



1. Zulu playwright and actor, Welcome was born on the 18th November 1943 in Durban. He spent his youth in Chesterville township where he received his primary education. In Standard 7 he was sent to St Christopher school in Swaziland where his interest in Drama started. He and some friends formed a dramatic society at school and produced several plays including some Shakespeares 'The Merchant of Venice and Julius Ceasar and Macbeth. Welcome was particularly absorbed by Shakespeares plays and he spent many hours reading them - a dictionary by his side. While he was still at school Welcome wrote short stories, radio plays & poems. When he was 14½ he submitted his first short story to 'Ilanga newspaper - it was a short story criticising marriage - he was delighted to receive 2 guineas for his efforts. Welcome also acted in several radio plays for radio Bantu during his school holidays.

c

cartoon - acting in radio plays or in school productions or reading Julius Ceasar - dictionary at hand.

2. His parents wanted him to study medicine but Welcome was determined to act and to write Zulu plays for production - people laughed at him saying that a play in Zulu would never draw the crowds. But he wanted to write something that the black majority could enjoy. He wrote 'Mntanami Nomhlangano' and financed the production with his own funds. Welcome tried several methods of advertising for the show. He walded the streets with sandwich boards reading 'An exciting first Zulu presentation on stage 'Mntanmi Nomhlangano' When this did not succeed he tried other methods finally selling the tickets by going from house to house in the townships. The first show at the old Bolton hall in Durban was a success in spite of the failure of the spotlight during the show. This was in 1967. Welcome set about preparing for his second production working as a scooter salesman and later assa supervisor for Mobil to keep himself in funds.

cartoon - Welcome walking the streets with sandwich boards with a picture of a mother and a yo ung girl and the writing 'An exciting first Zulu presentation on stage ! Mntanami Nomhlangano'.

3. Welcome's second play 'Qondeni' was performed to white audiences at the University of Natal and was very well received. Professor Sneddon suggested to Welcome that he do a big production in Zulu Welcome felt that Macbeth would offer the best scope in Zulu because of the symbolism and witches. He wrote Mbabatha and it was produced for the first time in 1971 at the Open Air theatre of the University of Natal. When the production was taken overseas to London's Aldwich theatre the following year, it had a tremendous reception. The dancing and song were particularly appreciated. Mbabatha has since toured Italy Rhodesia and SA. Welcome's next big production was 'Isithembu' or 'Phezulu as it is popularly named after his theatre company has toured Scotland, Israal, and the West Country in England. Dancing and music play a big role - Welcome composes both dance and song - he has had no formal training but has learnt much about fradional music from frquent visits to the rural areas in his youth and while he composes. Welcome has many plans for future productions and community programmes. He has tremendous faith in God which he says gives him the courage to attempt big projects. He lives in Umlazi, is married and has two children. His son has played in Mbabatha since the age of three. Welcome is optimistic, friendly and has tremendous iniciative and drive which has enabled him to achieve much.

cartoon - Welcome in the role of Mbabatha.