

PRESS KIT

THE
NIGHT
I LEFT
AMERICA



ABOUT



SYNOPSIS

While awaiting the results of his mother's visa renewal request, a teenage boy living in Texas is forced to confront memories of the life he so desperately wanted to leave behind in Uganda.

The Night I Left America follows the story of a teenage boy named Chamagello who, from a very young age, became enraptured with the American dream. He always imagined that one day he might move there with his family and make a better life and, perhaps, event a name for himself.

As fate would have it, years later, Chamagello finds himself living with his mother in a ramshakle trailer in the middle of "nowhere Texas." It wasn't exactly the life he imagined for himself but, for him, it was better than the life of struggle he perceived his family had had before.

But with the threat of his mother's work visa not renewing, Chamagello finds himself at a crossroads; wanting to hold onto the promise of opportunity set before him in America or learning to embrace the life he left behind in Uganda?



“...A BEAUTIFUL FILM WITH AN INSIGHTFUL STORY TO TELL.”

-Alan NG, Film Threat





BEHIND THE STORY

It all started when director, Laki Karavias, was asked if he wanted to put his directorial aspirations on hold to be a driver for a Ugandan children's choir during their U.S. tour. A few months prior, Laki had met all the kids and leaders of the choir in Uganda while working on a film project. He couldn't imagine a better group to hit the road with, so... he took the leap.

Throughout their travels, they shared many amazing experiences and Laki could easily say his family grew 25 strong because of their time together.

While traveling down the west coast, Laki's love for film started rearing its head. Some of the choir kids started showing a strong interest in learning what it takes to make a film and before any of them knew it, they were all crammed into a ramshackle trailer in the middle of Texas, shooting their first dialogue scene between Chamagello, **Erick Kiyeege** (Choir Member) and his mother, **Lydia Namagembe** (Choir Director).

After witnessing a bit of the magic that was captured there, they knew there was a bigger story to tell and began dreaming of what we could make together. That simple dialogue scene soon became a full blown production with the choir kids and leaders making up the entire cast and crew.

The story would eventually lead Laki back to the very village in Uganda where the choir was from.

Upon assembling a rough edit of the film, a fundraiser was held in Portland, Oregon and some of the cast and crew were flown over for a private screening of the film where we surprised the kids with \$10k worth of camera gear for them to take back to Uganda to continue to tell their own stories.

In just one year, they have written, shot and edited their own short film, have produced music videos for local artists and have been contracted to create videos for a couple local humanitarian organizations. Several of the kids are now set on and working hard towards a future career in filmmaking.



DIRECTORS BIO

Laki Karavias is a Greek-American filmmaker, currently dividing his time between Europe and the Pacific Northwest.

Because much of his childhood and post graduate work has been abroad, he is drawn to characters, settings, and experiences that take viewers beyond American boundaries and into the lives of some of the extraordinary people he has met during his travels.

After studying scriptwriting and directing at the National Film and Television School (UK) and the Prague Film School, Laki began crafting on paper the narratives he'd hope to see one day on the big screen—stories mixing gravitas and whimsy, while maintaining a human core.

When not making films, Laki looks for opportunities to pursue his passion for adolescent film education, particularly for youth living in underserved communities and economically fragile contexts both locally and abroad.

FILMOGRAPHY

"MESSANIA'S STORY"

2020. Documentary Short. Oscar Qualifying.

"QUI JE SUIS"

2018. Narrative Short.

"35 YEARS TO THE MOON"

2016. Narrative Short.



CHAMAGELLO *Erick Kiyeege*

Erick was born and raised in the village of Busega, Uganda, where he lives with his mother and older sister.

When not studying hard in school or helping his mother tend to the grocery shop they run from the front of their home, Erick takes any and every opportunity to get lost in a good film or television show.

As a child, it was not an uncommon occurrence for Erick to rally with kids in his village to write and perform little plays for their community. Watching how his embodiment of a character could bring joy to an audience has stuck with him to this day.

While playing the role of Chamagello in *The Night I Left America*, Erick's determination to pursue a career began to flourish and he is now convinced that his journey in film has only just begun.



MAMA CHAMA *Lydia Namagebe*

Although this was her first time acting for film, Lydia is no stranger to performance.

After losing her parents as a young child, Lydia was raised and educated all the way through high school by the African Children's Choir. During her time there, she danced her way through Africa, Europe, Asia and America with her fellow choir members.

During the filming of *The Night I Left America*, Lydia not only served as the choir director for the Bridge of Hope Africa Ministries Choir but graced the screen with her performance as Mama Chamagello.

Today Lydia works as a Community Development Director in Wakiso, Uganda and is committed to helping children in need and their families imagine and work towards a better future.



YOUNG CHAMAGELLO *Steven Kiyingi*

Steven is the eldest of four, where he lives with his parent's in Wakiso, Uganda.

Although Steven has a precocious and endlessly energetic temperament that would not seem not to mix with the rigor and repetition of screen acting, he seemed to effortlessly snap into character as soon as "action" was called.

Outside of his newfound passion for acting, Steven enjoys playing soccer, watching movies and getting into a healthy amount of trouble with his friends.



PAPA CHAMA *Henry Tumwesigye*

Henry was raised and educated by the African Children's Choir after losing his parents at a young age.

Growing up in similar circumstances, Henry always had a passion for helping the poor, the orphans, and street children. It was this passion that led him to establish the Bridge of Hope Africa Ministries.

Henry holds a Diploma in Journalism from the Uganda Institute of Business

MATERIALS

downloadable links

Poster Art

VERTICAL, HORIZONTAL & SQUARE

Trailer

W/ LAURELS, W/O LAURELS

Film Stills, BTS

HIGH RES, SOCIAL

Screenener

H264, PRORES, DCP

WRITER & DIRECTOR

Laki Karavias

PRODUCERS

Henry Tumwesigye, Paula Fairfield, Katie Walter

SOUND MIXER

Eric Kabanda

1ST AC

Ivan Ashimwe

PRODUCTION ASSIST

Diana Kisakye, Henry Sewante

STORY CONSULTATION

Lydia Namagembe, Griffin Magezi

EDITOR

Laki Karavias

MUSICAL PERFORMANCES

Bridge of Hope Africa Ministries Choir

ORIGINAL SCORE

Brian Leroy Hall

ASSISTANT COMPOSER

Jonah Ramey

SOUND DESIGN

Paula Fairfield, MPSE

RE-RECORDING MIX

Gary Coppola CAS, Paula Fairfield

FOLEY ARTIST

Vincent Guisetti

COLORIST

Darren Hartman

VISUAL EFFECTS

Japhy Riddle, Adam ager

TRANSLATION

Dorothy Kazimoto

PREVIEW

SOUND DESIGN

PAULA FAIRFIELD, MPSE

Paula Fairfield is an International and Emmy award winning sound designer for tv, film, commercials, and basically anything that makes noise. She has 11 Emmy nominations for her work on **Lost**, **The River**, **Game of Thrones** and **Lovecraft Country**, with two wins for Game of Thrones, and multiple other wins and nominations for her work in both The US and Canada. Her passion is high concept sound design and her main interest is working with visionary creators, which is clearly reflected in her resume and her background as an artist. Recent projects include “Motherland: Fort Salem”, “Warrior Nun”, “Lovecraft Country”, “Them: Covenant” and “The Nevers”.



MUSIC



Music Performances

BRIDGE OF HOPE AFRICA MINISTRIES CHOIR

The members of this choir were not only an integral part of the script development and production of the Night I Left America, they also performed much of the music in the film. With the leadership of choir director and lead actress, Lydia Namagembe, they unearthed various traditional Ugandan songs that were aligned with the themes of the film.

Through voice, body movement, and instrumentation, they worked together to bring an authenticity to the story that only they could.

Original Score

BRIAN LEROY HALL

At an early age, Brian made his mark as a rising young maestro in the music production business, working with a long list of music houses and agencies. This is the third film he has worked on with director, Laki Karavias. In addition, Brian has scored spots for brands including Levi, Nike, Bud Light, Google, Nintendo, McDonald's, HTC, Wikipedia, Intel, Lowe and many others.

Brian is the co-founder and creative director at Marmoset Music, a boutique music house. When he's not working on demos until 3 am in his recording studio, he finds time to write for and lead his Portland-based folk pop band.





INTERNATIONAL TITLE / *The Night I Left America*

DURATION / *13Mintutes*

ASPECT RATIO / *2.35*

YEAR / *2021*

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE / *Luganda, English*

COUNTRY OF PRODUCTION / *Uganda, USA*



DIRECTOR, Laki Karavias

hello@lakikaravias.com

PRESS/SALES, Deborah Sheppard

deborah@iheartcinema.co.uk

CONTACT

A young boy is sitting on a tree stump in a rural village setting. He is wearing a light-colored tank top and shorts, and is looking towards the left. In the background, there are other people walking on a dirt path, and a lush green landscape with hills and trees. The text 'WEBALE NYO!' is overlaid on the image in a large, bold, black font.

WEBALE NYO!

"THANK YOU!"