



Press Release

Scandal Swingers **Monday to Thursday @ 7.30pm**

The Voice's feature writer Samantha Young (Candice Derman) and her ever-so-straight advertising manager boyfriend, Andrew McBain (Ashley Dowds) will swing hot and cold, high and low on Scandal screens over the next few weeks.

Their sexual adventures begin with gold card-glam couple Paris and Zuko Zondi, played by Lala Tuku nee Monamodi and Hugh Masebenza, respectively.

"Zuko is a highly successful entrepreneur who appreciates the finer things in life. He's a Black Economic Empowerment product who is making his mark in the corporate world and loving it," comments Hugh.

Lala draws a picture of the uninhibited couple: "The Zondi's are very rich and have lots of time on their hands and they have an open relationship in which they get to do things that other people cannot do if committed to each other. They don't conform to the norm, which I know will raise a lot of questions and eyebrows.

"Paris is a serious socialite. She has a 'life is all about fun attitude' that is a luxury for most of us in real life because we have jobs and families and all sorts of everyday pressures to deal with. I like the fact that she is smart and confident. We definitely don't have a lot in common except for the fact that we're both married. I have kids

however, and I would never agree to an open relationship, “ comments Lala.

Although Hugh may play a rich man on the small screen, in real life he is a humble person who knows what it's like to hit rock bottom. "My career has spanned over a decade and in those years I've taken a life lesson from each experience," comments Hugh.

In 2001, just when his career was picking up, he started going through a rough patch and was a victim of an industry rumour that he was doing drugs. "I'm not going to deny that I might have taken drugs at some stage but I was much younger then and, like my peers, I was experimenting," adds Hugh.

But the rumour didn't go away and did more damage than he thought it would. "Suddenly people didn't want to hire me. I was in debt and unemployed. My house and car were repossessed and I was homeless. A friend of mine took me in and a couple of people gave me money," he says. Hugh has since managed to get his life back on track. Hugh reckons he's probably one of only a few actors in South Africa who can claim to have appeared in every local soapie.

Extremely extroverted and sporty as a child, it was then when Lala also discovered her love for acting. She studied at the National School of Arts and at AFDA (The South African School of Motion Picture Medium and Live Performance). She has performed in Dawn Lindberg's, "Wanna Be Gonna Be" musical at The Civic Theatre and Deon Opperman's "Le Shebeen", which toured venues like the Grahamstown National Arts Festival and the KKNK in Oudtshoorn. In 2004, she appeared in the Market Theatre production, "Shreds and Dreams".

"Getting the role for Paris was a bit weird," adds Lala. "I originally auditioned for the part of Nirvana's lawyer, Sibongile, and the casting director told me I was good but there was a different character that he had in mind for me. He wasn't just blowing me off because a few weeks later I got the call..."

Hugh will perform in a play called, "Truth and Translation", which is scheduled to open at The Market Theatre in June to coincide with

Youth Day. "The story is based on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission but it's a musical with all the music written by Hugh Masekela. We also hope to tour Palestine, Sierra Leone and Rwanda," he says.

Hugh's also fund-raising for his movie titled, "Heads on the Rise". "It's also a musical based on different local cultures and will promote all local African languages. I've secured great sponsorship but it's not enough to cover all the costs. We'll start shooting as soon as I have enough money."

Lala says the biggest challenge about Paris is the explanation (and possible defence) of her character to family and friends. "People see you on TV and always associate your character with you as a person and don't get that you are two totally different people. I struggle with Paris' morals, but then again, it's not really me doing what she does."

Erotic exploration or evil exploitation - on Scandal it's always a see-saw of swings and roundabouts – Mondays to Thursdays @ 7.30pm.

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