

Half of a Yellow Sun

Cert 15 Nigeria 2013 111 mins

Crew

Director/	
Screenplay	Biyi Bandele
Cinematography	John de Borman
Film Editing	Chris Gill
Original music	Ben Onono Paul Thomson

Cast

Thandie Newton	Olanna
Anika Noni Rose	Kainene
Chiwetel Ejiofor	Odenigbo
Onyeka Onwenu	Odenigbo's Mother
John Boyega	Ugwu
Joseph Mawle	Richard

Synopsis

Nigeria, the 1960's. Twins Olanna and Kainene return to a privileged urban life in Lagos after completing their expensive English education. Mirroring their country's newly-asserted independence, the two girls follow their hearts rather than their father's wishes for them.

Preoccupied by their romantic entanglements, for a time politics plays little part in their lives. But as the Igbo people struggle to establish Biafra as an independent republic, the sisters become caught up in the shocking violence of the Nigerian Civil War and a betrayal that threatens their family forever..



Booking Information

Distributor/ DVD Bookings:

Soda Pictures - Nathan Gilligan
0207 377 1407
info@sodapictures.com
www.sodapictures.com

Available: June 2014

Programme notes



Reviews

Achingly heartfelt as a story of a people's tragedy through civil war, *Half of a Yellow Sun* is Biyi Bandele debut feature, and the story, told through two sisters and their partners, resonates with all the highly charged elements of life, from love and hate to fear and murder on a large scale. Told chronologically with newsreel footage inserted as relevant, the film serves as a personalised history lesson of the birth of Biafra.

Thandie Newton as Olanna and Chiwetel Ejiofor as Odenigbo her partner carry the film's weight on their capable shoulders, but there are notable supporting performances including John Boyega as Ugwu, Odenigbo's faithful, diligent houseboy, whose journey is one of the most satisfying elements in the film.

Anika Noni Rose delivers a slightly mannered performance as Olanna's sister Kainene, but she does capture our attention. Joseph Mawle is great as her husband Richard, a weak character with reserves of courage and love. Onyeka Onwenu makes a big impression (literally) as Odenigbo's Mama, and most of the smaller supports are also terrific.

There are stilted moments and slackly paced scenes, and the storytelling is sometimes hard to follow, but Bandele's feel for the dramatic appears intuitive, both in examples of violent action and intimate conflict. It's a story worth telling to a world that was aware of the events - as the newsreels demonstrate - but which has largely forgotten and certainly never knew the full inside story of the tribal hatreds that fuelled the killings.

Andrew Urban, Urban Cinefile, March 2014

Half of a Yellow Sun is vividly colourful, quite literally with regards cinematography, the almost jazz age version of African costume, and larger than life characters. The plot occasionally gets a bit lost with regards time and occasion and it helps if you are able to come to the movie with a little knowledge of Nigeria. I did not have this but my lack of erudition didn't seem to matter - I was still dazzled.

Bearing in mind that this is a first film, its occasional rawness simply adds to the overall picture of a very different time and culture which is truly fascinating

Anne Hooper, BFFS SW Committee (at the London Film Festival)

Awards, commendations, accolades

Premiered at the **Toronto International Film Festival** 2103
Based on the 2007 Orange Prize winning novel of the same name by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

