

# Afda alumnus Lemogang Tsipa is Shaka

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Afda Cape Town Live Performance alumnus Lemogang Tsipa plays the titular role of 'Shaka' in the upcoming drama series *Shaka Ilembe*.



The date has been set for the launch of the much-anticipated Mzansi Magic (DStv Channel161) series which will premiere on the channel on Sunday, 18 June, at 8pm.

Lemogang stars alongside the *The River* actor Thembinkosi Mthembu who portrays King Dingiswayo with *Isibaya* leading lady Nomzamo Mbatha as Queen Nandi and *Uzalo* star Wiseman Mncube as King Zwide. Newcomer Nthando Zondi plays the younger Shaka.

Playing Shaka is not only a career highlight for Lemogang but also the most detailed process he's ever had to go through in terms of body transformation.

He played both the younger and older version of the character, dropping to 68kg to capture teen Shaka. Then he had a month to gain the weight back and go up to 76kg. To achieve this, his breakfast consisted of six eggs and two sausages, muesli, yoghurt, and fruit. His lunch would include 500g rice and 250g chicken, and he'd have protein shakes all day.

In an interview with the *Sowetan*, Lemogang explains the difficulty of playing Shaka: "The most difficult thing in playing Shaka has been trying to find a balance between the harsh and tough mythological character that we know, and the vulnerable human being behind that. Trying to play those two worlds and marry them without leaning too much into one [has been difficult]."

*Shaka Ilembe* is a 12-part series that tells the story of the iconic Zulu king and the events that shaped his life with iterations from his early childhood through adulthood. Before production started, consultations occurred between historians, academics and family descendants, including the late King Goodwill Zwelithini and Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

Lemogang graduated from Afda Cape Town in the class of 2012 with a BA in Live Performance. In 2013 he was booked in his first international feature film, *Alien Outpost*, where he would play an American soldier in this futuristic action film. Shortly after his first shoot, he decided to take the risk of perusing his career full-time, and he has never had to look back.

Lemogang made his film debut in the local film *Felix* (2013) and his local television debut in *Forced love* (2012-2016). His first major international supporting role was in the British thriller *Eye in the sky* (2015) where he played the role of Matt Laver, the Mission Intel Coordinator. In the same year, he also landed another international supporting role alongside Sir Kenneth Branagh in *Wallander* (2015) in which he delivered a memorable and touching performance.

His body of work consists of *Alien outpost* (2014), *Homeland* (2014), *Traffic* (2014), *The Golden Rule* (2014), *Cape Town* (2015), *The Book of Negroes* (2015), *Lazy Suzan* (2015), *Jamillah and Aladdin* (2015), *Black Sails* (2016), *Jab* (2016), *Roots* (2016), *Oasis* (2017), *Amandla* (2017), *The Number* (2017) and *The Dark Tower* (2017).

In 2017 Lemogang made his feature film debut lead role in Craig Friemond's, *Beyond The River* where he plays Duma, a talented young man who feels trapped by his circumstances and finds himself on the wrong side of the law. He attempts to overcome his obstacles through his journey in the sport of canoeing.

Lemogang recently starred in the BBC/Netflix series *Troy- Fall of City* and is currently a lead in the popular television series, *Isithembiso*.

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