



## CHESTER FILM SOCIETY PRESENTS:

### KIRIKOU AND THE SORCERESS

2002 FRANCE 84 MINUTES

DIRECTED BY MICHEL OCELET

VOICED BY ANTIONNETTE KELLERMAN, THEO SEBEKO

**Tiny hero Kirikou embarks on a perilous adventure to discover why an evil sorceress has it in for his African village. Lush animation for all ages from France**

In a little village in Africa, a mother (voiced by Kombisile Sangweni) gives birth to a minnow of a boy named Kirikou (Theo Sebeko). But this is no ordinary child: he's born walking, talking and with a strong will of his own, much to the fear and revulsion of the tribe. He soon learns that the evil sorceress Karaba (Antoinette Kellerman), along with her 'fetish' robots, has dried up the local spring and apparently eaten the village menfolk, save for Kirikou's warrior uncle (Fezele Mpeka). Determined to discover the origins of Karaba's wicked ways, our resourceful hero, ("Tiny but mighty") sets off to confront her. During his epic quest, and with the aid of his all-seeing grandfather (Mabutho Sithole), he uncovers a secret that will tear the villagers' world apart.

"I had long wanted to portray Africa, a powerful realm that had never been portrayed in an animated feature film," says French writer-director Michel Ocelot. "**The Lion King** used African settings but not Africa nor the Africans." The resulting animation, inspired by Senegalese fables, is powerful stuff - stylishly rendered in vivid, near-psychedelic colours and featuring haunting vistas, from jungles to hellish, crimson caverns. An exuberant,

traditional score from internationally championed musician Youssou N'Dour only adds to its charm.

There is also a will to verisimilitude here, which means Kirikou's tribeswomen remain authentically bare-breasted - one aspect the film's original producers had trouble, er, grasping - ordering Ocelot to furnish them with bras. He was forced to seek alternative funding after he refused to compromise indigenous culture. Certainly, you'll never catch a restless newborn chomping off its own umbilical cord in your average Disney flick. And no cutesy singing lions need apply. In short, this is one children's animation that won't be troubling the multiplexes any time soon. A shame, as this is a remarkable piece of work that demands to be seen by kids and adults alike.

#### Verdict

**An enchanting, life-affirming animation of love and redemption, made with no small measure of maturity and care - along with an all too rare respect for the art of storytelling.**

**Channel4**

PLEASE RATE TONIGHT'S FILM USING THE SCALE BELOW. DETACH AND HAND IN AS YOU LEAVE. PLEASE LEAVE ANY COMMENTS ABOUT THIS FILM ON THE REVERSE OF THIS FORM. MANY THANKS.

0  
TERRIBLE

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

FANTASTIC