

Y ZaMakio

Wady
FILMS

A FILM BY HENRI PARDO

KANAVVAL

A CANADA/LUXEMBOURG PRODUCTION

FORMAT : Fiction

GENRE : Comedy-drama

ESTIMATED LENGTH : 120 mn

SCREENWRITER & DIRECTOR

Henri Pardo

PRODUCERS

Eric Idriss-Kanago

Daniela Mujica

Adolf El Assal

Neigeme Glasgow-Maeda

CAST

Rayan Dieudonné

Penande Estime

Martin Dubreuil

Claire Jacques

Tyler Epassy

Jean jean

Rykko Bellemare

Sylvain Massé

Hana Sofia Lopes

Fayolle Jean Jr.

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Canada Media Fund, Société Radio-Canada

Maison 4:3, Harold Greenberg Fund, CFC Accelerator

LOCAL DISTRIBUTION

Maison 4:3 (Canada)

Wady Media (Luxembourg)

AVAILABLE TERRITORIES

WORLD EXCEPT CANADA & BENELUX

KANAVAL

LOGLINE :

A young Haitian boy is whisked away from his island and taken to a strange planet called Canada.

SHORT SYNOPSIS :

In the mid-1970s, Rico, a 9-year-old Haitian boy, was brutally torn from his native land along with Erzulie, his mother, and deposited on a strange planet called Canada. Since their arrival, a distance seems to have grown between mother and son. To regain the love of his mother, Rico will have to understand this New World populated by individuals with strange habits and customs. Fortunately for him, he can count on Kana, his imaginary friend who comes straight out of Haitian mythology.

TARGET AUDIENCE : ALL AGES

Kanaval is told through the eyes and the innocent perception of a 9 year old child. It is through his perception that we discover the world around him. His interpretation of reality is strongly coloured by his wild imagination. Beyond the geographical changes Rico experiences during this flight, his imagination makes the world around him all the more alien. This is what will allow the spectator to identify with this endearing character.



SYNOPSIS

In the mid-1970s, against his mother's advice, Rico, a 9-year-old boy with a mischievous smile and an overflowing imagination, escapes from the family home to take part in the colorful carnival of Jacmel, on the south coast of Haiti. Renowned throughout the country, this popular gathering is an extraordinary outlet against the dictatorship that rages at the heart of these troubled years.

Intoxicated by the musical rhythms of Kanaval (Carnival in Creole) at its peak, Rico does not respond to the appeals of his uncle who tries to bring him home. Wandering among the many festival-goers, he meets the different characters who have shaped the history of the Haitian republic, whether they are human (former slaves, politicians, natives), or inhuman (Lwas and the other various characters of Haitian mythology). Intoxicated with memories of that evening, he returns home.

Unfortunately, another reality catches up with him. His mother Erzulie is arrested and interrogated in the family courtyard by the men of the militia in the service of the state. In fact, this young intellectual is suspected of being an influential member of a group of resistance fighters who clandestinely campaign for the establishment of democracy in Haiti. Before the militia men notice his presence, Rico is grabbed by his uncle Seradiou and flies into his arms, only to land in another reality.



There was a snowstorm the night that Rico and his mother knock on the door of the Cyr family, who welcome them with open arms into their modest home, in the heart of the Quebec countryside of Canada. Albert and Cécile Cyr were never able to have children, hence their warm welcome and the great kindness that they show Erzulie and Rico.

While the city of Jacmel was his playground, Rico discovers his New World through the prism of television. He's particularly captivated by the adventures of Commander Koenig from the popular Space 1999 series. Television is also a refuge that distracts him from what he perceives as a distance that has grown between him and his mother. It is true that Quebec's Erzulie is only a shadow of the Erzulie of Jacmel. Her frustration and her long unexplained absences are perceived by Rico as a real lack of love.

Fortunately, the Cyrs are there and accompany Rico in this new life which he finds very strange. While Albert introduces him to the joys of outdoor winter games such as skidoo, Cécile, lovingly, warms him up with cakes and hugs.



In the spring, along with Albert and other men from the village, Rico takes part in his first hunting trip. The butchering of a moose and the sight of blood awakens in him the trauma of the interrogation suffered by his mother. Rico flees through the underbrush and that's where Kana first appears.

Kana is a Lwa, a sort of demigod from Haitian mythology who serves as an intermediary between humans and the world of the invisible. Kana is about the same age as Rico and he seems to know this New World called Canada well. Moreover, by dint of consistent clues, he will convince Rico that all the inhabitants of the village are in fact extraterrestrials who are working to separate him from his mother. It is true that the animosity of the other children, the texture of food, and more generally local customs are far removed from what Rico knows.

On an autumn evening, in order to find the last bits of evidence of the extraterrestrial conspiracy, Kana and Rico leave for a nocturnal escapade, with the goal of discovering their spaceship. The ship will turn out to be the village carnival where Rico is reunited with his loving mother. He then understands that his mother was going to Montreal to prepare for the arrival of the rest of the family. Moreover, she has even been able to save enough money to buy a house in Montreal.



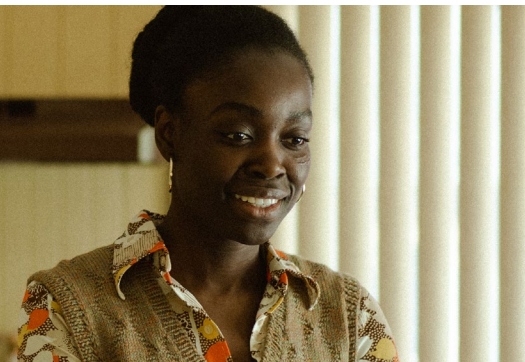
MAIN CHARACTERS



RICO (RAYAN DIEUDONNÉ)

Rico is a 6-year-old boy who wants to play, who wants to have fun. He comes from a place where anything is possible, where his family's resources seem endless, where strangers are uncles aunts, & distant relatives who take care of the children. Rico comes from a Haiti where the spiritual world is strong, where spirits rub shoulders with you when someone finds themselves at a crossroads.

Rico is completely immersed in this spirit world. When he is forcibly removed from this world, and ends up in Canada, his strong spiritual grounding allows him to not only adapt but to be loved on this new planet that is Canada. The only thing missing is his mother's love. A love that he will desperately seek throughout the film.



ERZULIE (PENANDE ESTIME)

The character of Erzulie is very complex because she subverts the traditional role of mother, as we understand it in a western context. No one should go through the death of a child under torture. This character manages to face and resist torture. The only thing that unsettles her are her children: Rico who discovers her, and the child she carries within her. Erzulie is in deep mourning for her child. This child that she has lost is also the realisation of the loss of her country. In a way, she is miscarrying the Haiti she would have liked to have given birth to, like the revolutionary she is.

Indeed, Erzulie is part of this generation of Haitian youths, curious as ever, and excited by everything that was revolutionary. The revolution was a struggle for the sharing of the countries resources, be it intellectual, cultural and natural resources with everyone. This great solidarity, this great enthusiasm for revolt finds an echo in the book by Toussaint Louverture that Rico holds ardently to his heart during the film, as a substitute for his mother whom he cannot hold physically.

Erzulie represents this entire generation of educated and revolutionary Haitians who had to flee their country, flee their island to ensure their survival.

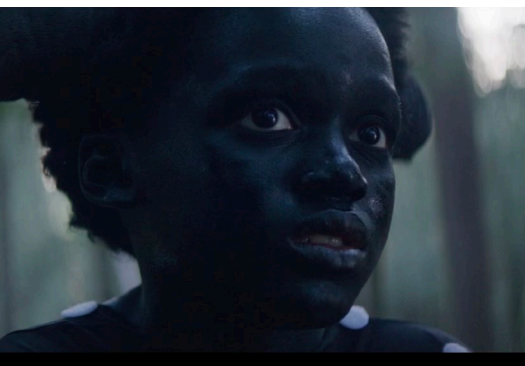


THE CYR (MARTIN DUBREUIL & CÉCILE JACQUES)

Albert and Cécile Cyr are simple farmers who have just enough to survive. They are resourceful and despite their modest lives, they have positive community minded values.



The couple have no children, due to the high number of miscarriages that Cécile has had, but has always wanted them. When Rico comes into their lives, it's like a gift from heaven, an angel fallen from heaven. Rico's arrival is like a revelation to them. It enables them to shine and be their best, and unite them as a couple. They spoil him. They adopt him and his presence gives the couple a desire to live. They go on adventures with him, take him everywhere with them, to snowmobile camps, hunting. They love him.



KANA (TYLER EPASSY)

Kana is another complex character, He is a representation of a character from Jacmel's Carnival, but is also a character which emanates from Rico and which represents the other half of his person, his imaginary double in a way. In this sense, in moments of panic, of anxiety, instead of fleeing into his fears, Rico and Kana become one. He has created an imaginary character to help himself manage his difficulties.

As Rico flees into the forest after the traumatic vision of the dead animal, Kana appears and stays with him for good. Kana is the only person who could understand what Rico is going through. He is like his twin, a little boy who looks like him, with whom he can converse in his magical "inner-verse". Kana is Rico's solution to Erzulie's unavailability.



NOTES FROM THE AUTHOR

This story is mine, that of my mother and my family, that of our uprooting from Haiti. That of a migration that belongs to the great history of the African diaspora. A diaspora in perpetual displacement. A diaspora, for hundreds of years, condemned to "succeed" its integration into a host country. A demanding integration which, very often, does not take into account the accumulation of traumas linked to various oppressions. An integration which, despite everything, has been able to breathe beauty into the movement, culture into the imagination and a marvelous intellect into the territories it travels through.



No matter where we come from, each newcomer carries with them a rich and sometimes marvelous existence that would benefit from being better known by the host countries. This diaspora, still constantly adapting to its environment, has made its way to Canada. This exodus has rarely been shown in cinema from the point of view of a child, an innocent being who has not been asked his opinion and who will have to live his whole life with the choice of his parent.

Thus, through the eyes of Rico, we rediscover Quebec from a new angle. That of the immigrant who arrives here and finds that it is beautiful but difficult in winter here, but that this country is vast, grandiose, an impressive place where dreams can come true. Despite all the love of "adoptive" Quebec parents, the Quebec countryside can be hurtful, isolating and bitter.

To understand this new environment and find a semblance of security, Rico cannot count on his mother, herself scared by her painful experience. He can only escape thanks to his imagination, a fertile imagination that feeds on the imaginations of the Haitian people.

I was that child, but I discovered while writing this story that many of us have been. Many of us have been uprooted and have had to sacrifice our childhood and many more of us have found refuge "dans l'imaginaire." By bringing this story to life, I hope to give voice to the child in every adult.

- Henri Pardo

HENRI PARDO / DIRECTOR

Henri Pardo is an afro-centric Canadian moviemaker from Haitian parents. Henri wrote and directed the documentary *Afro-Prospérité* and the series *Black Wealth Matters* with the production company Black Wealth Media. He directed the short *Sous bois*, in official competition at the Warsaw Film Festival. He recently wrote and directed *Dear Jackie*, a feature-length documentary produced by Catbird Productions in partnership with CBC and Afro Canada, a 4-episodes documentary series produced by Yzanakio, about the presence of people of African descent in Canada throughout 400 years of history. Pardo is a founding member of the Black on Black films collective, which endeavors to promote and develop an afro-centric cinema in Quebec by representing creators and craftspeople of African descent in film institutions.

YZANAKIO / CANADA

Yzanakio is led by Eric Idriss-Kanago, an independent producer for about twenty years involved in cinematographic and televisual works shown not only in movie theatres, but on TV in three continents. This permanent striving for authenticity and quality has led to a large number of his productions being selected and awarded in the world's most important film festivals (Berlinale, Mostra de Venise, Seattle, Sidney, Fespaco...) In 2018, he created the production company Yzanakio in Montreal, with the ambition of contributing to the building of a more inclusive collective memory. Eric is also the co-founder of Black on Black Films and Coalition M.É.D.I.A

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WADY FILMS / LUXEMBOURG

Since its creation in 2015 by award-winning filmmaker Adolf El Assal, Wady Films has aimed to develop artistic and stimulating projects on cinematographic, television and digital platforms. We are committed to creating revolutionary tales, to building a visionary world, to questioning contemporary social problems while entertaining. Wady Films defends very specific artistic perspectives and collaborations with unique and traditionally under-represented voices. Our work defies conventional architecture of narration, from comedy to drama through horror, while combining an avant-garde visual language. Their latest success is SAWAH, the first majority Luxembourg production to be available on Netflix (Benelux, MENA, DACH, CEE) as well as on Amazon Prime (US). The company's founders are members of ULPA (Luxembourg Producer's Guild), the European Film Academy, EAVE, Screen Leaders as well as Berlinale Talents. Wady Films is currently in production of its first Luxembourg-Canada co-production KANAVAL, to be released in 2023. Recently, PAMFIR, their latest co-production was selected at Director's Fortnight at the 2022 Cannes Film Festival.

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