

MELVIN ALUSA

TORA NATO



Dad has got to grow.

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY NGWATILO MAWIYOO

JOY'S GARDEN

TEREN TEREN



A TEREN TEREN PRODUCTION "JOY'S GARDEN" STARRING MELVIN ALUSA INTRODUCING TORAH NATO
MUSIC COMPOSED BY SEAN PEEVERS ART DIRECTED BY HATIBU KELLY EDITED BY FRANKI ASHIRUKA
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ANDREW "DRU" MUNGAI EXECUTIVE PRODUCER JUDY KIBINGE PETER MUDAMBA
PRODUCED BY MUNGAI KIROGA NGWATILO MAWIYOO FIRUL MATTHYA HAWA ESSUMAN WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY NGWATILO MAWIYOO



JOY'S GARDEN

Written & Directed By: **Ngwatilo Mawiyoo**

Produced By: **Mungai Kiroga**

Ngwatilo Mawiyoo

Firul Maithya

Hawa Essuman

Production Company: **Teren Teren Ent.**

Edited by: **Franki Ashiruka**

Cinematographer: **Andrew "Dru" Mungai**

Composer: **Sean Peevers**

Kenya | 2021 | Drama | English and Kiswahili with English
subtitles | 13 min. | 16x9 | LtRt



SYNOPSIS

Edwin abruptly goes from absent baby daddy to sole caregiver of Joy, his seven-year-old daughter when her mom passes away. Can he find it in himself to give Joy the home she needs?

The Idea

Absent or unavailable fathers have become a common occurrence in my communities. I wasn't at all aware of it growing up, but I seem to see it everywhere as an adult and possible mother. This awareness arrived as I also came to terms with my (wonderful) father's fading health and mortality.

How would my children survive my absence should the worst happen, I wondered. I remembered my mother voice her worry when I was young.

Joy's Garden brings to life a moment where a 'deadbeat' dad encounters himself as his child's last hope. Could such a man teach himself to step up? *Joy's Garden* is hopeful, tracing a path for how a child might survive a parent's death, and how a maladapted man could learn to understand his daughter's needs.



The Production

The critical hurdle I had to overcome was the idea that I had any business directing! I wouldn't be here, now, if not for the encouragement of Judy Kibinge of Docubox and Hawa Essuman, as well as Mungai Kiroga. Once the commitment was made we were off to the races! I realized I'd already been preparing for this moment: years earlier, shortly after I first met Dru, I told him about the story and how he should be my DoP. I was incredibly privileged to have his 'Yes', so long after those early conversations.

We held a closed audition to find our "Edu" and "Joy." It turned out the perfect dad was one of the two people who got me into film years over ten years earlier. We had to search further afield for Joy, but once she arrived she too found she was among friends. Although she was a first time actor, she was immediately comfortable with Edu, which made all the difference. I could go on, but the story of how our crew came together, given an impossibly tiny budget, is all pure camaraderie and goodwill. I'm incredibly grateful for their trust and gifts.



The Production

Location presented an important layer for me: while the story could occur anywhere, I was especially interested in setting this story in the newer housing developments that many middle-class families in Nairobi live in today: concrete boxes not well suited to fostering children's play, let alone their connections to the natural world.

For Production Design, we could hardly afford to buy or rent the things we needed, and so my thanks go out to my family, friends and neighbours (and their children!) who let me fill the apartment with their prized possessions. We had two brisk days on set and then it was time to edit. Halfway through the pandemic struck, and we had to learn how to work remotely. In every way, making *Joy's Garden* has been an incredible learning experience. Hopefully the first of many!



CAST

Melvin Alusa as *Edu*

Melvin's work as an award-winning actor has been featured on a number of local Kenyan and international films including *Mission To Rescue* and *The Boy Who Harnessed The Wind*. He is a familiar face on local Kenyan television, featuring on a number of series, including a recurring role on Showmax's new series *Salem*. In 2021 he won the Best Actor award at Zanzibar International Film Festival.



Torah Nato as *Joy*

Torah's interest in acting was encouraged by her father, Xavier Nato's work on stage and screen as an actor and a playwright. Joy's Garden is her first appearance on screen.

THE FILMMAKERS

WRITER/DIRECTOR/PRODUCER, Ngwatilo Mawiyoo

Ngwatilo made her debut as a writer/director with *Joy's Garden* (2021). A recipient of a Docubox micro-production grant, the film has screened at several festivals including Zanzibar and Pan African Film Festivals, and was a finalist at the International Amity Short Film Festival. The film was the recipient of five nominations at Kenya's 2021 Kalasha Awards, including best original screenplay and best short film.

Her latest short as a writer is *Inheritance*, a magical realism drama and recipient of a Some Fine Day Pix production grant. The film is currently in post-production.

Ngwatilo is also the multi-award nominated author of two poetry collections. Her poems appear in respected literary magazines around the world both in English and translation. A graduate of The University of British Columbia's MFA in Creative Writing program, Ngwatilo's start in film came as an actor, notably on Ekwa Msangi's *Soko Sonko* (2014).



THE FILMMAKERS

PRODUCER, Mungai Kiroga

Mungai is an experienced producer, scriptwriter, camera operator, editor, and director across fiction and documentary. As in-house producer at Docubox East Africa Film Fund and in his own capacity, he's produced many short films. Mungai has also written for more than five Kenyan TV shows, including the screenplay for the feature *Something Necessary* (2013), co-produced by Tom Tykwer.



PRODUCER, Firul Maithya

Firul Maithya is a Kenyan filmmaker and photographer. His interest in film began when he came across grips as a journalism student. He was a set runner at his first job on the TV show *Makutano Junction* and was steadily promoted to 3rd AD assistant director. Today, Firul is a highly capable line producer and 1st AD working across film, tv and commercials.



PRODUCER, Hawa Essuman

Hawa is a multi award-winning Director at the forefront of filmmaking in Africa. Her most recent film, *Silas* (2017) - a feature length documentary co-directed with Anjali Nayar - tells the story of environmental campaigners defending Liberia's rain forests. It has won awards in the US, Europe and Africa. Previously, working with Tom Tykwer, she directed *Soul Boy* (2010), a narrative feature set in Nairobi's Kibera slum. Presented at more than 40 film festivals around the world, it won a number of awards, including the dioraphte audience award at the Intl. Film Festival Rotterdam 2010. Currently, Hawa is developing a feature length narrative film *Djin*, set in Zanzibar.



THE FILMMAKERS

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY, Andrew “Dru” Mungai

Dru splits his time between Nairobi and Los Angeles shooting commercials, television and features (narrative and documentary). Recent works include the break out feature *Kati Kati* (2016), *Country Queen*, Kenya's first TV series on Netflix, *Oh-Bama* (2016-2017, tv series), and the short *Soko Sonko* (2014). Dru spent the first 10 years of his career working as a news and documentary cameraman, producer and editor in more than 20 countries across Africa for Reuters TV, the BBC, Aljazeera , CNN, ABC News, Discovery Channel, and other international media outlets. Andrew “Dru” Mungai is a graduate of the American Film Institute (AFI).

MUSIC COMPOSER, Sean Peevers

Sean is a gifted urban Kenyan music composer/producer and sound engineer. He is one of two music composers on the feature *Kati Kati* (2016), presented at Toronto International Film Festival and elsewhere. Besides producing many TV and Radio commercials, Sean has worked with renowned local and international artists like Maurice Kirya (UG), Steve Kekana (SA), Aaron Rimbui (KE) among others.

EDITOR, Franki Ashiruka

Franki is an award-winning film & TV editor with 20+ years experience in Kenya, New Zealand, UK &the US film industries. She is founder & lead editor of Africa Post Office, a post production company. Her work on Netflix short, *Poacher* (2018), won 3 intl. Best Editing awards. National Geographic's *Fearless Chef* (2015) won Best TV show award while *The Last Fight* (2015) won Best Feature Documentary film award. Other work includes BBC's *The Great Kenyan Bake Off* (2015) and SONY's *KCB Lion's Den*.



CREDITS

CAST

Edu

Melvin Alusa

Joy

Torah Nato

CREW

Executive Producers

**Judy Kibinge
Peter Mudamba**

Producers

**Ngwatilo Mawiyoo
Mungai Kiroga
Firul Maithya
Hawa Essuman**

Writer/Director

Ngwatilo Mawiyoo

1st Assistant Director

Firul Maithya

Continuity

Caroline Mbula

Director of Photography

Andrew "Dru" Mungai

Camera Assistant

Ronald Owen

Set Photographer

Firul Maithya



CREDITS

Art Director

Make-up and Hair Artist

Location Sound Recordist

Production Assistant:

Set Runner:

Production Driver

Catering

Editor

Music Composer

VFX Artist

Colorist

Foley, Sound Design & Final Mix

Post Producers

Poster Artwork & Title

Script Consultants

Hatibu Kelly

Eve Ndinda

Josephine Obudo

Debbie Aroko

Jordan A Adegboyega

Sam Kitonyi

James Bundi

Nelita Caterers

Franki Ashiruka

Sean Peevers

Jim Karutu

Koome Mwambia

Eric Musyoka

Carole Kimya

Cidi M

George Buliba

Ian Masters

Selina Ukwuoma

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<https://ngwatilo.com/joys-garden>