

DISCOVER
CINEMA
BEYOND
CONVENTION



2014

Tango Macbeth
Theatrical Film
Release Case Study

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS Produced and directed by the mother-daughter team Marlene Patterson (producer) and Nadine Patterson (director), **TANGO MACBETH** is their first feature length project. Their previous films include *Anna Russell Jones: Praisesong for a Pioneering Spirit* (Winner Best Documentary at Chicago's African American Women in the Arts Film/Video Festival) and *Moving with the Dreaming* (winner Prized Pieces Award from the National Black Programming Consortium). **TANGO MACBETH** has played at film festivals in Philadelphia, Boston, New York, Chicago, Washington D.C., Argentina, and Paris. Music composed by Lenny Seidman and choreography by Zane Booker.

PURPOSE The purpose of this case study is to review the journey of one film into movie theatres in the Philadelphia region. **TANGO MACBETH** is an ultra low budget film shot on location in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

SYNOPSIS Shakespeare, world music, and dance! A theater company rehearses MACBETH. A film crew documents their every move. The drama of the play intertwines with the drama of making the film. This adaptation is unlike any version of MACBETH you have ever seen.

For more information on the film go to www.tangomacbeth.com or <http://bit.ly/TuggTmac>.

ABOUT THE CASE STUDY This case study is written and designed by Nadine Patterson @hipcinema. (CC) By Harmony Image Productions www.hipcinema.net.

TIME LINE FOR TANGO MACBETH

- 2008** Originated idea for film and work-shopped scenes in London, United Kingdom for six weeks
- 2010** Received Independence Foundation in the Arts Visual Artist Fellowship \$10,000
- 2011** Completed script/Casting/Principle Photography
- Started Post-Production
- Continued Fundraising by giving donors tickets to Special Preview Screenings in **March 2012**
- 2012** Completed Post-Production
- March** Preview Screenings Painted Bride Art Center: 400+ people attended two screenings in one night \$12,000+ raised
- June** Roxbury Film Festival, Boston
- June** Philadelphia Independent Film Festival 187 attended screening at the Franklin Institute/ IMAX
- November** African Diaspora International Film Festival New York City
- 2013** Film continued tour in film festivals
- January** **TANGO MACBETH** selected for the 2013 Tour of the African Diaspora International Film Festival (ADIFF), starting in New York City

2013 **June** **TANGO MACBETH** Fundraiser screening of "Toussaint Louverture" 280+ attended screening \$1,300+ was raised for French subtitles and Blu-ray of **TANGO MACBETH** and \$1,300+ was raised for Haitian Professionals of Philadelphia

June ADIFF Chicago screening

August MARFICI, Mar del Plata, Argentina screening

August ADIFF Washington DC screening

September ADIFF Paris screening

2014 Limited Theatrical Release via TUGG

January Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (204 tickets sold)

February Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (151 tickets sold)

April Harlem, New York (83 tickets sold)

Valerie Keller | February 6, 2014 Shadow & Act Blog Comment

This is a very exciting film, fresh and original. Not only a re-imagining of Shakespeare but a re-imagining of filmmaking. Even within the category of the documentary and fiction blend, it is not quite like anything I've seen. Go see it, you may find yourself delighted, challenged and refreshed; you might be a little perplexed, a little enraged (this is not cinema as you know it!); you may leave with more questions than answers; you may realize how bored you've been with movies and you didn't even know it.

MY INDIE REALITY: IT'S ALWAYS HARD TO SHOW FILMS IN PHILADELPHIA (IF YOU ARE A "LOCAL" FILMMAKER)

- If you look at the MOVOTO BLOG list of 50 top American cities for "movie lovers", Philadelphia is not to be found: <http://bit.ly/1iD41Wr> . The lack of screening venues limits choices for filmgoers and independent filmmakers alike.
- There is a lack of commitment from local movie venues to show feature length film work from a variety of voices on a frequent basis. The movie house programming does not mirror the diversity in the city of Philadelphia.
- Native/indigenous talent is usually given the option of 4-walling. Rental fees at several venues I contacted via phone run from \$900 to \$1,100 for a 2-hour slot to show films. This is prohibitive to the average low-budget independent filmmaker.

In the summer of 2012 in the span of one weekend over 20 people asked me if my film **TANGO MACBETH** was screening at a new festival in town or at one of the older establish festivals. I said "No, I was not invited to screen my film". The reason could have been that my film had just premiered in Philly at the Philadelphia Independent Film festival in June at the IMAX in the Franklin Institute to a house of 187 people a few months before.

I asked a local programmer of alternative film if they could do a screening of Tango Macbeth in 2013 at major venue. They said my film was over exposed in this market.

I asked a local media arts center if they would present my film as part of their filmmaker showcase. They also had access to screenings at a major venue. We started talking about it, and then nothing happened, and 2013 came and went.

I called several local theatres and got quotes. The Ritz 5 was \$900 to \$1,100 for 2 hrs. The Bryn Mawr Film Institute was \$1,100 for 2 hrs. FILM@KIMMEL had a day rate of \$3,000+.

When I talked to colleagues about how I could go about getting my film on the big screen in Philadelphia, no one could offer a financially reasonable solution. Many movers and shakers in the American film industry seem to believe that the days of theatrical releases of indie films is over. [See 2013 articles: The Wrap <http://bit.ly/1dJGgy3> and NoFilmSchool link about Spielberg-Lucas discussion <http://bit.ly/19VhV2S>]

What is an independent filmmaker to do?



DISCOVERING A TEXAS BASED THEATRICAL FILM SERVICE IN THE CITY OF LIGHTS

My producer, Marlene G. Patterson, and I arrived in Paris to show our film TANGO MACBETH at the African Diaspora International Film Festival to warm fall weather. A large 24"x46" film festival poster greeted us in the lobby of the cinema. The festival used the key art from our film **TANGO MACBETH**. The photo was big, 22"x18". We were stunned. We were happy. We felt loved and appreciated by the hosts of the African Diaspora International Film Festival.

During the reception I was seated and Dr. Yvonne Welbon came over and joined us. We met each other in 1997 in FESPACO. She is an American filmmaker and film scholar. She asked me what do you want to do with your film? I said I want to release it theatrically. She said that is a very expensive undertaking. I said that is what I really want to do. She said "Don't you want to make money?" I said "Yeah." In a span of 30 minutes she gave Marlene and I an impromptu seminar on how we could have a sustainable feature film release. The two major points are the following:

1. Use Tugg to screen your film theatrically. Tugg (a new startup based in Austin, Texas) allows you to create one-night only events around the country. You select the rental fee that you are guaranteed to get each time you make the minimum number of ticket sales. The agreement is non-exclusive. Therefore, you can plan screenings through colleges or other distribution channels as well as use Tugg.
2. Use Tugg screenings as a launching pad to promote your next film/projects.

I had heard of Tugg before and visited their website www.tugg.com. I never met anyone who actually used the service. I learned that with Tugg it was possible to reach my audience through a limited theatrical release. I just had to make a plan and execute it step by step.

When we returned from Paris I did research on Tugg. I submitted our film for consideration. We were accepted. We sent a Digital Cinema Package (DCP) and Blu-rays to Tugg. We emailed the film's poster art and synopsis. The film was listed by November 2013.

Our Philadelphia screening was announced in early December. We requested the Landmark Ritz Theaters in center city Philadelphia and that is what we got. However, I almost choked when I saw the ticket price (\$13 is high for a week night in Philly) and the threshold for the venue— 111.

STRATEGY FOR USING TUGG ~ LIMITED THEATRICAL RUN

- Teamwork: You need a core of FIVE FRIENDS pledged to sell 10 tickets.
- Community Commitments: Get individuals and groups to buy tickets for other people. Individuals can purchase one or two tickets and give them to friends.
- We used our event as a fundraiser for another organization, PHILADANCO as a way of reaching out to the dance community and sharing the spotlight.
- Word of Mouth.
- Use the Tugg COUNT DOWN CLOCK, post the number of tickets sold and tickets needed. Embed it everywhere! People like to follow the “Will they or won’t make it” drama of meeting the threshold. Instead of seeing it as a hindrance see it as part of the story.
- Social Media Outreach: Leverage social media to CROWD SOURCE your PUBLICITY.
- Cross Promotion: Online Articles/Blogs/Facebook Posting/Tweets: The key is to join into the conversations of others with something worthwhile to contribute. Half the time what you say online should not be about your film. My social media advisor suggested that I join in the @AFFRM Rebel online chat session on Friday December 20th, 2013. I did. I discovered a whole new group of people who love indie films.
- Traditional Media: Radio/Newspaper/ TV interviews are great ways to promote a film and yourself as an expert in your field. A week before the screening I was interviewed on WURD 900am Radio by Stephanie Renee. We were also fortunate to be interviewed on a cable program on PhillyCAM called “In Search of Knowledge” produced by Bea Joyner. It aired on cable TV in December and January. In each media appearance we discussed other topics (such as the

lack of diversity in film, and the importance of a scientific outlook in life) as well as **TANGO MACBETH**. The interviews got our names and company out into the public sphere.



- Use Twitter strategically. Tweets on @hipcinema about the film included @TangoMacbeth or @Tugginc. I added #film, #philly, #macbeth, and #alamw14 to attract filmmakers, people interested in fun things to do in Philly, people who liked Shakespeare, and librarians attending a conference in Philadelphia at the time of the screening. I re-tweeted items on @hipcinema that interested others (like Net Neutrality) not just the film event. Twitter handles from friends and organizations that I asked to promote the film were repeatedly used in my twitter blast rotation.
- We shortened links via <https://bitly.com> to control branding and create easy to remember links on Twitter, FaceBook, Wordpress, and printed materials.



Welcome, Nadine Patterson ▾

SET LOCATION

How Tugg Works

EVENTS TITLES CREATE A TUGG EVENT



Share This Event



Link <http://www.tugg.com/go/zkfkxw>

Spread the word about this event to help make it happen.

Tango Macbeth

Presented by Nadine Patterson

Message Followers

Thursday, January 23 7:30PM - 9:23PM

in Philadelphia, PA at [Landmark Ritz Five](#) \$13.00 General

Going This Event has
204 **Happened**

Box Office Closed

HAPPENED You should have been there, this event was probably awesome.

The Event Program

Movie presentation of [Tango Macbeth](#)

Shakespeare, dance and world music! A theater company rehearses Macbeth. A film crew documents their every move. The drama of the play interweaves with the drama of the making of the film. It's unlike [read more +](#)

Filmmaker Q&A

Contributions:

Contribute Now

Rooted in African-American cultural traditions, PHILADANCO's mission is to present the highest quality of professional dance performance and improve the skills of emerging and professional dancers and choreographers in a nurturing environment, while increasing the appreciation of dance among its many communities. Across the nation and around the world, PHILADANCO is celebrated for its innovation, creativity and preservation of predominantly African-American traditions in dance. Founded in 1970, PHILADANCO has a legacy of breaking barriers and building bridges across cultural divides, consistently performing for audiences representing an amalgamation of people from diverse communities. PHILADANCO is recognized for its artistic integrity, superbly trained dancers and electrifying performances. Inherent in our mission is a commitment to empowering youth with crucial leadership and development skills that facilitate achievement and success in the world of dance and everyday life. For more information please go to <http://www.philadanco.org/>.

| Contribution Levels | Amount |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Level 1 (13 contributions) | \$10.00 |
| Level 2 (5 contributions) | \$25.00 |
| Level 3 (1 contribution) | \$50.00 |
| Level 4 (0 contributions) | \$100.00 |

FINAL RESULTS OF TANGO MACBETH TUGG DEBUT

- We sold 204 tickets: $\$13 \times 204 = \$2,562$ for 1 screening.
- We were able to almost break even with our initial start-up costs for Tugg.
- We raised \$300 in Contributions to PHILADANCO.
- We gained 104 followers that we can reach out to via Tugg.
- We created buzz at the start of 2014 for the release of our film across the country.
- We grew our online presence via Facebook and Twitter.
- We connected with new niche audiences.
- We announced our next project: BLK PARIS, a Transmedia project about the Black presence in Paris.



The RITZ FIVE is a commercial theater in Center City Philadelphia that shows American Independent and Foreign language films. TANGO MACBETH via TUGG debuted at this cinema on January 23rd, 2014. The staff was very friendly. We brought in a lot of business on a cold snowy night.



THE PARADIGM SHIFT

Instead of waiting until the day of the film screening and/or making an impulse purchase to see a film, Tugg forces the audience to make a conscious effort to select and see a film. People go from being passive consumers of cinema culture to cultural programmers and activists. The film is a catalyst to a communal conversation. Audiences want to have their minds engaged. They want to think! How radical is that? They want to learn new things and have new experiences and learn new stories. They want to experience awe and transformation.

The collective experience of going to a movie theater and watching independent cinema can offer these things.

Each film screening becomes an EVENT that the audience must PLAN TO ATTEND. It becomes more like seeing a special music concert by your favorite artist that is ONE night only. You know you have to get your ticket in advance before it SELLS OUT. You talk to your friends about going and ORGANIZE a group. You save your money, buy your ticket and set up a car pool to attend. You share experiences about when you first heard the artist's music and how it made you feel. You go to the venue, sit in the dark, surrounded by friends and strangers and you SHARE. You watch and listen to the performer and you are in COMMUNION. You start swaying to the music and singing the lyrics. For a brief moment in time you experience ONENESS. In that moment a feeling triggers a new IDEA. You resolve to be better, do more, and love more. And when the lights come back on, you leave the theater and you CARRY the EXPERIENCE with you.

This is what going to see films can be like. I have had this experience watching *I Will Follow*, *Mother of George*, *Daughters of the Dust*, *Dancer in the Dark* and many other films. But recently this is happening less and less when I go see films in a local movie theatre in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



Tugg offers a way for truly innovative films like **TANGO MACBETH** to reach an audience. The Tugg system works best when the filmmaker engages her audience directly throughout the promotion process. When a person agrees to HOST a Tugg film event, they cannot just sit back. They must work with the filmmaker and cultural workers within each community to get the word out about each film. The push has to also be beyond filmmakers and media artists. There has to be a multifaceted outreach. For **TANGO MACBETH** we promoted the film to several communities through Facebook, Twitter, blogs, film societies, churches, arts centers, and sororities. It was a combination of face-to-face and online networking.



FINAL WORDS

- Tugg is not easy, but it is worth it. Meeting a THRESHOLD requires organization and teamwork.
- Think about other connections, aside from film/media that you can exploit to promote your film. Contact alumni associations for high school and college outreach; inform your church, synagogue, mosque, or meeting house about your film; contact art and culture groups; local government officials; restaurants and cafes; friends, family, and neighbors.
- Establish these connections before you need them and maintain after you use them. Do not “love’em and leave’em”.
- The Tugg system is open to all. Films of any genre are welcome. That makes Tugg a powerful tool for independent filmmakers who want to have a limited theatrical run of their film.
- The theatrical release can help you lay the groundwork for marketing your film when it comes time for your VOD, Home Video, and Educational sales.
- Although the theatrical release is part of the larger marketing process for getting your film into the public, you have to make a great film in order to remain in their consciousness.



NOTES

2014

Tango Macbeth Theatrical Film Release Case Study

This case study is inspired by a conversation with Caroline Savage -Program Director, Film/Media Arts, Folk Art, Visual Arts, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. Black & White images are from the film TANGO MACBETH. Color photographs from the Philadelphia Ritz 5 Tugg Premiere are by Stephanie Malson @slminspired.



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