



MBONGENI NGEMA'S

# ASINAMALI



# **Production Notes**

**Department of Trade and Industry**

**M-Net**

**And**

**Dual Films**

**In association with**

**The KwaZulu-Natal Film Commission**

**and**

**National Film and Video Foundation**

**And**

**Afrika Productions Trust**

**Funded by the National Lotteries Commission**

**Present**

**A Committed Artists Production**

**In association with Indigenous Film**

**An Mbongeni Ngema Film**

## **ASINAMALI**

**Danica De La Rey**

**Boitumelo Shisana**

**Luzuko Nqeto**

**Tertius Meintjes**

**Sbu Ngema**

**Gerard Rudolf**

**Dikeledi Letebele**

**Sibusiso Kotelo**

**Bhekithemba Zwane**

**Moses Mahlangu  
Congo Hadebe  
Kere Nyawo  
And Mbongeni Ngema as “Comrade”**

**Written, Produced and Directed by**

**MBONGENI NGEMA**

**Executive Producer**

**DAVID DISON**

**Producers**

**CHRISTIANNE BENNETTO**

**DARRELL ROODT**

**Associate Producers**

**HELEN KUUN**

**THANDEKILE MQADI**

**AFRIKA NGEMA**

**BRIONY HORWITZ**

**MWELI MZIZI**

**HARRY HOFMEYR**

**TARIKU BOGALE**

**Director of Photography**

**DINO BENEDETTI**

**Production Designer**

**SAMANTHA LOTTER DELL**

**Costume Designer**

**ANDREW PHIRI**

**Make Up and Hair Designer**

**ANGELINE BOSHOFF**

**Choreographers**

**NOMPUMELELO GUMEDE NGEMA**

**DAVID MATAMELA**

**VUSI MAJOLA**

## Synopsis

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One of South Africa's greatest classic theatre productions, *Asinamali* has been immortalised in film.

The story follows Comrade Washington (Mbongeni Ngema) who returns to South Africa in 1986 to create a prison theatre project. Washington believes in the power of music and theatre to transform the lives of people: the political activists, the criminals and offenders who find themselves incarcerated. He guides the inmates, silenced by the brutal prison authorities, as well as their sadistic, ruthless warden Sergeant Mgwaqaza (Boitumelo Chuck Shisana) to act and sing out the stories of their lives.

The tale has its roots in the height of the rent boycotts of the 1980s. In Durban's oldest township of Lamontville, a community leader called Msizi Dube rose up and launched a campaign under the slogan 'Asinamali' (we have no money). Dube was shot by unknown assassins in 1983. The story shows how the prisoners portrayed were all connected to Dube in some way, including Bheki (Luzuko Nqeto), who is in for attempting to murder Dube's assassin.

Under Washington's leadership, the prisoners recount through word, song and dance the events which have brought them there. The prison authorities are threatened by their play and they bring the project to an end, punishing the cast. The group continue to sing until the entire prison joins them in a chorus of protest. The authorities relent and let them perform the play, but without Soweto (Danica de la Rey), the love of Washington's life. Having found her languishing in the prison he loses her again as she is transferred to death row at Pretoria Central for violent political crimes.

The ensemble cast also includes Congo Hadebe, Moses Mahlangu, Gerhard Rudolph, Luzuko Nqeto, Sbu Ngema, Kere Nyawo, and Sibusiso Kotelo.

## About the Film

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Produced by Ngema, Oscar nominated director Darrell James Roodt, Dual Films and the prolific Christianne Bennetto, the film version of this seminal musical is in the hands of a hand-picked South African crew and cast. Roodt directed the smash hit film version of *Sarafina!*

Ngema himself is the most seasoned theatrical, writer, director, choreographer and composer to come out of South Africa. In this latest collaboration, Roodt has taken on the role of technical director, sharing his directing knowledge and skill, and working alongside Ngema who is at the helm of a production to which he has dedicated many years of his life.

The 1985 theatre production by famous playwright, choreographer, composer, director and producer Mbongeni Ngema was his first major stage musical, followed by *Sarafina!* which was released as a film in 1992.

A local and international success, *Asinamali* is a show of immense vitality, sadness and humour, combining exhilarating dance and acting with awe-inspiring choral music. The play had a sold-out run at The Market Theatre before appearing on Broadway in New York, and throughout the world, winning numerous awards along the way. Ngema is seeking to preserve the classic play by turning it into a film that will be available for generations to come.

Ngema recorded the film's sound track at Downtown Studios. It comprises 12 hit songs from the show, with notable contributors including the KZN Philharmonic Orchestra and Ladysmith Black Mambazo, together with singers and dancers from Committed Artists, Mbongeni's theatrical company based in Durban.

*Asinamali* will be distributed in South Africa by Indigenous Film Distribution.

## Biographies – Cast

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### **MBONGENI NGEMA – Comrade Washington, writer, producer director**

Mbongeni Ngema is a renowned playwright, screenwriter and librettist. He is best known as the writer of the internationally acclaimed and award-winning musical *Sarafina!*, which was nominated for five Tony Awards, and later for the prestigious Grammy Awards. The musical won 11 NAACP Image Awards enjoyed a two-year run on Broadway, toured the USA, Europe, Australia and Japan, and was later adapted into a feature film starring Whoopi Goldberg, Leleti Khumalo and Miriam Makeba.

Ngema has had a string of blockbusters behind his name, including the award-winning and internationally revered *Woza Albert*, *Township Fever* (1990), which travelled from the Market Theatre to the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Majestic Theatre in the US, *Mama* (1995), *Asinamali* (1996), *Maria Maria* (1997), *The Zulu – The Musical* (1999), *1906 Bhambada The Freedom Fighter*, *The House of Shaka* (2005) and *The Lion of the East* (2006).

In 1998, Ngema was inducted in the New York Walk of Fame in front of the Lucille Lortel Theatre in Manhattan, as one of the revered writers of the 21st century. In 2001, during the African Renaissance festival, his name was engraved on the entrance of the City Hall in Durban alongside those of Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Miriam Makeba and other heroes of the liberation struggle.

As a librettist, Ngema has written the musical soundtrack for *Sarafina - The Movie* and produced the movie's soundtrack alongside Quincy Jones. He has composed several music albums, including the famous and locally loved album *Stimela SaseZola*. Ngema has written and arranged numerous songs as well as arranged music for artists such as Michael Bolton. He was also one of the vocal arrangers for *The Lion King*, Disney's animated film. For this, he received a multi-platinum award for sales of more than six million copies. He subsequently won a Grammy Award for the movie adaptation. "Woza My Fohloza", the new millennium song, and several albums of his musicals are on Ngema's librettist list.

Ngema was awarded an honorary doctorate from the Good Shepherd College of Religion, Divine Agriculture and Skills Training in KwaZulu-Natal. This was in recognition of his service to South African music and his ongoing impact in the arts sector. Ngema is also the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award, presented to him at the Naledi Awards ceremony held in Johannesburg in 2014.

### **BOITUMELO 'CHUCK' SHISANA -- Sergeant Mgwaqaza**

Boitumelo "Chuck" Shisana is a South African actor best known for his role as Willy Phoma in the SABC2 medical drama series *Hillside*, from 2006-2008. He also played the role of Frank in the e.tv soapie *Rhythm City* and had a guest starring role in the third season of the SABC2 sitcom *Ga Re Dumele*. In 2014, he appeared in the theatre production *Silent Voice* directed by Aubrey Sekhabi.

**DANICA DE LA REY – Soweto**

Danica de la Rey has a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of South Africa (Unisa), majoring in Communication and Media Studies. An actress, dancer and writer she starred in music radio station, Jacaranda FM's More Music You Love, the first radio simulcast live lip sync billboard, created by ad agency Halo. She has also appeared in the film *The Number*, based on Jonny Steinberg's eponymous book.

**LUZUKO NQETO – Bheki**

Luzuko Nqeto is an actor, known for *Little One* (2013), directed by Darrell James Roodt. He also appeared in the role of Cedric in the SABC 1 youth drama series *Tsha*, from 2004 to 2006.



## Biographies – Crew

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### **DARRELL JAMES ROODT – Producer**

South African film director Darrell James Roodt made an international name for himself with the debut feature *A Place of Weeping* (1986), a passionate condemnation of apartheid. Educated at the University of the Witwatersrand, he gained further acclaim for *The Stick* (1988). In 1990, he made his first film with American backing, *Jobman*, which opened The London Film Festival. One of Roodt's best known films is his adaptation of the anti-apartheid stage musical *Sarafina!* (1992), starring Whoopi Goldberg.

He was nominated for an Oscar for his film *Yesterday* in 2004. He has made over 20 features, working with Oscar nominated actors such as James Earl Jones, Richard Harris, and Melissa Leo. He has also worked successfully with Oscar nominated composers such as John Barry and Phillip Glass.

He has won numerous awards at various festivals throughout the world including a Humanitarian Award at the Venice Film Festival in 2004, as well as the Prime Minister's prize at the Taormina Film Festival in Italy for his outstanding contribution to English language cinema alongside Peter Weir and Stephen Frears.

His most recent film is a big budget biopic of Winnie Mandela starring the Oscar winner Jennifer Hudson and the Oscar nominated Terrence Howard as Winnie and Nelson Mandela.

### **CHRISTIANNE BENNETTO – Producer**

Christianne Bennetto graduated in 2009 from AFDA Film School with a Bachelor's Degree in film producing. She has focused her career on the vital art of finance, without which no film would ever proceed from concept to screen. Bennetto's filmmaking business savvy was spotted by two of South Africa's most prolific, talented and respected filmmakers, producer Anton Ernst and director Darrell James Roodt. Since meeting them, she has worked as production manager, associate producer and producer on 14 independent feature films, including *Little One* (South African official submission for Academy Award Best Foreign Film 2013) and winner of Best International Feature Film at the New York City Film Festival, *Die Ballade van Robbie de Wee, Seun, Verskietende Ster* and *Liewe Kersfeesvader*.

Bennetto is also the recipient of the Los Angeles Women in Film and Television Visionary Award - Best Producer for *Little One*

### **DAVID DISON – Executive Producer**

David Dison is a veteran executive producer and entertainment lawyer based in Johannesburg. He has worked on films including *Sarafina!* (1992), *Cry the Beloved Country* (1995), *The Ghost and the Darkness* (1996), *Inside Out, Mandela and De Klerk* (1997), *Room 9* (2012), *Bloodline: Now or Never* (2017) and now, *Asinamali*. He first worked with Mbongeni Ngema in 1985 when Mbongeni produced *Asinamali* at The Market Theatre in Johannesburg, and has been associated with him ever since.

## CREDITS

Production Manager	Pieter Du Plessis
Technical Director	Darrell James Roodt
1 <sup>st</sup> Assistant Director	Chris van Latum
2 <sup>nd</sup> Assistant Director	Paballo Mthakathi
Continuity	Halala Sabela
Script Editor	Dr Christopher John
Researcher	Irene Cohn
Production Accountant	Elmien van Hees
Director of Photography	Dino Benedetti
Sound Recordist	Hendre Jacobs
Focus Puller	Willem Engelbrecht
Focus Puller B Camera	Khaya Jali
Focus Puller B Camera	Paul Gruyere
Focus Puller B Camera	Evert van Heerden
2 <sup>nd</sup> AC	Evert van Heerden
2 <sup>nd</sup> AC	Dimitris Savva
VT Operator	Gareth Salmon
Steadicam Operator	Deon Vermeulen
Data Wrangler	Briony Macleod
Key Grip	Gerrit van Zyl
Best Boy Grip	Bongani Sibeko
Gaffer	JP Du Preez
Best Boy Lighting	Zakhele Mavuso
Spark	Eric Phakati
Spark	JP Walkinsaw
Genie operator	Given Masampu
Costume Designer	Andrew Phiri
Wardrobe Mistress	Mabel Mofokeng
Wardrobe Standby	Cate Temo
Production Designer	Samantha Lotter Dell
Art Director	Hannes Oosthuizen
Art department standby	Lerato Ntswele
Key Make-up and Hair	Angeline Boshoff
Make up Assistant	Anika Pretorius
Stunt coordinator	Jenn Robinson
	Leon Breytenbach
Armorer	Kevin White
Paramedic	Paul Murphy
Locations Manager	Bongani Khumalo
Unit/Locations assistant	Thabo Hlubi
Catering	Karin Van Wyk
Stills Photographer	Suzy Bernstein
Editor	Lucian Barnard
Post Production Supervisor	Leon Gerber
Editors Assistant	Paballo Mthakathi
Colorist	Lourens Smit

Sound Mixer  
Re-recording Mixer  
Composer

Hendre Jacobs  
Alun Richards  
Chris Letcher

## Cast

Bheki  
Sergeant Nel  
Sergeant Khumalo  
Sergeant Mgwaqaza  
Mr X  
Bhoyi  
Bra Tony  
Thami  
Hammerman  
Shoe Shine  
Soweto  
Angel  
Msizi Dube  
Salamina  
Man # 1  
Man # 2  
Shebeen Queen  
Big guy  
Comrade Washington  
Colonel Du Toit  
KGB Officer  
Barney Simon  
Guard # 1  
Guard # 2  
Warder # 1  
Warder # 2  
Warder # 3  
Warder # 4  
Mrs van Niekerk  
Mr van Niekerk  
Boss Boy  
Foreman  
Store owner  
White man # 2  
Spectator # 1  
Spectator # 2  
Spectator # 3  
Female Prisoner  
Female Warder  
Maid  
Mickey

Luzuko Nqeto  
Gerard Rudolf  
Bongani Hlophe  
Boitumelo Chuck Shisana  
Moses Mahlangu  
Sbu Ngema  
Kere Nyawo  
Bhekithemba Zwane  
Sibusiso Kotelo  
Congo Hadebe  
Danica De La Rey  
Dikeledi Letebele  
Mfana Hlophe  
Lucia Mthiyane  
Mfana Hlophe  
Brian Mazibuko  
Lindiwe Ndlovu  
Phalanndwa Takalani  
Mbongeni Ngema  
Tertius Meintjies  
Kevin White  
Jonathan Taylor  
Nhlanhla Ngema  
Mpumi Shelembe  
Khulekani Zungu  
Thabile Mzobe  
Cat Mpanza  
Seipathi Sothoane  
Ataliyah Chana  
Altus Theart  
Bheki Mqadi  
Jakkie Groenewald  
Cobus Visser  
Miles Petzer  
Graeme Kriega  
Ayanda Makayi  
Kamogelo Mogale  
Siziwe Ngema  
Velephi Mnisi  
Busiziwe Gumede  
Christopher Khubeka

## Dancers

Tony Banyatsi	Bafana Ngema
Sifiso Ka Mavuso	Nkosana Bembe
Elimza Wildshutte	Mduduzi magagula
Maleshwane Radebe	Nhlakanipho Mkhwanazi
Siphiwe Zungu	Tshegofatso Mafojane
Llewellyn Mnguni	Dumisani Mhlanga
Nonfo Olekeng	Tshepo Mohlabane
Matshidiso Mokoka	Bush Ngubane
Nonkululeko Vilakazi	Vusi Majola
Tshepo Mohomane	Nompumelelo Gumede
Fikile Zikali	Sabelo Ngema
Lindiwe Nene	Manelisi Nkambule
Muziokhanyayo Buthelezi	Vukani Dlamini
Nobuhle Mazibuko	Clive Madlala
Thuli Semela	Sifiso morobe
Sibahle tshibika	Thandiwe Sekhibane
Thandikile Fetiabi	Jacob Bheki Moiloa

## Zulu Dancers

Magwegwe Ntshingila  
Sandile Khumalo  
Thovozi Hlongwane  
Bhekumuzi Hadebe  
Mbongeleni Zondo  
Jerome Mpinga  
Linda Ndawo  
Sakhile Hlongwane  
Mthokozisi Hlobgwane  
Khumbulane Mbhele  
Ntuthuko Ndlovu  
Kwanele Myeni  
Jabulani Makhanya  
Sibusiso Ndlovu  
Sphehile Makhanya  
Zakhele Ndimande  
Sanele Makhanya  
Nkosikhona Sithole  
Nicholas Shandu  
Sipho Nxumalo  
Pinky Mabaso  
Themba Zondo  
Thulane Mbhele  
Simphiwe Zondo  
Mxolisi Msimango  
Musa Masango  
Sibusiso Ndaba  
Mandla Mabaso  
Mlamuli Mnguni  
Mhlaliseni Khumalo  
Jabulani Hlongwane

Njabulo Mdakane  
Zwangaye Hadebe

**Shebeen Band**

Keyboards Butana Ngubeni  
Guitar 1 Mia Malherbe  
Guitar 2 Siya Mnisi  
Drums Mpho November  
Trumpet Thabo Nkala  
Trumpet John Seatlola

Alexander Youth in Action Ensemble

General Extras – Euniki Casting

Final Mix Studio Kwazi Mojo Studio

Completion Bond and Finance Services: Hollard Film Guarantors

Finance Services: UsPlus

Legal and Executive Services: Media and Broadcasting Consultants

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KZN Film Commission  
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Joy Mawela  
Peter Kwele  
Xolelwa Nomgca

Nothile Sibisi  
Yonela Nxokwana  
Thandekile Sishange

Indigenous Film Distribution

Helen Kuun  
Jana Erasmus  
Cenetta Wagner  
David Alex Wilson

Media Film Services

Wiseman Nciweni  
Gideon Furst  
Hayley Chater

Constitution Hill  
Maggie Moeketsi  
Zenande Tyalimpi

The Gauteng Film Commission

Andile Mbeki  
Desmond Mthembu  
Joyce Pekane

Emoyeni Conference Centre

Nonhlanhla Mavie  
Lorraine Segone

Carolyn Steyn  
Brendan Grealy

67 Blankets for Nelson Mandela Day

Mr and Mrs Oosthuizen

Steven Goldblatt  
Motty Sacks  
Anke Gerber  
Shelley Horwitz

## **SOUNDTRACK**

Music Producer/Composer/ Arranger - Mbongeni Ngema

Arranger 1. - Eddie Mathiba

Arranger 2. - Brian Thusi

Sound Engineer 1. - Oyama Songo

Sound Engineer 2. - Ian Osrin

## **BACKING VOCALISTS**

Backing Vocals 1. - Stella Khumalo

Backing Vocals 2. - Siziwe Ngema

Backing Vocals 3. - Mandisa Dlanga

Backing Vocals 4. - Nompumelelo Gumede

Backing Vocals 5. - Sonto Khumalo

Backing Vocals 6. - Sabelo Ngema

Backing Vocals 7. - Sergeant Malishe

Backing Vocals 8. - Zolani Maseko

Backing Vocals 09. - Ladysmith Black Mambazo

## **SOLOISTS**

Soloist 1. - Velephi Mnisi

Soloist 2. - Dikeledi Litebele

Soloist 3. - Khanyo Maphumulo

Soloist 4. - Vusi Mahlanze

Soloist 5. - Remember Mbongwa

Soloist 6. - Mookho Nyotenyane

Soloists 7. - Simphiwe Sikhakhane

Soloists 8. - Bongani Hlophe

Soloists 9. - Mthandeni Mvelase

Soloist 10. - Sonto Khumalo

Soloist 11. - Abednigo Monyane

Soloist 12. - Thabo Mathibe

## **BRASS SECTION**

Brass 1. - Barney Rachabane

Brass 2. - Bez Roberts

Brass 3. - Brian Thusi

Brass 4. - Khaya Mahlangu

Brass 5. - Sidney Mavundla

Brass 6. - Sisonke Xonti

Brass 7. - Adam Howard

Rhythm Section Musician 1. - Butana Ngubeni

Rhythm Section Musician 2. - Barney Bophela

Rhythm Section Musician 3. - Themba Dlamini

Rhythm Section Musician 4. - Scelo

Rhythm Section Musician 5. - Jaws Dlathu

Rhythm Section Musician 6. - Sbu Masondo

Rhythm Section Musician 7. - Sabu Satsha

Rhythm Section Musician 8. - Billy Monama

Rhythm Section Musician 9. - Ntokozo Zungu

Rhythm Section Musician 10. - Kenny Mathaba  
Rhythm Section Musician 11. - Sibonile Ngubane

CREW

Logistics Crew 1. - Dixon Malele  
Logistics Crew 2. - Jomo Phoswa  
Logistics Crew 3. - Edward Zwane  
Logistics Crew 4. - Siyoni Mdletshe

CATERING

Thulisile Nxumalo-Mncube  
Sibonile Mkhize

Producer - Thandekile Mqadi  
Project Coordinator - Khanyisile Serakoeng  
PA to Dr Ngema - Zandile Mthembu

Original Score Composed by Chris Letcher

Viola, violin - Waldo Luc Alexander

Contrabass - Ariel Zamonsky

Cello - Maren du Plessis

Voice - Grace Magubane

Piano, percussion, guitar, mbira, electric bass - Chris Letcher



**“Majavajava”**

Composed/Arranged by Mbongeni Ngema  
Lyrics by Mbongeni Ngema

**“Love is so sweet”**

Composed/Arranged by Mbongeni Ngema  
Lyrics by Mbongeni Ngema

**“But’ Omuhle”**

Composed/Arranged by Mbongeni Ngema  
Lyrics by Mbongeni Ngema

**“To be a woman”**

Composed/Arranged by Mbongeni Ngema  
Lyrics by Mbongeni Ngema

**“O’Ibambeni”**

Composed/Arranged by Mbongeni Ngema  
Lyrics by Mbongeni Ngema

**“Dala Bafana”**

Composed/Arranged by Mbongeni Ngema  
Lyrics by Mbongeni Ngema

**“Lamontville Township”**

Composed by Mbongeni Ngema  
Performed by Ngema Band  
Courtesy of Committed Artists

**“Soka Lami”**

Performed by Mpume Sikhakhane  
Composed by Mbongeni Ngema  
Courtesy of Committed Artists

**“Danse Macabre”**

Written and produced by Zbigniew Priesner  
Performed by  
The Symphonic Orchestra of the Calisia  
Philharmonic  
Courtesy of Chester Music Ltd.

**“Strawberry Roan”**

Written by Curley Fletcher  
Performed by  
James and Casper of the James Brown Band

**“Go, let the prisoners go”**

Composed/Arranged by Mbongeni Ngema  
Lyrics by Mbongeni Ngema