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MANDISI SINDO
The doctor of theatre

PHOTO CREDITS
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Photography

<http://ngunifiedstudio.co.za/>

[March 2017] features an actor, writer, director, voice-over artist and creator of site-specific artworks. The artistic director of Theatre4Change Arts Project and is passionate for helping young people gain the necessary skills for tertiary-level ed...

Bhut' please introduce yourself to the people...

Before I introduce myself, I would like to take this moment and thank you guys for this platform. It is indeed a pleasure.

I was born Mandisi Sindo kwilali yaseSihlabeni, eCofimvaba, in the Eastern Cape. Where I was taken care of by my mother's older sister, uNomakhazi Qolombeni, while my biological mother was working in the city of Cape Town in order to provide for the family.

In 1996 I relocated to Cape Town to stay with my mother, uNomayilo Sindo, eKhayelitsha informal settlements known as TR Section. I went to uMmangaliso Primary School where I received my diplomatic pass in standard B, then to Vuyiseka High School, before I enrolled to further my studies in Theatre and Performance at the University of Cape Town.

What inspired you to get into Art and Performance?

At home we are four men, Ntsikelelo, Zuko, myself and Emihle, but I am the only one who got fascinated with performing art.

I grew up a very naughty, playful and energetic boy. It was in 1998 and I was doing Grade 5 when a group called **Ikhwezi Theatre Company** came to our primary school to do a fundraising performance for their show that they were taking to France. They performed for us, with disbelief I was sitting there watching how bodies can transform and how these people told their stories using their bodies, monologues and dialogues. I did not know those names then but fell in love with what I was watching.

I couldn't stop talking about it as we were all blown away. So, we asked our class teacher to help us find the group back to our school to teach us too. Fortunately, among the group there was this guy who was outstanding and loved development so much and his name is **Zimasa May** also known as Ras.

Zimasa would come to our school every day after school just to teach us drama. We would sing, dance, recite and start forming productions. We had plays such as **Mgoduse**, **Three Rats** and **What's Energy** to name a few. From 1998 - 2001 we were performing in crèches around Khayelitsha and in 2002 our first public show was at **Andile Msizi** competing with other schools during Energy Festival. That is when I and **Abongile Kroza** were the highlight of the event. We scooped awards and since then we vowed that this is our calling and we will never stop. We then formed a group known as **Young Performers Drama Group**.

Do you have a preference for theatre or film?

I do prefer theatre over film, it speaks to me and it feels original. I have done a number of television work as a presenter, actor and featured in commercials, but theatre still does it for me. It's raw, it doesn't limit, and it's the real reflection of life. Everything in theatre is believable.

And yes, there is money in theatre and more money in industrial theatre.



If you had a dream role you wish to play, what would it be?

Growing up, people used to say I lookalike with legendary actor Menzi Ngubane and later I changed some started to say I lookalike with Desmond Dube. Before *Generations the legacy* I wanted to play Sibusiso Dlomo's younger brother, especially in 2010 when his (Menzi Ngubane) heart attack story started to hit the media. I was worrying, thinking he would die before that dream becomes a reality. I would still love to do something with him. He inspired me and I enjoyed his acting way before *Generations*. One of his characters that made me enjoy his work the most was when he played uMazwi in *Ubambo Lwami*.

My dream role now is to play a young man from eKasi who told himself that he will never leave iKasi even if he becomes a millionaire. I wanna play ME. Lol

Please tell us about Theatre4Change?

Theatre4Change Arts Project is a Non-Profit Organization I founded in 2010 and it's based eKhayelitsha, in Cape Town. We are working with and for upcoming and professional artists across South Africa. Its board members include Mbulelo Grootboom, Asanda Rilityana, Khayaletu Anthony, Zanele Azuza Radu and I. We intend to provide performance platforms, mentorship programs and skill building sessions for artists and the communities in need. We seek to see a drug free society and to reignite the spirit of the arts in the townships.

We also run programs for women such as **Healing and Teaching Females Workshop** in May and we organize the annual **Amazing Women Arts event** where female directors, writers, performers and Conceptualizers are given an opportunity to voice out their thoughts.

As our align says, "**Healing Souls through Theatre**". Our intention is to heal artists by proving platform, creative jobs and give back the skills we've got.

Who's Abongile Kroza and why the One-handers festival?

Abongile Kroza was one influential artist who dedicated his life into nurturing and training young people the arts and sending them to study further in different Institutions in any situations. He was a warrior, man of a kind and a friend. He was the **Zakumi** mascot during South Africa 2010 World Cup entertaining fans and players at Cape Town Green Point stadium and performed in quite few productions after graduating with distinction at the University of Cape Town.

He discovered and mentored at lot artists in and around Cape Town, but kuthwa "**isitya esihle asidleli**" and he unfortunately passed away from a car accident in Macassar on his way to Somerset Mall.

2017 mark five years after we have lost an influential artist in the industry, an actor, director, music producer, visual artist and youth developer and a good friend. This year we honor him, we celebrate his life and achievements with what he enjoyed the most THEATRE.

Abongile Kroza
One-Handers Festival (AKOF)
24-26 March 2017
Makukhanye Art Room
Khayelitsha
10am - Late

Directors: Lamia Ntseluba, Thendo Doni, Khayaletu Mofu, Sindile Meebenzi, Melissa Peter, Mandla Mpanjulewa and Ayanda Haas
 Performers: Lamia Ntseluba, Siv Dunjwa, Mxolisi Boaman, Siye Poni, Melissa Peter, Luke Bye and Ayanda Haas.
 Support Acts: I-Liso Art Media, Matic, Turn Up Boys, Cadanza, King Kiteo uMakoya, Mbu Gg, Amapite and many more

Abongile Kroza One-Handers Festival on 24-26 March 2017 at the Makukhanye Art Room.

What in your mind is the theatre industry in SA missing, especially in the townships?

Unfortunately, our industry is fully of lies, nepotism, racism, sexism, exploitation, I can go on and on. It hurts the most to see young black stars not getting the recognition they deserve because of what I have mentioned above. When Steve Biko said, "Blackmen you on your own" he knew that times like these would come and a Black person in the townships will die in the shacks.

Shacks and community artists will become victims of exploitation. Fanon said, "Each generation must find its mission and fulfill it or destroy it". It's time young people take a lead and dismantle South African freedom chapter and constitution because it is full of lies. It makes those who are voiceless more voiceless, those who are rich get richer and the poorer stays poor. We need to act and fix our Industry and Voice out our thoughts and report those who create tension in it and effective decision must be taken about them. There is so much in the grass than in the so-called the professional world.

I so wish black artists, businessmen/women and black dignitaries can find it in their hearts and help the black communities and their initiatives that help in decreasing crimes and criminals. We live in a society where our parents are in fear because young people have become vultures. We need their help to intervene and support these young people.

You've had opportunities to showcase your talent abroad and again you have another trip lined up later this month, please tell us about that...

My first visit outside South Africa was in 2009 in India where I did Mcebeki by Pieter Dick Uys and I went to America to do The Lesson by Eugene O'neill, last year in Sept I was invited to a conference in Belgium to speak about my work Mari&Kana and other pieces I have created to Remove Apartheid in South Africa.

In March, I will be in Switzerland, Zurich where I am invited by Urban-Think Tank to speak about Theatre4Change and the Makukhanye Art Room. There is a Shack Theatre based in Khayelitsha called Makukhanye Art Room, which we are working hard to acquire funds to build a new theatre Khayelitsha where it is situated. Khayelitsha is one of the biggest township in South Africa with no arts centre nor a theatre. Artists and community members had to build this Shack Theatre for their kids to have a space to practice their art.

The Shack Theatre reverently been awarded at the 52nd **Fluer Du Cap** Awards at Artscape for its INNOVATIVE WORK that has been doing for the township professional and amateur artists. So, on this trip I will be doing a presentation about the Makukhanye trying to get funds from the funders and supporters who are in the event.

So What's that one thing or two you would like the world to remember you of?

Selfishness and Love for Black Artists.

What projects do you have lined up for the rest of 2017?

24 - 26 March: 1 annual AKOF (Abongile Kroza One-Handers Festival).

27 May and 24 June: 4th annual Healing and Teaching Females Workshop.

18 July: 5th annual Vuka Mandela Theatrical Magic

09 August: 4th annual AWAE (Amazing Women Arts Event)

Between May - September: 4th implementation of Kasi-2-Kasi Public Art Festival in Kraaifontein

To be part of these annual events and festival please follow us on our Facebook page: Theatre4Change Arts Project, theatre4changetherapeutics@gmail.com

 [Theatre4Change Arts Project](#)

Photos by: [@sithembelejr](#)

