



### **Stay Hungry!**

An Interview with TUKS Drama alumna and *You Spectacular* award winner for “Favourite Actress 2014”, Zenade Mfenyana. Zenande also graced the stage at the *Krêkvars-Kopanong Student Arts Festival* during her undergraduate studies.

Photographs courtesy of Zenande Mfenyana.

**Q: Since graduating from the Drama Department you have been involved in exciting projects and has become one of South Africa's most recognised and celebrated TV personalities. Tell us about that journey.**

A: After graduating from UP in 2007, my life became that of hopping from one audition to the next. And I landed my 1st acting gig 6 months after graduating; I was cast as Rapunzel in the children's theatre production at the Promusica Theatre in Roodepoort. Theatre productions are short-lived and I was soon out of work and looking for my next acting gig, which meant more and more auditions. It gets tiring because you start doubting yourself, but I kept on, and I landed my second children's theatre gig in a play called *Madiba's Magic*. In 2010 I was cast as Thami in the movie called *Liefeling*. My days at TUKS speaking Afrikaans paid off, because I was able to pull off that role with ease. In 2011, my life changed dramatically. I went for an audition for a role on *Generations*, and I gave it my all, I told myself "you only have one chance, make it count" and I went in that audition guns blazing. I waited for weeks to hear from them if I got the role, I got a call-back and still there was another month of waiting... Finally, after close to 2 months waiting, I got told that I got the role of Noluntu Memela. I was over the moon with excitement, and I had an amazing 3 year journey on the soap. I learnt so much! As much as we had a viewing of 8 million people a day, I never let the fame get to my head. I remained grounded and focussed on bettering my craft. In 2015, I got cast in the Telenovela called *Ashes to Ashes* and I play the role of Rebabedi Namane (it is currently on air, it plays at 20:00 on ETV, Mon-Fri). In just 3 months of being on air, it got 4,5 million viewers and the numbers are still growing. I'm honored and blessed to be part of this amazing production.

**Q: What aspects of your drama studies did you enjoy most?**

A: I enjoyed the performances we would put on at the Masker and Lier theaters and the public coming to watch. It gave us a taste of what it was like to come as professionals. I also enjoyed the radio and singing practicals. Early mornings of movement classes at Skuros were tough, but I really enjoyed them. That's the one thing that kept me fit during my varsity journey!



Zenande's signature on The Masker "Wall of Fame" on the Hatfield campus..

**Q: What did the drama course offer you that you have applied in your working life since graduation?**

A: The voice lessons and the acting techniques we learnt have been immensely valuable. Now and again before I step onto set I find myself doing the y-buzz while doing the heel rock on the floor - this helps me to focus.

**Q: What future projects are on the horizon?**

A: I love radio with all my heart and I am venturing into that avenue. I co-host a 30 minute slot on CliffCentral on Tuesdays on a show called Ladies Round Table with 2 other ladies (Tamerin Jardin and Wardah Hartley). The show is hosted by Arye Kellman who has his show from 15:00-18:00 daily. I can't wait to have my own 3 hour slot one day. I know I will get there, no doubt.

**Q: What advice would you give to aspiring young actors?**

A: Stay focused on your goal, don't let anything take you off course, it's a very competitive industry so you need to make sure you remain on your A plus plus game at all times. Keep going to extra acting/singing classes, hone your craft and perfect your skill, don't ever be complacent. There's always somebody more eager than you. STAY HUNGRY!