (Paulino Victor Bol) and son Daniel (played by Louis Daniel Ding and Stephanos James Peter at different ages), is living in a temporary shanty, having just been unfairly evicted. The women's paths are not meant to cross — at most, Julia ought to be a peripheral presence, selling bread on the side of the road as Mona drives by. But one day, Mona accidentally strikes little Daniel with her car while driving distractedly through his neglected neighbourhood.

Had she done the right thing and stayed to face the music, likely no further tragedy would have ensued. However, Mona pursues a course of action that leads to devastating consequences. Meanwhile, there is nothing to connect her to the ensuing events except the increasingly loud voice of her conscience.

That voice drives her to offer Julia a job as her live-in housekeeper. The scene is thus set for a melodrama of escalating tension in which Mona's fragile house of cards, built on dubiously well-meant deceptions, threatens to collapse.

But Kordofani has a more humane story to tell, in which his characters, as beautifully played by two actors mining an easy chemistry, are more than archetypes within a ticking-clock plot. Across the divides of rich and poor, Muslim and Christian, north and south, light-skinned and dark, Mona and Julia become friends. But in a neat parallel with the state of Sudanese society by late 2010, it seems that no matter how closely bonded you might have become to your neighbour, sometimes the weight of a long, cruel history demands separation.

In many ways, this is a valuable film in its portrayal of humanity, friendships, betrayals, hopes and reconciliation. And valuable for taking its audience into Sudan.

Source: www.variety.com. Jessica Kiang 29/5/23 Edited Extracts Accessed 2/9/24

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COMING UP

December	<i>Mad About the Boy</i> [UK]	Sunday 8 th & Tuesday 10 th
February '25	<i>The Road to Patagonia</i> [Aust.]	Sunday 16 th & Tuesday 18 th
March	<i>Citizen Kane</i> [USA]	Sunday 16 th & Tuesday 18 th

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Some Thoughts on: *Last Night of Amore*

This film has been described as “stylish” and I can only agree. From the slowly panning shot over Milan with the soundtrack of sinister panting, slowly increasing in tempo and intensity, tension is established from the start. It seems always to be night time, flashing lights, dark tunnels, dark corners, gunshots, chaos – what is happening? Who is shooting whom? And Why?

I’m not sure that I sorted out the answers to all these questions but the tension never ceased. Franco’s tender eyes seem proof of his goodness and integrity, but the world in which he lives is shot through with corruption on both sides of the law. He is fatalistic about his own end – that he will eventually be uncovered for his part in the events which led to five deaths, including his work partner Dino. But his need to continue to provide for his family, even in the event of his own imprisonment or death, is overriding – and indeed, family connections are intrinsically important on all sides from the Chinese gangsters to the Italian ‘ndrangheta to innocent families as well.

Franco knows that this may indeed be his last night of love and you wonder what was going to be the outcome of his firm statement to the Chinese boss (legitimate businessman? Or crime king?) that he would not be returning the diamonds. That shadowy figure approaching him in the very last frame of the film continues the ambiguity.

I haven’t mentioned his young wife, Viviana. She is from a crime family and this explains her willingness, even enthusiasm, for the expedience of looking after themselves first. Apparently, the low pay of Italian police officers is barely enough to live on so that the need for second jobs is always going to be open to the offer of corruption. That there continue to be any non-corrupt police officers seems almost a matter for amazement, and we can only take hope from the multiple messages of genuine thanks and farewells from Franco’s colleagues, over the police car radio. Their esteem seems genuine. And then comes the shadowy figure.....

Trish Topp.

Many thanks again, for your insightful comments Trish. [Ed.]

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