

Sassy rainbow nation affair

March 1 2013 at 11:45am Theresa Smith

FANIE FOURIE's LOBOLA

DIRECTOR: Henk Pretorius

CAST: Eduaan van Jaarsveld, Zethu Dlomo, Chris Chameleon, Jerry Mofokeng, Marga van Rooy, Lilian Dube, Motlatsi Mafatshe, Yule Masiteng

CLASSIFICATION: PG

RUNNING TIME: 90 minutes

RATING: ****

SMART, funny and gleefully positive, this is a local romcom that works, and works well.

Inspired by a book of the same name, it comes from the makers of *Bakgat*, but is a more grown-up romcom than that popular teen slapstick comedy, with original dialogue and well-fleshed out characters.

On the surface the story follows the attempts of very Afrikaans Afrikaner Fanie Fourie (Van Jaarsveld, pictured) to get a date to his brother's arch-conservative wedding and how he falls in love with a Zulu from the other side of town, Dinkie Makobane (Dlomo).

While she initially uses him to keep her father out of her private business, Dinkie connects with Fanie because she understands him a whole lot better than his own family does.

He, on the other hand, can't quite believe his luck that a pretty, and rather well-educated, girl is actually talking to him – never mind listening to what he says.

Neither of them quite fits into their surroundings, riding across the herd instead of with it. She plans her every move and has a business plan for her life, while he has an artistic bent which he expresses in a way out of keeping with his family's expectations.

As their relationship progresses, friends and family express displeasure, discomfort and negativity about the interracial relationship which does create scope for some funny scenes.

By poking fun at cultural misunderstandings and hidebound parents, the filmmakers create a bit of leeway for the audience to examine why people are afraid of difference.

By mostly steering away from slapstick and concentrating on the comedy inherent in illogicality, the filmmakers don't denigrate anyone's culture, but simply show the endless possibilities available if you change your reactions.

Each of the characters is matched from the opposite side. So, the pathos of Louis (Van Rooy) decrying the end of civilisation as she knows it is mirrored in Dumisane's (Mofokeng) seeming haste to sell his daughter. Examine their behaviour within their own cultural framework and they are both worried about their children's future, it's all just a matter of interpretation.

Dlomo manages a credible mix of independence and insecurity, while Van Jaarsveld goes for a lighter touch than the heavy, dark and dreary serious side he showed in *Triomf*. He creates an endearing bumbler who knows what he wants, he just has trouble articulating it.



Fanie isn't sure of himself, but in true filmic tradition, the love of a good woman gives him the courage to take himself seriously and the evolution of the characters throughout the film is such that we believe and root for them by the end of the film.

The opening sequence of Chris Chameleon as Afrikaans pop star, Sarel Fourie, sets the scene for a deliciously irreverent undertone which pops up throughout the film. Chameleon takes the mickey out of how seriously Afrikaans pop stars take themselves and their carefully cultivated images.

The film uses its strong soundtrack as both a signpost for emotion and a subtle reinforcement of the merging of South African cultures.

The cinematography is also strong; Joburg hasn't looked this great on the big screen in a long time. While the cinematography of *Verraiers* concentrated on recreating the natural look of the Highveld, the look of Fanie Fourie's *Lobola* is very contemporary and urban.

The colour palette has been carefully curtailed to specific hues for specific characters, the grading is uniform and some unusual and interesting camera angles turn everyday events into noticeable moments.

Oh, and the vehicles. There are more cool cars on display here than there were in that aborted attempt at a local car movie, *The Race-ist*. A scene with the ubiquitous car guards introduces a more serious element of racial tension, but it is when Fanie has it out with his hidebound mother who doesn't want him cavorting around with some black girl that the film hits the high point.

Fanie and Dinkie realising that they have to create a new way of looking at the world unpredicated on other people's experiences but their own, ties in neatly with the film which uses the filmmakers' previous films' technical expertise, but goes its own way.

If you liked *White Wedding* or *Jozi* you will like this.