

A documentary film on interracial adoption

A Season for Dancing



Short Synopsis

A Season for Dancing is the story of 15-year-old Meseret who, along with his adoptive American father, embarks on a journey of discovery, redemption, and rejoicing in his homeland of Ethiopia. Together, they seek out the people and places of Meseret's colorful but tragic childhood, restore relationships with family and friends, and celebrate with them his triumph over adversity.

Long Synopsis

Meseret has a good life in the USA, but he also has a need for healing from his tragic past, a desire to reconnect with family and childhood friends, and a dream to help them have better lives. His adoptive father Marcus decides the best way to help Meseret is for them to travel together to Ethiopia. He also hopes that doing so will allow him to make deep, meaningful connections with Meseret.

Meseret and Marcus begin their journey and Meseret reunites with family in Mota, visits his childhood home, and recalls details of his

childhood including his mother's death—the point in his life when everything changed. Meseret's family tells stories about what his life was like for him after his parents died. These sad stories are a contrast to how they see him today and to their hopes for his future.

From Mota, Meseret and Marcus then travel to Debre Markos, where Meseret lived on the streets. Describing how his life was like on the streets, Meseret begins to realize his dream of bettering the lives of street children in Ethiopia. They then travel to Bahir Dar to visit

Meseret's half-sister, Seranesh, and her family. Meseret recalls how, following his life on the streets and then briefly living with his sister Haimanot, he had adjusted much better to life at Seranesh's home, but caring for a growing family later became financially impossible for her family and they ultimately send him to an orphanage.

Finally, Meseret and Marcus travel to Addis Ababa, their last stop in their journey to re-visit all the places Meseret has lived. Meseret is reunited with his friends at Enat Alem Orphanage, and takes them out shopping and dinner at a cultural hall and restaurant.

Meseret and Marcus return to the US, both profoundly changed by their experiences in Ethiopia. Now that Meseret, in his own words, seen everything new, he feels a stronger connection to his Ethiopian heritage and a desire to return as soon as possible, to spend more time with his family, to visit the region where his father was from, and to expand his efforts to help his family and others in Ethiopia who struggle in their daily lives. Marcus develops a deep appreciation for the people and culture of Ethiopia and inherits Meseret's passion to help relieve the suffering there, but in ways that respect and preserve the Ethiopian culture and traditions.

Epilogue

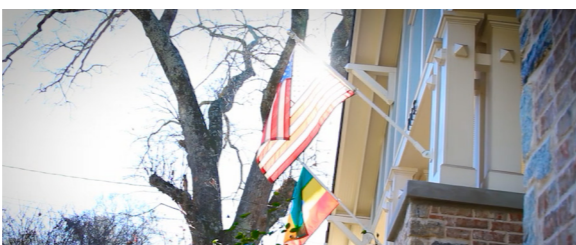
Six years after their visit, Marcus reveals that despite all the positive outcomes of the trip, Meseret and Marcus faced new challenges.

Who we will meet

Meseret: Meseret is the main subject of *A Season for Dancing*. Having endured through a lot of adversity following his mother's death till he was adopted, the 15-year-old, along with his adoptive father, Marcus, returns to his motherland to revisit all of the places he had had to live, including the streets of Debre Birhan. After his visit, he is able to come to terms with his tragic past and see his country and his family in a new way. He leaves inspired and passionate about helping street kids. He later discovers that finally being allowed closure doesn't ward away future challenges.

Marcus: A single father who adopts Meseret after his first adoption fails. He brings Meseret to Ethiopia for the first time in two years because he believes that it would allow Meseret to better deal with past trauma. Like Meseret, he is changed by the trip, and by all that he learns of his son and the people and culture he encounters.





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Haimanot: Meseret's sister.

She and Meseret grew up together and were separate after their mother's death. She searches for him until he is found by relatives living in the streets. She and her husband take him in but tensions build due to Meseret finding it difficult to reacclimate to his new living situation.

Ishete: Haimanot's husband

Siranesh: Meseret's sister. Like Haimanot, Siranesh has been searching for Meseret after discovering that she has a half-brother. Meseret moves in with her and her family in Bahir Dar. With a young child and another on the way, Siranesh and her husband have too many mouths to feed and are forced to put him in an orphanage.

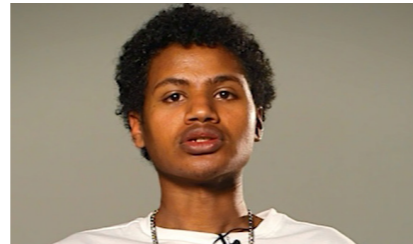
Yeshiwias: : a 13-year-old street musician that Marcus and Meseret befriend in Bahir Dar. Meseret sets up a bank account for Yeshiwias through which he can continue to help him.

The street boys: while walking through Debre Birhan where he once lived, Meseret meets a group of homeless boys. After buying them a meal and talking with them, Meseret decides to help them by first buying them blankets and then, so that they can they start their own small businesses, he buys them products that they can resell.

Friends from the Orphanage: Meseret reunites with both the administration and nurses, and his friends during his visit to the orphanage. Before his departure, he buys his friends shoes and takes them out to dinner.

We also briefly meet his maternal uncle, his cousin and childhood friends from Mota



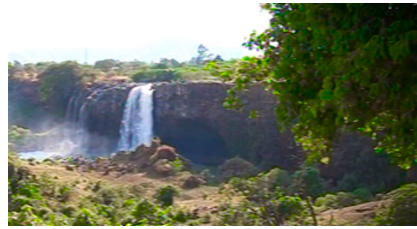


THEME, TONE, VISUAL STYLE AND OVERALL LOOK AND FEEL

The overall themes of *A Season for Dancing* are loss of family, childhood, hope and dreams but also rediscovery and healing. Meseret and Marcus go on several journeys to revisit the many places that Meseret grew up and endured through hardship. At first, we faced some difficulty as filmmakers when creating a coherent storyline. So we decided to intertwine the locations they visited with the themes raised in the film. At every location, Meseret (and the audience) get to dwell on the past but also find healing and new purpose.

LOCATIONS

Meseret and Marcus's trip to Ethiopia consists of revisiting all the places that Meseret has lived. They first travel to Mota where he lived with his mother and sister Haimanot. Then they travel to Debre Markos where Meseret had lived on the streets and follow that with a visit to his sister Siranesh's home in Debre Birhan. Their final visit takes them to the capital city Addis Ababa where Enat Alem Orphanage is located.



MUSIC

For the film, we have selected a score composed locally and which implements traditional Ethiopian instruments.

Music is very important part of Meseret's life. Once we attain the rights, we would like to use a song by Ejigayehu Shibabaw GG which was Meseret's favorite at the time of filming, during the end credits. Live music occurs throughout the film such as during the party that Haimanot and Ishete throw, the music that Yeshiwas the young street musician plays, and the live music that plays at the cultural hall and restaurant that Meseret takes his friends to. We believe that incorporating these moments with live music and dancing not only adds life to the film, but emphasizes how Meseret, his family, and people in general, can face adversity and/or sadness with hope and determination.

FILMMAKER BIO

Moges Tafesse is a documentary filmmaker and TV producer from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. His documentary film Dancing for Unity was screened in Monaco and Nice as a side event during the Cannes Film Festival in 2011. His documentary film Tumcheze Mwakaila—Lets Dance for Mwakaila (Kiswahili) was produced for the Tanzania School of Social Work and University of Illinois, Chicago, and has received recognition. He is also engaged in media related research and publications. His recent publication "Investigating the Role of Media Advocacy in Framing Accessibility of Antiretroviral Treatment in Ethiopia: A Social Work Perspective on Communication Theories" was published in the Journal of HIV/AIDS & Social Services.

He has also produced and/or directed short films Cycling(2016), Pencil (2015), and Cleaner (2014). He also produced and/or directed two weekly TV shows, Made by an Ethiopian Woman and My Quest to create awareness and sensitization, as well as to influence decision making towards a safe and protective environment for women and children. Currently he is fully engaged in his new feature film My Enchained (Quragnaye).

He established and has been running Synergy Habesha Films and Communications with the motto "Empowering Community Through Media" for the past ten years. Qualification: PhD in Social Work and Social Development, Addis Ababa University; MA in International Studies, Louisiana Baptist University; MSW in Social Work, Addis Ababa Universality. Moges has also received extensive training on directing and script writing by UNESCO-IICBA (international Institute Capacity Building for Africa); Media Working Groups, Kentucky; Grand Rapids Community Media Center, Michigan; Ethiopian Film Initiative, Addis Ababa and Goethe-Institut; a training on film by International Emerging Films Talents Association (IEFTA) in Monaco, France

Current Status:

The story currently **it** is in post-production phase and a trailer has been developed.

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