



# The Hop



**A film by Dominique Standaert  
Belgium, 104 Minutes**

Public Relations Contact:  
Ann Hinshaw  
Film Movement Series  
375 West Broadway, 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl.  
New York, NY 10012  
212.941.7744 tel. ext.214  
212.941.7812 fax  
[ann@thefilmmovement.com](mailto:ann@thefilmmovement.com)

Distributor Contact:  
André Lee  
Film Movement Series  
375 West Broadway, 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl.  
New York, NY 10012  
212.941.7744 tel ext.212  
212.941.7812 fax  
[andre@thefilmmovement.com](mailto:andre@thefilmmovement.com)

## Cast

Justin	Kalomba Mbuyi
Frans	Jan Declair
Gerda	Antje De Boeck
Dieudonné	Ansou Diedhou
Taminiaux	Alexandra Vandernoot
Simon	Peter Van Den Begin
Adrien	Erico Salamone
Alphonse	Tshilombo Imhotep
Commissaire	Stéphane De Groot
Officier P.O.S.A.	Alexandre Aflalo
and Emile M'Penza as himself	

## Credits

Director/Writer	Dominique Standaert
Producers	Dominique Standaert
	Michel Houdmont
	Thierry De Coster
Adaptation	Rémi Hatzfeld
	Olivier Poncelet
Music composer and orchestrator	Vincent D'Hondt
Line Producer	Gérard Verduyck

Location Manager	Peter Van den Borre
Casting Manager	Gerda Diddens
Director of Photography	Remon Fromont
Sound Engineer	Dan Van Bever
Art Director	Yvan Bruyère
Costume Designer	Sabina Kumeling
Make-up	Garence Van Rossum
Mixing	Wilfried Van Baelen
Editor	Dominique Lefever

## Short Synopsis

*HOP is the fight of David against Goliath. It is the story of the trials and tribulations of a young illegal pygmy, confronting the Belgian authorities on his own, in order to recover his expelled father. The ring in which all bets are allowed, especially those below the belt.*

The feature debut of Dominique Standaert, *HOP* tells the story of Justin (Kalomba Mbuyi) and his father Dieudonné (Ansou Diedhou), illegal immigrants from Burundi living in Brussels. One night, during a crucial soccer match, Justin rigs up the cable feed from downstairs so he and his father can watch the Congolese Emile M'Penza play. The neighbors, unable to get any reception on their television, come upstairs to protest and throw the TV out the window, forcing Dieudonné and Justin to run away from the police. While Justin narrowly escapes, Dieudonné is caught by the police and immediately slated for deportation. Meanwhile, Justin is taken in by a retired anarchist (Jan Declair) and his girlfriend (Antje De Boeck) who unite to help Justin get his father back. This morally rich yet lightly uplifting story is shot in black and white yet is an incredibly colorful film.

## About the Production

Dominique Standaert was inspired to make *Hop* after hearing an announcement on the radio: An illegal Nigerian immigrant was arrested in Belgium, but no traces were found of his son, a student at a Belgian school. The boy disappeared and the father was expelled from the country. Standaert chose not to recreate this incident as a dramatically somber social film but instead fictionalizes this true story in a humorous, uplifting manner. “If humor is the politeness of desperation, I would like *Hop* to be a film of exquisite propriety,” Standaert explained. The Belgian director tried very hard to avoid cliché and artificial emotion: “If one is moved, it is because the film alternates between a tragic situation and comic detail” just as it fluctuates between Flemish and French dialogue (a feature easily noticeable among French and Flemish speakers but perhaps more furtive among English-speaking viewers who focus on the English subtitles). According to Standaert, the film pokes fun at the workers of the Belgian Office of Foreign Affairs: “People choose their profession, don’t they!” he jokes.

According to Standaert, “*Hop* treats childhood and the life of immigrants in Europe in a magical way ... I don’t like to show things that everyone already knows.” Indeed, *Hop* is a stunningly original look at life to which any father, son, immigrant or human being should be able to relate. The film not only marks the marriage of the African and the Belgian cultures, but also between the French and the Flemish communities. When told that this “cohabitation” between the two languages worked very well in the film, Standaert replied: “That brings me great pleasure! I’ve received reactions from both sides of the linguistic border and this was not evident. Because one doesn’t know how exactly it works, this type of thing. Jan Declair didn’t speak like a Parisian, but he was not asked to! Moreover, during production, after a bit of time, we started to correct him towards mistakes because he was starting to speak *too* well!”

As for the role of Justin, “When one makes this genre of film, it is one of the points of question. One writes for the ideal child who does not exist or who is very difficult to find. To find a 12-year-old boy in Belgium, that is possible...But to find a black child, who lives in Belgium, who speaks French and who can act...There, the pool shrinks. We launched a casting well ahead of time because there was another problem: the role, which I conceived, required a child of a very specific age. We couldn’t make the film with a child too young or one who was already an adolescent. Keïta, we found in the Metro. He called me; he passed the casting and *voilà*... I’ve worked with children in film before and I know the responsibility that I have to them. To work as an actor -child or adult - is not at all the same thing. I hope I was always honest with him. I told him that we were going to make a beautiful film, but that he shouldn’t put his faith in Hollywood.”

When asked if the use of black and white imposed upon the story, Standaert responded, “No. There are three reasons for this. The first is that like it a lot. The second is that I wanted the story to exist outside of reality, very clearly. Things are plausible, but not true. The third reason is that we are not in a *James Bond* movie and I don’t have a colossal budget. I could have made this film in color in so far as I master color, that I utilize it as I wish. In black and white, one works with contrast, not with anything else.”

From first-time actors like Kalomba Nbuyi to veteran dramatists such as Jan Declair and Antje de Boeck, *Hop* marks the marriage of generations, language and cultures and is an uplifting tale of hope and a deep expression of the Belgian soul.

## Festival History/Awards

- Official Opener at the Ghent International Film Festival 2002
- Joseph Plateau Prize for Best Belgian Actress
- Joseph Plateau Prize for Best Musical Score
- Grand Prix, CinéJunior 94 Festival 2003
- The Young Public “Art et Essais” Prize 2003
- Audience Award, CinéJunior 94 Festival 2003

## About the Director

Born in Bombay in 1957, Dominique Standaert grew up in Chicago and Kigali, Rwanda before pursuing his education in Belgium. After graduating with a degree in clinical psychology, he studied film direction at the INSAS. Standaert worked as first assistant director or line producer on a number of feature films including: *L'Oeuvre au noir* / André Delvaux, *Het Sakrament* / Hugo Claus, *Taxandria* / Raoul Servais and *Combat de Fauves* / Benoît Lamy. He started his own company “Executive Productions S.P.R.L.” in 1995. As director, his short film *Eau* (1997) won the prize of the French Community of Belgium at the International Film Festival of Namur, the Prize for Photography at the Media 10/10 Festival in 1997 and at the Festival “Court Toujours” in 1998. It is selected in several Festivals abroad. Standaert produced, wrote and directed his first feature film *Hop*. From 1999 until 2001, Dominique Standaert was a member of the selection commission of films for the French Community of Belgium. Since 2001, he teaches film direction at the INRACI in Brussels. Currently, he is preparing his next feature film, *Formidable*.

# About the Cast

## **Kalmoba Keïta Mbuyi**

Kalomba Keïta Mbuyi – or “Keïta” as he is commonly called – is currently a shining student studying the Humanities in a Brussels High School. After difficulty casting (as director Dominique Standaert explained, it wasn’t easy to find a black child living in Belgium who spoke French and could act) Keïta was discovered on a bus one day and hired almost immediately thereafter. *Hop* marks Keïta’s first major acting gig, but his incredible performance will undoubtedly open the doors to a remarkable career.

## **Jan Declair**

Jan Declair was born on February 14, 1946 in Niel Belgium. He has appeared in numerous French and Flemish language films including Benoît Mariage’s *La Part Manquante* (2003), Hilde Van Mieghem’s *De Kus* (2002) and Frank Van Passel’s *Villa des Roses* (2001). Declair has also appeared in many Dutch television series including “Meiden Van de Wit” (2002), “Keromar” (1970) and “Diamant” (1997). Declair has received critical acclaim for his acting including the “Best Actor” award at the Paris Film Festival in 1998 and the Joseph Plateau award for “Best Actor” at the Flanders International Film Festival in 1990, 1993 and 1997, among others.

## Filmography:

1993

Daens

1995	Antonia
1999	Crinière au vent, une âme Indomptable
1999	Shades
2000	Mariken
2001	De Verlossing
2001	Villa Des Roses

## About Film Movement

**Film Movement** is an innovative new film distribution company, created as a solution for millions of consumers across the nation whose access to outstanding film is limited by geography, lifestyle or lack of information. Film Movement acquires award winning independent films from the world's top festivals, which they then release each month of the year to members on DVD through a subscription service, and theatrically through The Film Movement Series. Participating filmmakers are able to reach under-served film fans everywhere through Film Movement.

**The Film Movement Series** is a new theatrical film series featuring some of the best in original world cinema. Created by the team that invented the groundbreaking Shooting Gallery Film Series, Film Movement will release 6 of its 12 films per year in leading independent cinemas in major US cities to help outstanding filmmakers find the audience they deserve. All films are available to members on DVD upon theatrical release so that they may participate regardless of where they live.

Film Movement has partnered with some of the leading independent theaters in the country to exhibit the Film Series including Quad Cinema in New York, Arc Light & Laemmle in Los Angeles, The Gene Siskel Film Center in Chicago, and the Roxie in San Francisco. The schedule includes the following films:

- April 11 – Wiebke von Carolsfeld's *Marion Bridge*
- June 13 – ERIC EASON'S *MANITO*
- August 15 – Scott Kennedy's *OT: Our Town*
- October 10 – Rebecca Chaiklin's *The Party's Over*
- December- Tjebbo Penning's *Morlang*
- February- Mina Shum's *Long Life, Happiness and Prosperity*