

More **than just a** **Game**

The inspiring story of organised soccer
among prisoners on Robben Island

Anant Singh
presents in association with
Telkom Media,
Videovision Entertainment,
Filmex (Pty) Ltd, Distant Horizon
and
The National Film And Video Foundation Of South Africa,
Present

More than just a Game

Presley Chweneyagae
Wright Ngubeni
Tshepo Maseko
Az Abrahams
Merlin Balie

Music by

Vusi Mahlasela
Brendan Jury

Edited by

Melanie Jankes Golden

Production Designer

Darryl Hammer

Director Of Photography

Guilio Biccari

Line Producer

Daphne Williams

Historical Consultant

Charles Korr

Co-Producers

Chuck Korr
Lord Ted Rowlands
Double Jab Productions
Hannelie Bekker

Executive Producers

Sudhir Pragjee
Sanjeev Singh

Screenplay by

Tom Eaton

Producers

Anant Singh
Helena Spring

Directed by

Junaid Ahmed

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MORE THAN JUST A GAME

CAST

Presley Chweneyagae	Mark Shinnars
Wright Ngubeni	Anthony Suze
Az Abrahams	Sedick Isaacs
Tshepo Maseko	Lizo Sitoto
Merlin Balie	Marcus Solomon
Grant Swanby	Warder Delport
Anelisa Phewa	Pro Malepe
Deon Slater	Snr. Warder Fourie
Ramey Short	Warder Nel
Junaid Booysen	Dikgang Moseneke
Rea Rangaka	Freddie Simon
Sizwe Msutu	Harry Gwala
Riaan Visman	Baartman
Christian Bennett	Blues
Vaneshran Arumugam	Indres Naidoo
Chris April	Makaleni
Brian Heydenrych	Warder Malan
Louis Minnaar	Captain Theron
Tyrone Keogh	Warder Ekwilbou
Afzal Mohammed	Supporter #2
Andile Nebulane	Prisoner #1
Mlamli Mangcala	Prisoner #2 & Supporter #1
Michael Dube	Prisoner #3
Mukhtaar Pathan	Prisoner #4
Adrian Collins	Warder Steyn
Marcel Broodryk	Boat Warder
Marthinus van den Berg	Arresting Policeman
Leslie Mongezi	Grey Haired Referee
Sheldon Cross	Military Policeman #1
Clinton de Villiers	Gunners Captain

MORE THAN JUST A GAME

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Told through the stories of five former prisoners, this is the story of political activists sent to Robben Island in the 1960s who rise above their incarceration by creating a football league and finding an outlet for their passion and commitment to discipline through the Beautiful Game.

MORE THAN JUST A GAME

LONG SYNOPSIS

In the energetic, dangerous urban landscape of the late 1950s, five youngsters are weeks or even days away from being arrested. Their backgrounds are as diverse as their personalities, but all share an activist's zeal and a desire to change the racist status quo. ANTHONY SUZE is a hothead and athlete, a world away from the cool, introspective activism of MARK SHINNERS or the steady, stocky rugby-playing LIZO SITOTO. Others have come to the struggle in their own way: SEDICK ISAACS, the impassive bomb-making schoolteacher; MARCUS SOLOMONS the non-aligned guerrilla. But all are targets of the state, and all are destined to spend their youth on Robben Island.

The island is more brutal than they ever imagined. Nobody, they naively believed, could be cruel enough to send schoolchildren to the Alcatraz of Africa. But as the reality of their new life dawns on them, with its eternal cold, brutal warders and nagging hunger, so too does the sense of community and shared purpose. The physical hardships – exemplified in the hulking person of DELPORT – are extreme, but there is refuge in learning and in comradeship. A philosophy of excellence is applied to every task, no matter how brutalising: the prisoners take pride in building the most escape-proof prison they can. And ultimately there comes the realisation that there is humanity to be reclaimed in sharing a love for sport and fair play. The seeds of soccer are sewn.

It is not an easy journey. SHINNERS' requests for soccer to be allowed is a war of attrition, and ISAACS must apply the strict disciplines of his highly trained mind to his mission of spreading sport throughout the prison community. But at last the authorities relent, and informal soccer kicks off on Robben Island.

But recreation is only half the aim. To the prisoners, all steeped in the ethos of debate, dialogue and negotiation, it is not only essential that sport takes place, but that it is seen to take place in a well ordered and highly structured manner. The Makana Football Association is formed, based on the principles of inclusivity, collective discipline, and fair play. 16-year-old Dikgang Moseneke is elected Chairman, an act that underlines the Association's commitment to excellence and FIFA-like technical rigour, rather than hierarchy, party politics and personality.

The Association is a microcosm of democracy, a training ground not only for the body but for the political soul, where the principles of negotiation and dialogue are practiced and entrenched. It is literally the training ground for the leaders of the future. It is also a happy collective ripe for upheaval...

Enter the Atlantic Raiders, a team selected with a cold, calculating eye focused purely on merit. It makes no concessions to inclusivity: the ongoing experiment with socialism on the island is suspended in favour of a voracious attitude to winning. The Raiders demand respect almost immediately, their fans viewed as heretics by the elder statesmen of the community desperately concerned about the potentially fracturing effect of this rogue team of elitists.

And then the impossible happens: in an insignificant knock-out match, the Raiders are controversially beaten by a team of self-confessed "old crocks". A freak goal is scored, a referee leaves the field, a desperate defence produces a 1-0 scoreline, and the Raiders are incensed. At once they throw themselves at the official channels, filing complaints, demanding official redress; but the MFA resists their charge. The result stands. It is an intolerable situation for SUZE and his fellow Raiders, and at last they step outside the rules, so carefully laid down with so much negotiation, and stage a sit-in, hijacking the field and throwing the League into turmoil.

It is an injury to all, and an injury that festers. Morale drops as the youthful, arrogant Raiders refuse to back down. The community is in danger of fracturing. At last an elderly official takes SUZE aside, and helps him see past his pride and his outrage, to see the large effect of the stand-off. The Raiders relent, and back down: soccer is saved, and with it, the emotional integrity of the community.

It is 1976, and the five men are older, their youths past. Slowly they and their comrades are being released. But a new generation is coming to the island, schoolchildren-activists plucked off the bloody streets of Soweto. The torch is passed, as the old guard, those who built the prison and the MFA, leave the island and look towards the future.

SOCCER ON ROBBEN ISLAND

Fact Sheet

- For years, political prisoners on Robben Island demanded the right to play soccer. Eventually prison authorities relented under pressure from the International Red Cross.
- The Robben Island prison opened in the early 1960s. The Makana Football Association was established in 1966, and played off and (mostly) on until the prison closed in 1991.
- The league was operated in three divisions — A, B and C, based on players' abilities — complete with trainers, managers, referees and coaches from the prison population of as many as 1,400 men.
- The league had several standing committees to deal with a range of issues, including discipline and maintenance. Minutes of meetings were kept. The level of detail was meticulous.
- Games were played for two hours on Saturdays for almost nine months a year.
- Playing soccer was important on many levels for the prisoners:
 - as a diversion from the harsh realities of their lives, as physical exercise to keep their minds and bodies sharp
 - as a way for those from differing political factions to work and play together. For the first time, as football is established, prisoners from the ANC (African National Congress), PAC (Pan African Congress) and other smaller political formations begin to train together and play together in prison.
- Soccer played a key role in shaping and sustaining a spirit of resistance on the Island. The prisoners believed they would be running their own country one day. That was partly why they organized the soccer league along strict FIFA rules. They saw it as a chance to prove they could run anything.
- Nelson Mandela, Robben Island's most celebrated prisoner, along with his comrades such as Walter Sisulu, Ahmed Kathrada and others, were among a small number of prisoners kept in isolation and who were barred from watching and participating in the soccer league
- Some of South Africa's politicians and leading figures in many aspects of the socio-economic, cultural milieu played soccer on Robben Island. This includes the Minister of Defence 'Terror' Lekota, the Deputy Chief Justice of South Africa Dikgang Moseneke, ANC deputy president Jacob Zuma, business leader Tokyo Sexwale and many others.

- All week, prisoners worked in the slate quarry in their drab prison garb. On Saturdays, when they played soccer, they wore uniforms in club colours such as maroon and white or black and silver.
- Initially when the prisoners were not allowed to play soccer, they would play secretly in their cells with balls made of pieces of string, paper, cardboard and rags.
- When soccer was finally allowed, the prisoners built their own goals. The league's building and maintenance committee rolled and levelled a playing field.
- Training sessions were held mainly in the communal cell bathrooms- so as not to disturb other prisoners who were either relaxing or sleeping.
- In later years, teams that won the various leagues were given small trophies and certificates designed by the prisoners. The prison authorities would confiscate this immediately after the awards ceremony on the soccer field.

MORE THAN JUST A GAME

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The making of **More Than Just A Game** has been an incredible journey. In this regard I am extremely grateful to the producers, actors, crew and supporters and especially to five 'ordinary' but remarkable fellow South Africans - Anthony Suze, Mark Shinnars, Lizo Sitoto, Sedick Isaacs and Marcus Solomon. The story of **More Than Just A Game** is told from their point of view and the opportunity to look at reality through their eyes was both an educational and dramatic experience for me.

This film also appealed to me because I wanted to be part of a team that showed another image of Africa- different to the stereotypes that continue to be misrepresented to and imagined in the minds of many people outside the continent. The fragmented and inaccurate representations of the 'dark continent' include that of being primitive, poor, underdeveloped, violent and covered with jungles. But Africa abounds with rich and remarkable tapestries of stories that offer fresh insights about the continent. **More Than Just A Game** is an example of an inspirational story that reveals the strength and energy of people when confronted by the worst of adversities – people such as Tony, Mark, Lizo, Sedick and Marcus. When apartheid South Africa imprisoned them on Robben Island - the 'Alcatraz' of Africa-they responded to their detention with strength of mind, purpose and determination and at the same time, topping this with amazing measures of dignity. And on this island-more brutal than they ever imagined- they found refuge in learning and in comradeship. A philosophy of excellence was applied to every task, no matter how brutalizing. And ultimately there came the realization that there is humanity to be reclaimed in sharing a love for sport and fair play.

It was not an easy journey-this request to play soccer on Robben Island. But even when the authorities relented, recreation was only half the aim. To the prisoners, all steeped in the ethos of debate, dialogue and negotiation, it was not only essential that the playing of soccer takes place, but that it was seen to take place in a well ordered and highly structured manner. The political detainees formed the Makana Football Association, based on the principles of inclusivity, collective discipline, fair play, commitment to excellence and FIFA-like technical rigour, rather than hierarchy, party politics and personality. Being involved in all aspects of soccer- from administration to playing – enabled the political prisoners to rise above their incarceration and finding an outlet for their passion and commitment to discipline through the Beautiful Game.

The collective time that Lizo, Tony, Sedick, Marcus and Mark spent on Robben Island was almost 75 years. They survived the imprisonment and worse. But their resolve never wavered. And today, instead of becoming slaves to the economy of power in a free South Africa, they are busy contributing to the benefit of our society- working with children, empowering the economy, educating and deepening democracy. They have made me understand that politics is about people. That they do have the power, and all they need to do is to engage and reclaim their voice and they can change the world- even under the most overwhelming of odds.

More Than Just A Game shows the resilience of ordinary people when their lives get turned upside down by injustice. And that is why it makes me really happy that their story should be seen by an international audience. Their stories are universally important not only because they are inspiring but because it can also mobilize us to contribute towards creating a better world.

Junaid Ahmed
Director
More Than Just A Game

PRESLEY CHWENEYAGAE

(plays MARK SHINNERS)

Born in 1984, Presley is a young man with a great talent. Since his school days he has performed in numerous theatre, productions for North West Arts and in television and film roles.

Most notable is his lead role in Gavin Hood's film adaptation of Athol Fugard's *Tsotsi* which won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 2006. Presley won the Best Actor Awards at the Bangkok Film Festival and the Apollo Film Festival in 2006 for his role in *Tsotsi*. The latest addition to his series of awards is for his role in *Tsotsi* are the Black Movie Awards' Outstanding Performance By An Actor In A Leading Role and Best Actor at the SAFTA Awards in 2006.

He played "Puck" in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and "Zipper" in *Cards for the Grahamstown Festival*. In 2000 he was cast in a supporting role in *Orlando* for SABC. Presley co-wrote the stage play, *Relativity* (with Paul Grootboom) which scooped the Herald Angel Award at the 2006 Edinburgh Festival.

Presley plays Mark Shinnars in the docu-drama, *More Than Just A Game*.

He has extensive experience gained from the community theatre projects and worked with Paul Grootboom, Bongi Ndaba and Percy Langa.

WRIGHT NGUBENI

(plays ANTHONY SUZE)

Wright Ngubeni was born in Soweto, Johannesburg. Wright's career began at the tender age of 5 as one of the characters on the popular children's television programme, *Kideo*. By the age of 10, Wright had featured as an actor in numerous television commercials and joined Professional Kids Casting Agency, through which his television presenting and acting career was launched.

His first presenting job was on SABC 2's *School TV*. Later, he acted in television dramas and corporate videos, including the critically acclaimed industrial video - "Kingdom of the Sun".

At age 11, he acted in the television drama, *Street Life* on SABC 3, in which he played the lead role as a street kid. In 2000 Wright re-launched his TV career by appearing in a commercial for national retailer, Edgars.

He made his international debut in the mini series, *Human Cargo* in which he played Nobakhaba, a Burundian teenager with a Hutu mother and Tutsi father; caught up in a cultural war going on in his country between the tribes.

His next international feature was *Shadow*, in which he played a small role of the son of Amin Walker. While busy lending his voice to the South African audience as a voice-over artist, he was cast in the popular South African soapie *Generations* on SABC 1 for the role of Jonathan Motene.

While on *Generations*, he auditioned to anchor *World of Winners* on SABC 2. The show which was initially a 5 minute weekly game show proved to be popular to the point that the SABC extended it to a 30 minute daily live show. It was at this point, Wright left *Generations* to pursue live TV.

Wright's last major engagement was in *More Than Just A Game*, the docu-drama about the role of soccer on Robben Island which is produced by Anant Singh.

Beyond working as an actor, Wright works as trainee director on SABC 1's *Gospel Gold*.

TSHEPO MASEKO

(plays LIZO SITOTO)

Tshepo Maseko is among South Africa's most talented actors. After completing school at the Kelokitso High School, he enrolled at the Pretoria Technikon where he graduated with a National Diploma in Drama.

Tshepo's acting talent is much sought after and he is a familiar face on television and in the theatre. He also does motivational speaking and acts as Master of Ceremonies at high profile events.

Tshepo is best known for his role as Parsons in the daily soap, *Isidingo* on SABC 3. He has also starred in a number of television shows, among which are *Take Five*, *Badirammogo*, *A New Kind Of Dawn*, *The Principal*, *Limits Unlimited*, *Soul City*, *Crime Reporter* and *Katlego*.

In the theatre, he has appeared in productions of *Fall I Catch You*, *Aspoestertjie* and *Macbeth*.

Tshepo's latest engagement is a role in the docu-drama, *More Than Just A Game* which explores organised soccer in the Robben Island Prison.

AZ ABRAHAMS

(plays SEDICK ISAACS)

Cape Town based Az Abrahams is a natural actor who is active in film, television and theatre. He is also a radio personality with stints as a DJ on Good Hope FM and P4 (now Heart FM).

His roles in the theatre include the Cape Flats productions of *Daai's Mos Reality* and *Sisters In Arms*; *The Diva Music* which was staged at the Baxter Theatre and the touring school production, *Buckingham Palace*. He was also featured in the popular television shows, *Madam And Eve* and *SOS* on etv.

Az made his film debut in *Bush Decision* in 2000. This was followed with roles in *Dollars And White Pipes*, the lead role in *34 South*, *Confessions Of A Gambler*, *The Man From Yesterday* and *Doomsday*. His latest role is in the docu-drama, **More Than Just A Game**.

MERLIN BALIE

(plays **MARCUS SOLOMON**)

A drama graduate of the University of Stellenbosch, Merlin Balie is an accomplished actor and singer who works in television, film and theatre.

Merlin has appeared in the popular SABC television drama series, *Sewende Laan* and *The Interrogation Room*.

In the theatre, he has performed in a number of stage plays among which are *Matilda*, *Charlie And The Chocolate Factory*, *Robin Hood (The Musical)*, *War Of The World*, *The Contingency Plan*, *Karnaval*, *Jan en die Playstation* and *Bungi Writing Finals*. He has also performed with The Paarl Orchestra as a lead singer.

Included among Merlin's film credits are roles in the acclaimed film, *Twist, Luck, The Silent Fall* and most recently, ***More Than Just A Game***, a docu-drama that explores the three division football league that existed on the high security Robben Island prison on which Nelson Mandela was imprisoned.

Vusi Sidney Mahlasela

Composer: Original Score

Born Vusi Sidney Mahlasela Ka Zwane in 1965 in Lady Selborne, South Africa, Mahlasela became enchanted with music at an early age, building his first guitar out of tin and fishing line. Reared in Mamelodi Township, a vibrant artist community where he still resides, he gravitated toward poetry and songwriting as a teen and eventually joined youth organizations protesting South Africa's apartheid government.

Reading poems at night vigils, funerals and anti-Apartheid marches triggered a long streak of police harassment. Local police soon required that he keep them abreast of his whereabouts at all times, and his poems and songs were routinely confiscated—forcing him to memorize his work. It was a time when people like him would 'just disappear indefinitely,' he recalls, or, in Mahlasela's case, be held in prison for extended periods of time.

In 1988, he joined the Congress of South African Writers, developing a new level of confidence as a poet and a writer. He struck up a creative friendship with South African poet Lesego Rampolokeng, while falling under the spell of artists like Miriam Makeba and Phillip Tabane and the work of Victor Jara— all central influences on Mahlasela's music and lyrics.

He wrote the song *River Jordan* for his mother, and it was with her inspiration and the motivation of leaders like Nelson Mandela that Mahlasela crafted his official debut, 1991's *When You Come Back*, produced by Lloyd Ross.

After the end of Apartheid, Vusi performed at Mandela's inauguration in 1994, and is now an ambassador to Mandela's 46664 Foundation, a campaign to help raise Global awareness of Aids/ HIV. Mahlasela proudly promotes Mandela's message at all of his performances. Having released a string of albums in South Africa, it wasn't until the debut in 2003 of the documentary film *Amandla! A Revolution in Four-Part Harmony*, a film that charts South Africans' longtime struggle for racial equality, that Americans first glimpsed and heard Mahlasela. In a rave Los Angeles Times review, noted critic Robert Hilburn wrote: 'Vusi Mahlasela's voice is so pure and commanding; you wonder whether you should have gotten an entire album by him.'

Later that year, Americans did, with *The Voice*, a collection of the best songs from his catalog, all released for the first time in U.S. via the ATO Records label (co-owned by longtime fan and fellow South African Dave Matthews, who calls Mahlasela 'one of the most important influences of my life.'). It was an album so chock full of beauty, soul and struggle that it had a profound effect on American listeners in the wake of 9/11 - even though much of the album wasn't sung in English.

And that's a power that Mahlasela doesn't take lightly. A single listen to *Guiding Star*, is all one needs to be assured that Mahlasela is a gifted performer. And with that gift comes responsibility, says Vusi: 'I know that I have something that is like a borrowed fire from God. And I have to use it in a very positive way.'

Brendan Jury

Composer: Original Score

Brendan Jury graduated from the University of Natal with a Bachelor of Music Degree in 1994. Besides forming the groundbreaking SA rock group Urban Creep, he was also their vocalist and viola player. Urban Creep released two highly acclaimed albums: "Sea Level" in 1995 and "TightRoper" in 1997. The band toured extensively internationally.

In 1997 he formed Trans.Sky with celebrated Kalahari Surfer, Warwick Sony. In addition to playing live and recording albums, Trans.Sky composed music for the BBC, Discovery Channel, Tube on SABC, Channel 4 and several short films. A highlight was the composition of the music and songs for William Kentridge's "Ubu and the Truth Commission" which toured for over a year in the USA, the UK and Europe. In 1997, Brendan also joined the Gathering Forces afro-jazz project, led by Darius Brubeck and featuring Lulu Gontsana, Barney Rachabane, Deepak Ram and Concorde Nkabinde. They recorded and performed in the "Fin de Siecle" festival in Nantes, France. In 1998 Trans.Sky released the album "Killing Time" to extraordinary critical acclaim, fusing electronica, kwaito, hip hop and ambient music.

In 1999 Brendan formed the rock act OHM, releasing the album titled OHM on the Melt 2000 label and also toured internationally, performing in France, the Netherlands and the UK.

In 2001 Brendan collaborated with Ellis Pearson to write and perform original theatre and won the FNB Vita Award for Male Performance Musical Theatre. A highlight of 2001 was performing with Gathering Forces at the World Conference Against Racism.

Brendan concentrated on composition for broadcast and teamed up with Arno Carstens of the Springbok Nude Girls, launching Arno's solo career in 2002. Brendan also played the viola on the One Giant Leap album in the 2003 project which included Brian Eno, Baaba Maal, Maxi Jazz of Faithless, Neneh Cherry, Robby Williams, The Mahotella Queens, Pops Mohammed and The Soweto String Quartet.

Arno Carsten's first album, on which Brendan played viola and keyboard, won the SAMA award for Best Rock Album in 2004. Brendan collaborated with Phil Manzanera of Roxy Music, Brian Eno, Dave Gilmour and Chrissie Hynde on Phil's debut solo album 6PM. In 2005 Brendan formed Bass Culture Music, working with great SA artists such as Jabu Kanyile, Proverb, Hip Hop Pantsula and TK among others. He played viola on the film score for *Totsi*. He also recorded and toured strings and keyboards for Arno Carsten's second album, "The Hello Goodbye Boys" and toured South Africa and the UK with The Springbok Nude Girls. He also recorded strings on Phil Manzanera's second solo album, "50 Minutes Later On" and the single, Bible Black produced by Brian Eno.

Brendan has been writing music scores for local and international documentaries, short films, television and commercials. In 2007 he won 2 Promax Awards for Broadcast Music in South Africa. In August 2007, he performed with Arno Carstens as

the opening act for the Rolling Stones and performed at the Isle Of White Festival. He is currently working on the new Arno Carstens album due for release in 2008.

TOM EATON

WRITER

Born in 1977 in Cape Town, Tom Eaton was educated at Westerford High School and the University of Cape Town. As an undergraduate he majored in English and Afrikaans/Netherlandic Studies, before completing in Honours degree in English Literature. In 1999 he enrolled at that University for a Masters in Creative Writing, and was supervised by Nobel Prize laureate J.M.Coetzee, graduating with distinction in 2001.

While working on his Masters, Eaton joined the 365 Digital group as a copy-editor and journalist, and by 2001 he was the South African editor for the group's Cricket365.com website. In 2002 he decided to go freelance, and the following year he was approached by the Mail&Guardian to write a weekly satirical sports column. The 'Pitch&Mutter' column established Eaton as one of the foremost columnists in the country, and in 2005 – when he retired the column – Double Storey published a collection of 'Pitch&Mutter's entitled *Twelve Rows Back*.

Also in 2003 Eaton took over from the late Peter Robinson as the Mail&Guardian's cricket correspondent, and has since gained a following as an insightful and wide-ranging sports writer – the “best sports feature writer in the country” according to veteran writer and commentator Mark Keohane. In 2006 he co-edited an anthology of South African sports journalism with Sunday Times columnist Luke Alfred, entitled *Touchlines and Deadlines* and published by Double Storey; and he remains a regular contributor to 'SA Cricket' magazine. His work has also appeared in the prestigious 'The Cricketer', UK-based 'SPIN Cricket' magazine, and other magazine titles like 'SA Sports Illustrated' and 'SA Rugby'.

In 2005 his cricket writing expertise led to an approach from publishers putting together a groundbreaking coaching manual, written by the late Bob Woolmer, Professor Tim Noakes and Helen Moffett. Eaton was appointed as editor and editorial consultant on the project, and continues to guide the book towards publication with Struik later this year.

Eaton's first foray into screenwriting came in 2006, when he was approached by Videovision to write the screenplay of 'More Than Just a Game', a docudrama directed by Junaid Ahmed that tells the story of the Makana Football Association – the soccer league founded and administered by political prisoners on Robben Island in the 1960s and 1970s – through the eyes of five former prisoners. The film is set for release in late 2007.

Eaton has also established himself in South Africa as a writer of fiction. His 2005 spoof, *The De Villiers Code*, was a bestseller, enjoying four print runs and sales in excess of 10,000 copies, and the following year he published his second novel, *Texas*, which was also well received. His third novel, *The Wading*, is to be published by Penguin (SA) in 2008.

ANANT SINGH

PRODUCER

Anant Singh is recognised as South Africa's pre-eminent film producer, having produced more than sixty films since 1984. He is responsible for many of the greatest anti-apartheid films made in South Africa, including "Place Of Weeping," *Sarafina!* and *Cry, the Beloved Country*. Nelson Mandela called him "a producer I respect very much...a man of tremendous ability" when he granted him the film rights to his autobiography, *Long Walk To Freedom*. Singh is set to film *Long Walk to Freedom* next year.

Singh is the producer of *Yesterday* (from director, Darrell James Roodt), which received South Africa's first Academy Award Nomination in the Best Foreign Language Picture category in 2005, the Peabody Award and an Emmy Nomination in 2006 in the "Outstanding Made For Television Movie" category.

Born and raised in Durban Singh began his film career at age 18 when he left his studies at the University of Durban-Westville to purchase a 16mm movie rental store. From there, he moved into video distribution, forming Videovision Entertainment). He moved into film production in 1984 with Darrell James Roodt's acclaimed *Place of Weeping*, the first anti-apartheid film to be made entirely in South Africa.

A selection of his subsequent feature films includes: *Sarafina!* with Whoopi Goldberg, Leleti Khumalo and Miriam Makeba; *The Road to Mecca*, with Kathy Bates; *Father Hood*, with Patrick Swayze and Halle Berry; *Captives*, with Julia Ormond and Tim Roth; Tobe Hooper's *The Mangler*, with Robert Englund and based on a Stephen King short story; *Cry, the Beloved Country*, from Alan Paton's revered novel, with James Earl Jones and Richard Harris; *Paljas* (shot in Afrikaans, the first South African film to be selected for Oscar Consideration in the Best Foreign Language film category); *Face*, with Robert Carlyle; *The Theory of Flight*, with Kenneth Branagh and Helena Bonham Carter; *Bravo Two Zero*, with Sean Bean; *The Long Run*, with Armin Mueller-Stahl; Tsui Hark's remake of *The Legend of Zu*, with Zhang Ziyi; *I Capture the Castle*, with Tara Fitzgerald and Henry Thomas and *Red Dust*, with Hilary Swank and Chiwetel Ejiofor, a drama centering on South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Directly after the completion of *Yesterday*, Singh once again teamed up with director, Darrell James Roodt to produce *Faith's Corner* which starred Leleti Khumalo and scored by multi-award winner Philip Glass.

Singh's association with South Africa's Number One Boxoffice star, Leon Schuster, saw the production of the hit comedy *Mr Bones* which became the highest grossing South African film of all time, earning more than R32 million at the boxoffice. Following *Mr Bones* was *Mama Jack* a further collaboration with Leon Schuster which was the top performing South African film of 2005, grossing more than R28 million at the boxoffice.

Prey, also produced by Singh, is directed by Darrell James Roodt and co-written by Roodt and the writers of *Cry Wolf*, Beau Bauman and Jeff Wadlow. The film stars Peter Weller of *RoboCop* fame, Bridget Moynahan (*I, Robot*, *The Sum Of All Fears*, *The Recruit*) and Carly Schroeder (*Firewall*, *Mean Creek*).

Singh's latest production is *More Than Just A Game*, the moving docu-drama feature which tells the inspiring story of organised soccer among prisoners on Robben Island (the maximum security prison where Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners were incarcerated by the apartheid regime in South Africa).

Anant Singh has also been involved in the production of many important documentaries, including *Countdown to Freedom*, about the first free election in South Africa, and *Prisoners of Hope*, about a reunion on Robben Island of 1250 of its former political prisoners led by Nelson Mandela.

Singh is a board member of the International Marketing Council Of South Africa, the Los Angeles-based Artists For A New South Africa and the Mandela 46664 Concert with Richard Branson, Dave Stewart and Jim Beach. He is also the only South African member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and was appointed by President Thabo Mbeki to the Creative Collective, the body responsible for the organization of South Africa's Ten Years Of Freedom Celebrations in 2004.

Singh's expertise in media and entertainment saw him being appointed to the Board of Governors for Media and Entertainment of the World Economic Forum.

The South African Film Industry recognised Anant Singh for his significant contribution to the advancement of the industry with the Golden Horn Award for Outstanding Contributor at the inaugural South African Film And Television Awards in October 2006.

Singh is a recipient of the Crystal Award of the World Economic Forum and the Lifetime Founder Member Award of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund. Both the University of Durban-Westville and the University Of Port Elizabeth have conferred honorary doctorates on him.

HELENA SPRING

PRODUCER

Worldwide Head of Production, for Anant Singh's company Videovision Entertainment has produced more than sixty television projects and over twenty feature films.

Among her motion picture credits as producer are *Mama Jack*, starring Leon Schuster, South Africa's most successful box office performing filmmaker and artist, the Best Foreign Film Academy Award® nominated motion picture, *Yesterday* (2005), starring Leleti Khumalo (*Sarafina!*), the record-breaking box office performers *Mama Jack* and *Mr. Bones*, with South Africa's number one boxoffice star, Leon Schuster, *The Long Run*, starring Armin Muehler-Stahl (*Shine*), *The Theory of Flight*, starring Academy Award® winning Kenneth Branagh and Helena Bonham Carter, *Bravo Two Zero*, (as co-producer), a BBC co-production starring Sean Bean, based on Andy McNab's best-selling book of the same title. She is also producer on *More Than Just A Game*, the docu-drama that explores the organised soccer league that existed at the Robben Island prison where South African political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela were imprisoned.

Helena executive produced the multiple award-winning comedy drama, *Get Real*, a British Screen and Graphite Films co-production, which garnered the Best Picture award at the British Film Festival of Dinard in France 1998: Trophee Hitchcock D'OR, Trophee Hitchcock Audience Award, and the Trophee Hitchcock Kodak cinematography Award.

Helena also exec-produced the motion picture *Waati*, directed by Palme D'Or winner Souleymane Cisse, *The Mangler*, directed by Tobe Hooper (*Poltergeist*), Katinka Heyns' *Paljas*, which was accepted as South Africa's first official entry in the 1998 academy Awards in the Best Foreign Language Film Category and Darrell James Roodt's *Sarafina!* starring Whoopi Goldberg, which received a New York Christopher Award.

Helena's associate producer credits include *Face*, starring Ray Winstone (*Nil by Mouth*), directed by Antonia Bird (*Priest*), Darrell James Roodt's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, starring James Earl Jones and Richard Harris, which garnered the New York Christopher Award Winner, *Dangerous Ground*, starring Elizabeth Hurley and Ice Cube for New Line Cinema.

JUNAID AHMED

DIRECTOR

Junaid Ahmed is a graduate of the University of Durban-Westville where he read for a BA (Honours) degree in Drama. During the past twelve years, Ahmed has been specialising in film and television production - writing, producing and directing documentaries and short films. He has produced and directed productions for Channel 4 (United Kingdom), the Discovery Channel, ARTE (Europe), SABC and e-tv.

His films have been featured in many international film festivals and he has also received many national and international awards for these productions. *Iqakamba - Hard Ball*, which he wrote and directed, won the Best Sports Documentary in Milan in 1996 and *Lucky*, a short film that he produced, was nominated for the 2006 BAFTA Best Short Film Award and subsequently won the Best Short Film Award at more than 30 international film festivals in 2006.

Ahmed's latest project is the docu-drama, ***More Than Just A Game*** which he directed and co-wrote. ***More Than Just A Game***

He is the past Secretary General of the Congress of South African Writers (COSAW) and represented the organization at many conferences on the continent, North and South America, Europe and Asia. Ahmed has edited poetry anthologies and his articles on arts and culture related issues have been published in a number of international publications.

He has also served on a number of advisory committees and executive boards in both the public and private sectors and non-governmental organizations, initiated and co-coordinated arts and culture events, conferences and workshops both internationally and in South Africa. He was a consultant to the Democratic Media Trust and past executive member of the Independent Producer's Organization (IPO). During 1996 to 1998, he was appointed by the South African Minister of Arts and Culture onto the National Interim Film Fund Board-now the National Film and Video Foundation.

Over the past twenty years Ahmed has produced, workshopped, acted in and directed many theatre productions at various community venues, the Asoka Theatre, the Market Theatre and at the Grahamstown Arts Festival. His latest production, which he wrote and directed, was the acclaimed musical, BOMBAY CRUSH.

Ahmed has also co-ordinated and directed many national and international special events. These include being the South African co-ordinator of one of the biggest arts and cultural festivals held outside South Africa – the Zabalaza Festival which was held in London in 1990, a multi-cultural stage show for the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Durban Summit in 2001 and the arts and culture programme for President Thabo Mbeki's official state visit to India in 2003.