

MSOMI Welcome

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901/12/1-60

1. Msomi was born in Durban in 1943. After schooling in Chesterville he went to St. Christopher's in Swaziland, where drama became his main interest. He acted in the Merchant of Venice, Julius Caesar, and Macbeth, and played the part of the bishop in The Bishop's Candlesticks.

Cartoon: Msomi as the Bishop, with the caught thief, and a police officer carrying the stolen silver candlesticks. The bishop is clearly saying to the officer, "No, I gave them to him".

2. His parents wanted him to study medicine, but he was determined to act and to write, and in Zulu. He wrote Mtanami Nomhlangana, and walked the Durban streets with sandwich boards. Finally he sold tickets from house to house. The play was produced in 1967 in the old Bolton Hall, and was well received. But Msomi was not satisfied.

Cartoon: Msomi walking the streets with sandwich boards, with picture of mother and young girl (12), and text: FIRST ZULU PRESENTATION - MTANAMI NOMHLANGANO.

3. After other dramatic ventures his big change came. Professor Elizabeth Sneddon suggested that he do a big production in Zulu. Macbeth was chosen as inspiration, because of its symbolism, the witches, and the parallels in Zulu history. Msomi called his play Umabatha. It was enormously successful, an exciting and spectacular blend of drama, song, and dance. It was well received in London, and visited Italy and Rhodesia. <sup>and then</sup> ~~His next production was~~ Isithembu, <sup>But in New York it received a hostile reception from Blacks because it did not articulate Black wrongs</sup> ~~which also toured abroad. Msomi lives in Umlazi with his wife and two children. He has many plans for future productions.~~

Cartoon: Msomi in the role of Mabatha, in Zulu war dress, with assegai, plotting with his wife the murder of the King.

However Msomi is still in NY, & it is rumored that he intends to stay there.