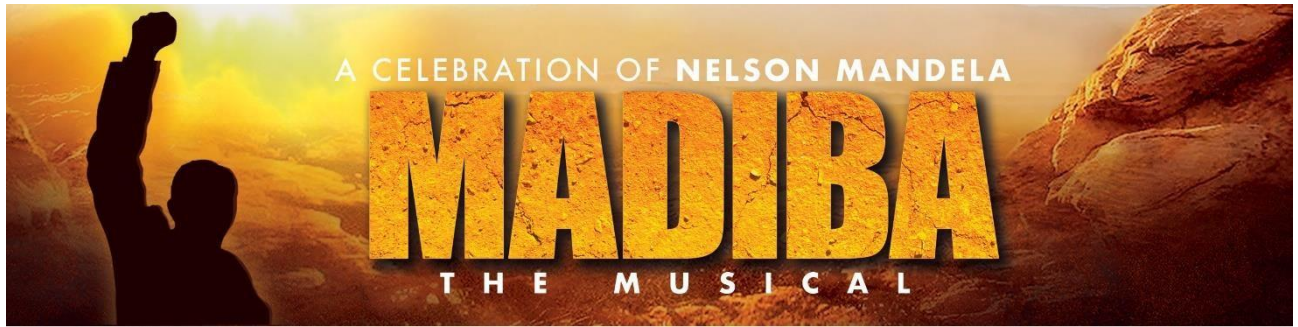


MEDIA RELEASE



A celebration of Nelson Mandela

MADIBA The Musical

FOLLOWING AN EXTENSIVE WORLD-WIDE SEARCH SOUTH AFRICAN PERCI MOEKETSI ANNOUNCED TO PLAY NELSON MANDELA.

Following an extensive international search, creators of the compelling new stage show **MADIBA The Musical**, today announced **Perci Moeketsi** will play the role of Nelson Mandela.

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".

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.

"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.

Madiba The Musical producer Neil Croker said *"After an extensive search, we are very pleased to add such an authentic and believable actor as Perci Moeketsi to the exciting line up of talented singers, actors and dancers now confirmed for MADIBA The Musical."*

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 NOW ON SALE

MELBOURNE **3 to 21 October**
Venue **Comedy Theatre**
Bookings **Tickets from \$79**
 www.ticketmaster.com.au
 or 136 100

SYDNEY **1 to 11 November**
Venue **State Theatre**
Bookings **Tickets from \$79**
 www.ticketmaster.com.au
 or 136 100

CANBERRA **22 to 24 November**
Venue **Canberra Theatre**
Bookings **Tickets from \$79**
 www.ticketmaster.com.au
 or 136 100

www.madibamusical.com.au

@MadibaMusicalAU

#MadibaMusicalA

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

NATIONAL and MELBOURNE

CAVANAGH PR

Julie Cavanagh M: 0419 306 540 or julie@cavpr.com.au

Larissa Anderson M: 0419 348 938 or larissa@cavpr.com.au

SYDNEY and CANBERRA

POLLACK CONSULTING: Bruce Pollack (02) 9331 5276 or bruce@pollackconsulting.com

AB PUBLICITY: Amanda Buckworth M: 0413 949 140 or amanda@abpublicity.com.au

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.



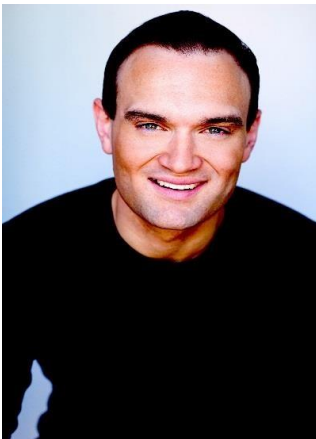
Ruva Ngwenya as Winnie Mandela

RUVA is an Australian based singer/actor of Zimbabwean decent. 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 5th 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 3rd 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.