

# 'WINDJAMMERS' WINS AUDIENCE

■ From L1

executive producer of the film. The emerging filmmaker has wanted to make films since childhood.

"It's a 30-year dream come true for me," he said.

In actuality, von Maur began working on the script four years ago when daughter Justice von Maur, who starred in the film with Brad Thomason and Craig Pinder, was 11 years old.

"My dad, he was always looking for a story to tell, and then one day he formulated it," said Justice.

The story von Maur developed with writers Elliott Lowenstein and Michael Ray Brown centers on a biracial teenaged girl who moves to The Bahamas from Chicago with her white father, and encounters racism at a local sailing club.

Justice, the actress, plays "Justice Wilson", the character, whose determination and heart help her to teach everyone valuable lessons on kindness and unity.

Sailing becomes the teen's outlet as she and her father challenge "Richard Whitehead", a powerful member of the club who wants to see them ejected. Craig Pinder, a Bahamian actor who lives in London, takes on the role of Whitehead with the eye-popping, single brow-raising antics of an animated nemesis.

Potcakes and Junkanoo get their due, and a familiar cast of hearty characters that includes theater veterans Anthony Roberts and Claudette Allens, add warmth and humor to a film brimming with emotion.

"When you make a film, you could feel proud of it but you never know how it's going to be received, and just feel like it was just really accessible," said Kareem Mortimer, who was also one of the producers of the film. "You could feel the excitement in the air."

The cast and crew were anxious to see how a Bahamian audience would react to the film.

"I was absolutely terrified," said von Maur, an American who moved to The Bahamas with his family five years ago, of how the film and its subject matter of racial prejudice might have been received.

"We tried to address an important subject but not so serious," he said.

Pinder, whose character led the mission to exclude Justice's family, appreciated the approach.

"By tackling the very serious and painful issue of racial exclusion in our society in a satirical and humorous way, the film hopefully helps to shed some light and ease some of the suffering of the past," he said.

"Admittedly this film doesn't address or answer all of the questions that surround this sensitive issue. It confronts a few of them head on and I believe opens a debate that leads our imaginations towards finding ways to peaceful and healing resolutions."

The film's message of unity resonated with Sir Durward. "C Dog", the character who teaches Justice to sail, seemed to have been modeled after Durward, the 1964 Bahamian Olympic Gold Medalist and advocate for racial harmony.

The film "brought out what I believe in life, that everybody should be equal and get on with each other," Sir Durward said.

"Windjammers" will be screened today at the College of the Bahamas at 4 p.m. Admission is \$5.