



## **Press Release**

### **VUSI & LU** **(New Faces on Backstage!)** **Mon March 27**

It's a case of, "you can't have one without the other" and, opposites attract, with Vulindlela College's new first year students, Vusi and Lu, who are scripted to do some serious shaking up Backstage.

And for both Nqoba Ngcobo, who plays the role of Vusi Buthelezi, and Nokhuthula Ledwaba (Noxie), who portrays Lulama (Lulu or Lu) Majola, appearing on Backstage will be their official TV acting debut.

#### **THE CHARACTERS:**

VUSI is a chubby, sharp and street smart 19-year-old, with a great sense of humour. Brought up in Diepkloof, Soweto, he matriculated with good marks and has been awarded a scholarship to South Africa's best-known performing arts college on the strength of his excellent acting, singing and street dancing abilities.

He's produced, directed and acted in a number of community project plays, musicals and other cultural events. In his neighbourhood, Vusi is "famous" for his performances - and for being the great organiser behind all the parties, concerts and shows.

Vusi lives with his mother (a single parent), two younger sisters and an elder brother – the latter is studying commercial law at Johannesburg University. Vusi travels to college in a taxi. He would like to live closer, but can't afford it.

*And he has a secret. He suffers from manic depression and hides the illness behind a façade of continuous comedic pranks. Vusi has never been in a truly romantic relationship. No one has been allowed that close to him.*

LU is from the same neighbourhood as Vusi – in fact, they were at the same school together – and she comes over as one tough babe. Cynical and stubborn, she prefers the company of boys and dresses down in caps and baggy clothes, like camouflage pants and slogan T-shirts. Lu, who comes from an average, good Christian family, doesn't flaunt her sexuality.

She hates Spike Lee (Lu wants to be a filmmaker) and dreams of being the first African, female Tarantino. She enjoys street culture (beat poetry and pantsula), but is very suspicious and critical of anything that boasts of cultural upliftment. *She has a secret crush on Vusi and her infatuation will soon escalate to alarming proportions.*

#### THE ACTORS:

How's this for irony? Real-life comedian, NQOBA, 25, was about to go into a pizza shop franchise partnership when he got the Backstage audition call. It was from a casting agent who remembered chatting to him at a party (she represents his sister) and thought he'd be perfect for the part. Nqoba had his doubts, so he's elated to have been chosen, although he admits accepting the part was an emotional tough call. "As an entertainer, it's always a case of weighing up financial security versus following your passion - and being happy," he says.

Nqoba (who speaks fluent French after having lived in Canada for 10 years, between the ages of six to 15) has done stand up comedy in a lot of Gauteng venues: Cool Runnings Comedy Underground; Carnival City; Tanz Café; The New Melville Theatre and the Horror Café. In 2005, he appeared in the Laugh Out Loud show. A Virgo, Nqoba is a sports fanatic with cricket and soccer his firm favourites.

NOXIE's previous acting experience is related mainly to industrial-corporate, educational and children's theatre, with a lot of touring throughout South Africa.

She visited the United Kingdom in 2004 with the Action Transport Theatre Company's productions of Dumisane's Drum and Tselane's Song.

"The scriptwriters have made Lu's character authentic – her role reflects how a lot of teenagers have to make the transition from a school environment to making their way – and mark - in the real world," says 23-year-old Noxie, who says she shares a lot of similar character traits with Lu.

Besides acting, Sagittarian Noxie also sings; dances; drums; composes music; writes song lyrics and poetry. She still intends to study law in the future.

New Faces; New Stories; New Dreams  
Backstage weekdays @ 6.30pm

For photos of Nqoba and Noxie, please contact:

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