



Press Release

IT'S SHOWTIME **ON BACKSTAGE!**

Thursday, September 1 at 6.30pm

It's Vulindlela College's cultural event of the year, epitomising everything that Backstage stands for... Yes, it's the Backstage Musical, titled *Lust For Dance*, an event put on by the college students to showcase their unique dancing, acting and musical talents, and it's coming to your screens shortly.

On Stage... New stars have joined the cast of Backstage and they come to the fore in this enthralling student production. The musical features hot, talented Lerato (Tahirih). She is the lead singer in this spectacular show, and her beautiful voice will take your breath away. Backed by a chorus, and supported by fellow lead Gyles (Ryan Laatz), she sings two songs, the opening and a love song. Both are performed with Gyles. The opening song, *Vuka Afrika*, is about the unification of nations and people of Africa and the love song is called, *I'm Yours*. Backstage's new musical director, Wikus Du Toit, wrote, composed and arranged both songs.

Another star in the making is Shaka (Quincy Myeza), Vulindlela's resident cleaner. He has a dream beyond his cleaning duties, and he gets a chance to reach for it when college student Duma (Leroy Gopal) is injured, and it is Shaka's awesome dancing ability that saves the musical from being cancelled. He steps into Duma's role and, with the help of Melissa (Mari Michael), Charmaine (Lorcia Cooper) and Carmen (Michele Levin), delivers an inspiring performance.

Naomi (Thahira Syed) directs the musical, in the face of many obstacles. and with her passion, drive and innovative ideas, she inspires the students to reach beyond themselves and grasp their dreams of success. From her first day at the college, Vulindlela's dynamic new acting coach caused waves with her forthright manner and passionate ideas about how she thinks things should be done. She's making her presence felt at the college and both students and members of the staff feel challenged by her focused commitment and determination.

Behind The Scenes... Romano Gorlei is the director of the musical, which forms part of Thursday's episode. A new set was built, special lighting was used, glitzy costumes designed (the opening act had an urban street theme, and for the finale, there is a Senegalese look with lots of colourful fabrics, sequins and glitter), a music score was written, and Lorcia Cooper (Charmaine) meticulously choreographed the scenes, with the actors spending hours rehearsing their dancing and singing for the show.

Spotlight On... Wikus du Toit was born in Mpumalanga. He studied Drama at the Pretoria Technikon and completed his Masters Degree (cum laude) on the development of Cabaret in South Africa. He also completed a grade VIII in music at UNISA; a course in jazz at the University

of GRAZ in Austria as well as master classes under John Kander, composer of Chicago and Cabaret, at the Tisch School of Arts at New York University. Du Toit has won numerous performing awards including the De Kat/Slurpie award for Best Newcomer, and he is also the recipient of two FNB Vitas for Best Actor. He lives in Johannesburg, is a lecturer in Musical Performance at AFDA (The South African School of Motion Picture Medium and Live Performance) and is a humbled (and slightly post-traumatised) Tsunami-survivor from Thailand.

A Standing Ovation Please! Backstage - The Musical, Thursday, September 1 @ 6.30pm - only on e.

For more information and star-studded photos, please contact:

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