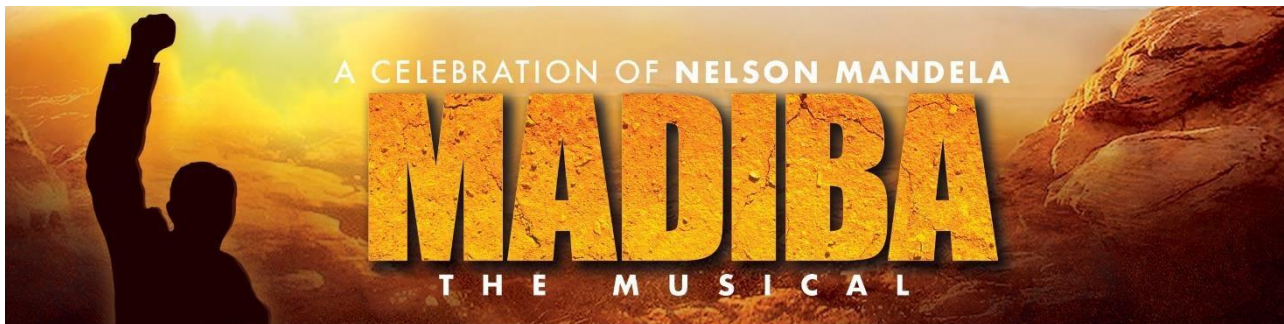


# MEDIA RELEASE



## *A celebration of Nelson Mandela*

### **MADIBA THE MUSICAL CROWN THEATRE, PERTH 2 - 12 JANUARY, 2019 ON SALE 25 JULY**

Energetic and compelling new stage show **Madiba the Musical - a Celebration of the Life of Nelson Mandela** which opens in Melbourne in October and will tour to Sydney and Canberra in November today announce dates for **Perth from 2 to 12 January** and Adelaide from 17 to 20 January.

**Madiba the Musical**, which celebrates the life of the former South African leader who would have turned 100 in July this year, is interwoven with stories of the fight against apartheid and forbidden love in a troubled land.

Australian producer Neil Croker said an exciting line up of talented singers, actors and dancers for **Madiba the Musical** has been assembled with the role of Nelson Mandela being played by **Perci Moeketsi** who was recently announced following an international search.

From a very humble background where a career in the arts was considered nothing but a hobby for a black child, Perci says he's pinching himself that he'll soon be portraying his hero and on an international platform.

The South African star of stage, television and film, *Perci Moeketsi*, dared to dream the impossible, encouraged by Mandela's own words: "It is impossible until it's done".

*"It is beyond a dream come true,"* beams the triple threat from Pretoria, the South African city where Mandela was both imprisoned and later inaugurated as President -- so fitting that a star from this area is chosen for the pivotal role.

Neil Crocker said *"Madiba the Musical is a production with both a fantastic and moving story, and some truly fabulous and joyous music and dance. This cast we have assembled of such authentic and talented actors, singers and dancers will deliver to audiences a memorable night of informative, challenging and uplifting theatre"*.

**Perci** joins **Tim Omaji; Tarisai Vushe; Blake Erickson; Madeline Perrone; Barry Conrad; Ruva Ngwenya; David Denis** along with **Courtney Bell** and **Riley Sutton** to star in this energetic and compelling new stage show.

Popular Australian Actor and singer, **Tim Omaji**, also known by stage name **Timomatic**, plays the role of Sam Onatou, a young black activist who is arrested in South Africa. In prison he meets the man known as "Madiba", Nelson Mandela.

**Tarisai Vushe** plays Sam's fiancée Sandy who works for the family of a white policeman, Peter Van Leden, played by Sydney actor **Blake Erickson**.

**Madeline Perrone** plays the policeman's daughter Helena, who Sandy asks to help free Mandela. **Barry Conrad**, Sandy's younger brother William, falls in love with Helena. As a fictional parallel story to Mandela's work as a lawyer and activist for peace, the romance between young artist Will and white Afrikaans girl Helena tells of the struggle and tragedy of the apartheid regime.

Following her performance as Shirelles lead singer Shirley Owens in the successful national touring production of Beautiful: The Carole King Musical, **Ruva Ngwenya** plays the role of Winnie Mandela.

With music and Lyrics by Jean-Pierre Hadida and book by Jean-Pierre Hadida and Alicia Sebrien, English co-adaptors Dylan Hadida and Dennis Watkins, **Madiba the Musical** Australian Production will be directed by Pierre-Yves Duchesne and associate director Dennis Watkins with musical direction by Michael Tyack and choreography by Johan Nus.

**Sebrien** and **Hadida** said that in creating **Madiba the Musical**, they wanted to tell the story of Mandela's pursuit of peace and reconciliation in his homeland. They said the musical was also timed to mark 25 years since the abolition of apartheid in South Africa, and the year that Mandela would have turned 100 if he was still alive.

The first English language production of **MADIBA the Musical** opens in Australia in October 2018 following acclaimed performances in France, Northern Africa and the West Indies. In 2019 the show is to tour to New Zealand and other international markets soon to be announced.

## **MADIBA THE MUSICAL – National Australian Tour**

### **VENUE AND DATES - TICKETS ON SALE 25 JULY**

**MELBOURNE**                    **3 to 21 October**  
Venue                            **Comedy Theatre**  
Bookings                        **Tickets from \$79**  
[www.ticketmaster.com.au](http://www.ticketmaster.com.au) or 136 100

**SYDNEY**                        **1 to 11 November**  
Venue                            **State Theatre**  
Bookings                        **Tickets from \$79**  
[www.ticketmaster.com.au](http://www.ticketmaster.com.au) or 136 100

**CANBERRA**                    **22 to 24 November**  
Venue                            **Canberra Theatre**  
Bookings                        **Tickets from \$79**  
[www.ticketmaster.com.au](http://www.ticketmaster.com.au) or 136 100

**PERTH**                            **2 Jan to 12 Jan**  
Venue                            **Crown Theatre**  
Bookings                        [www.ticketmaster.com.au](http://www.ticketmaster.com.au) or 136 100

**ADELAIDE**                      **17 to 20 Jan**  
Venue                            **Adelaide Entertainment Centre**  
Bookings                        [Ticketek.com.au](http://Ticketek.com.au) 132 849

[www.madibamusical.com.au](http://www.madibamusical.com.au)

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## Cast members of Madiba the Musical:



### **Perci Moeketsi** as Nelson Mandela

Perci Moeketsi is a Musical Theatre performer and graduate from Hammanskraal - North of the City of Tshwane (Pretoria). His appearance in Top Actor SA helped him gain early television exposure. He was part of Africa's 1st dance film and international award nominated *Hear Me Move*. Theatre has always been his true passion. His first role of note was for a community theatre musical called *Rorisang and Julie*, a township adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* where he

played lead Rorisang (Romeo). This drew the attention of the Tshwane University of Technology and assisted in his acceptance and enrolment in the Musical Theatre program at the age of 26. His most recent theatre performance was in *Gospel Spectacular* as choir lead and ensemble at the Joburg Theatre. He has also performed in the South African State Theatre in shows such as *Fire: A dance show* and *Fok-Fok The Musical* as lead antagonist. He also performed for 2 years (2016-2017) for the pantomime company: Pretoria Youth Theatre in Centurion playing lead roles in shows such as *Pied Piper*, *Aladdin*, *Beauty and the Beast*, etc... Other appearances in TV include SA's Got Talent with his dance group: Forefront Dance Crew and appearing with the choir he was conducting on Dumisa (Praise). Perci also enjoys writing his own stories, directing, choreography and song writing with rapping being one of his fortes. Motivational speaking and community development is also at the heart of his work, being from an unforgiving humble background, he understands the plight of a lot of the children.



**Tim Omaji** as Sam Onatou

Tim Omaji is an Australian singer-songwriter and dancer who secured his first leading musical theatre role as Tyrone in 2010 in the Australian touring production of *Fame the Musical*. Widely recognised by his stage name Timomatic, Tim rose to fame as a contestant on TV show *So You Think You Can Dance* in 2009. He was a top 3 finalist on *Australia's Got Talent* in 2011 and released his 4 times platinum ARIA nominated single *Set It Off* through Sony Music Australia. His latest musical offering 'Mash It Up' premiered on Channel 7's *Dance Boss* and he will perform in 'In The Heights' at the Hayes Theatre in March.



**Barry Conrad** as William Xulu

Barry Conrad takes a leading role in *MADIBA The Musical* following his performances in acclaimed production *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*. Barry also toured nationally playing Seaweed in *Hairspray Arena Spectacular* in 2016, and in 2017 he had the role of Kenickie in *Grease: The Arena Experience*. Barry made his musical theatre debut in the Australian premiere production of Broadway smash *Violet* which had critically-acclaimed seasons in Melbourne and Sydney.



**Ruva Ngwenya** as Winnie Mandela

RUVA is an Australian based singer/actor of Zimbabwean descent. At age five she showed signs of exceptional musicianship and went on to study at Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School. In 2013 she went on to the top 6 Girls Category of Australia's *XFactor Series*. Ruva was cast as Shenzi in the celebrated Disney musical *The Lion King*. She understudied Killer Queen in the Australian 2016 national tour of *We Will Rock You*, followed by The Production Company's *Dusty the Musical*. Most recently, Ruva was seen in the original Australian cast of *Beautiful: the Carole King Musical*. In 2017, Ruva was a top 24 finalist for season 6 of *The Voice* and has released an original EP *Humble Brag*.



**Tarisai Vushe** as Sandy Xulu

Tarisai Vushe travelled from Zimbabwe to Australia in her mid-teens and studied music theatre at the Australian Institute of Music. Following her 5<sup>th</sup> place success in TV series *Australian Idol* she launched her debut single *Head Over Heels* in 2010. In 2017 Tarisai secured her first professional musical theatre role in the touring Australian production of Disney musical *The Lion King*.



**Blake Erickson** as Peter Van Leden

Blake recently toured with the international production of Cameron Mackintosh's *Les Misérables*. Prior to this he made his New York debut leading the cast of *Stalker: The Musical* at the Lynn Redgrave Theater. Recent credits include *High Fidelity*, *Melba*, and his acclaimed cabaret *Hold Me Closer Logies Dancer*, all at Sydney's Hayes Theatre. For his performance in the title role of the one-man show *Pearls Before Swine: An Evening With Orson Welles* (Neil Gooding Productions), he won Best Actor at the inaugural Sydney Fringe Festival Awards before embarking on a national tour.



**Madeline Perrone** as Helena Van Leden

Madeline's involvement in the industry began at a young age, placing 3<sup>rd</sup> in *Australia's Got Talent* at just 12 years old. Madeline's training includes Film and TV at NYCDA and graduated from The American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York City. Her first role out of college was Bonnie Parker in *Bonnie and Clyde*, winning a *Broadway World Award of Best Actress in a Musical* (regional, national and touring). Madeline toured *Fiddler on the Roof* (TML Enterprises) as Shprintze (Hodel Cover) after returning from shows in the USA as Wendy in Disney's *Peter Pan* and *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*. Other credits include *Curtains* (The Production Co.), *Peppa Pig's Big Splash* (Life Like Company), *Disneyland*, *Universal Studios*, *Rock Rhapsody* (Good Egg Creative) aboard cruise lines and she was a semi-finalist in the Rob Guest Endowment award (2016)



**David Denis** as The Narrator

David Denis began dance training at fifteen years of age under the guidance of the Howard sisters at Sydney's Brent Street studios where he later completed the certificate IV in performing arts. David went on a National Tour with The Ambassador group production *Ghost: The Musical*. David appeared for Disney in *The Lion King* for four years in Australia and on The West End, London. For GFO he has played Boom-Boom Johnson in *Legends!* and the role of Tyrone in Kelley Abbey's *Fame: The Musical*. For Opera Australia David featured as Seabee in *South Pacific*. On screen David has played Jean-Michel Basquiat in Jim Sharman's film *Andy X*, and he worked with Peter Jackson on *King Kong* in the role of Taps. In recent years, David has had success as a contemporary dancer working alongside Kylie Minogue, Natalie Bassingthwaite, Taylor Swift and Guy Sebastian. David is also a

rapper, singer and song writer under the name Davey.