

Written by Ernest Kanjo

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There has an unending euphoria, brightening the movie atmosphere since news on the brilliant performance of a leading Cameroonian actor at ZAFAA filtered into the country. The name Nchifor Valery has been on every lip. Congratulatory messages have been reaching the young actor at his London abort, from home. Similar reactions have been rife on the social network forum, facebook. Nchifor Valery grabbed the best up-and-coming male actor award at the 2011 London-run ZAFAA Award. A good number of well wishers had predicted this victory. "I know Nchifor will make it. He is good," Buea-based producer Judas Case had told this interviewer upon the laureates departure to London. Soon after the event and Nchifor's designation, TIPTOPSTARS editor caught up with the Buea-bases star of Obsession, the film that ferried the actor to glory and sought to find out what feelings he was nursing. On the line to London, Nchifor explained among others what the prize meant to him, his country and the entire African continent. Excerpts of the chat with Ernest Kanjo.

Ernest Kanjo (EK): *Describe your feelings when your name was pronounced.*

Nchifor Valery (NV): Wow...it's was a wonderful feeling. I was greatly overwhelmed, but the same time thought I was dreaming. Behold, it wasn't a dream. It was reality. Ernest, words cant really explain the way I felt after hearing my name in the 1000 seater capacity hall amongst the best in Africa.

EK: *What was the reaction from the hall?*

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NV: When my name was pronounced and the mention made that I was from Cameroon, some people were surprised for a seconds. When I walked up to the stage, collected my prize and made my remarks, the hall exploded in applauds.

EK: *Did you expect this prize?*

NV: Well, to an extent I was optimistic since my performance in **Obsession** was quite convincing. That not withstanding I was in a very competitive category with Ghana's James Gardiner as a major challenger. Gardiner you know is a household name in the Ghanaian film industry. So in as much as I was optimistic I just had to wait for that moment of truth.

EK: *What were you told was the reason for your victory?*

NV: Well for the organizers who had watched **Obsession** told me that my performance was outstanding and I was spontaneous in my role.

EK: *What did participants tell you out of the hall?*

NV: Most of my counterparts from other countries were surprised to learn that I and my colleagues were from Cameroon and that Cameroon could put up such a performance. They encouraged us to keep up with the spirit and that Cameroon will make it big before the world knows it.

EK: *What does this prize represent to the following?*

Yourself

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NV: It is a huge challenge to me and tells me I have to get back to work and shoot to the top. I consider it a motivation. Let me say it's just like I never did it before.

CFI Buea

This is a motivation to other actors in Buea, my base. It is more for those who were getting discouraged with the slow pace of things there. It's just a matter of time and my colleagues in Buea will be harvesting awards. They should believe in themselves and never give up, if at all it's what they want to do.

NV: CFI as a whole

And to CFI as a whole, this is a clear indication that we can do it. We are meant to make it big. All we have to do is to put our heads and resources together, concentrate and forge ahead. We can also go out there and come back with a number of awards from one film festival to the other.

NV: Cameroon

This award is to show Cameroon that the country got talents in its film industry. Just a little support from the government, we'll be ferrying more of these back home.

NV: Africa

(Laughs).... Africa just has to know that there is a new male actor coming up, full of energy and endowed with acting skills. I'm determined to make the continent proud.

EK: *To whom do you dedicate the award?*

I dedicate this award, first to God Almighty for giving the strength and faith to endure all these years in the industry. Secondly, I dedicate it to my family, most especially my mum. To her I say thank you for letting me follow my dreamt path even with nothing to show for it till this moment - to the producer and director of **Obession** for believing in me, my interlocutor, Ruth Nkwenti whose spectacular performance helped me deliver and to the entire crew of the movie. Last but not the least I am dedicating this prize to members of CFI Buea for their endless support and prayers.

EK: *Is this first international award you're picking up?*

NV: Yes it is.

EK: *What advice would you give to other award-aspiring actors?*

NV: First of all I would say being an actor is not all about winning awards. Most of the big stars in Hollywood have never won an award. Some have not even gained a nomination, yet they remain great, respected and envied. A nomination is already a big achievement. I'm therefore saying actors shouldn't just act because they want to win awards, but because they love the art. When they've done their best, the awards will come definitely.

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EK: Which is your next award entry?

NV: My next award entry is the Berlinale Film Festival in February 2011 in Germany, the Rotterdam Film Festival, the same month and the Africa Movie Academy Awards, AMAA in Nigeria.

EK: Would you like to express gratitude to some people/film structures, etc?

NV: I will like to extend sincere gratitude all my friends for standing by me in this career. Permit me mention the following: Tanko Noel, Jedidiah Tebo, Fon Wamuchu, Ngwa Kenneth and Indah Anitha, just to name a few. They have been more than just friends. May God bless them! Let me say thanks to Anurine for coaching me in this performance. Special thanks also go to Genesis Pictures, Elegant Sisters Production, Chillen Music Entertainment Monairas Production and GOHFA Productions for bringing me into film world. Then I extend my love to my family, all those who voted for me and the entire CFI family.

EK: Your last remarks.....

NV: Well I will end by saying that it's been a bumpy ride up to this moment in my career but I held on firm while believing in God Almighty. He has not let me down and I know he will continue to give me the power to carry on.

EK: Thanks for talking to TIPTOPSTARS.

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NV: Thanks very much Ernest and a big thank you to **TIPTOPSTARS**. You are the best. More power to your elbow. All the best to

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, It was a great pleasure.