



Press Release

IT'S SHOWTIME! (In The Front Office with Nhlanhla Baloyi) **SCANDAL! MONDAY-THURSDAY @ 7.30PM**

Meet Nhlanhla Baloyi (played by Litha Bam), a new and gay character who replaces Tamia Bardill (Renate Stuurman) as the front-line receptionist for the shared offices of the weekly newspaper, The Voice and the fortnightly celeb magazine, Scandal!

He's had to take on this regular day job because, as a dancer, he's currently "resting between performances" (read out of work and out of money). He's a nephew to the former office messenger, now turned private investigator, Fana Baloyi (Welile Nzuza).

His role is crucial. Not only because every office need a receptionist for constant and reliable backup, but also for the unofficial channel of gossip, rumours and tip offs. And Nhlanhla fits the role beautifully. So well in fact, that even our macho publisher and empire builder, Vusi Zwane (Siyabonga Twala) takes to him and becomes his role model.

"Nhlanhla is a straight up kinda guy (excuse the pun) and there isn't any pretence with him. His family knows that he is gay, and although they might be in denial about it, he is comfortable about who he is," says Litha.

"The fact that Nhlanhla is a gay character excites me in that there isn't really a similar character on any local South African TV series. A black gay guy is rarely seen on our small screens and now he will be in a daily drama, so the responsibility is to make him believable and balanced.

"Nhlanhla needs to control himself a bit when it comes to his aspirations to become a performer. I don't trust that he won't jump over the counter and do a song and dance routine – much to Vusi's horror – because he's a bit of a wild one. However, he gets along well with everyone and tries to make the office environment a happy one," says Litha.

"I know it's going to be weird as people will associate me with the character I portray. I don't know how that will go down, as yet," he says. Although he's made cameo appearances on several prominent TV shows and been in commercials, Scandal! is his biggest career break yet, reveals Litha.

Litha was born in u-Mthatha in the Eastern Cape, but grew up in the sleepy town of Port Elizabeth where he lived with his parents and brother. Always a keen performer, young Litha took a liking to acting (and singing and dancing) whilst still in school where he was cast regularly in school productions. He and his family moved to Johannesburg in 1994 when he was ten-years-old.

"It really started making sense to me in high school that I was born to perform, and there again, I continued to be involved in as many plays as possible. The most exciting thing about choosing this career path for myself - aside from the fact that I can't see myself doing anything else - is that one gets to take on different personas.

"I'm excited about the future. This is something I've wanted to do all my life and it is finally coming together nicely."

A Taurean, Litha loves all kinds of music - from Soul, Hip-Hop, and R&B to pure club dance - and movies. In an upcoming Scandal storyline Nhlanhla will eventually fall in love with somebody in the office.

For further information and pictures please contact:

Thabo Makeleni

e.tv Publicity Writer

Tel: 011 537 9399

Email: thabo.makeleni@etv.co.za