

The 5 best local hits to stream now

Issued by [Showmax](#)

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These are the five local hits to stream on Showmax now.

[Zog | First on Showmax](#)

Zog is the keenest but clumsiest pupil in his class at Dragon School, where he longs to win a gold star as he learns how to fly, roar and breathe fire. He keeps meeting a kindly young girl who patches up his bumps and bruises, but can she help him with his trickiest school assignment yet: capturing a princess?

Animated in Cape Town by Triggerfish and produced by the UK's Magic Light Pictures, the 27-minute animated short captures the magic of Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler's bestselling picture book, with an all-star voice cast including the likes of Kit Harington, Sir Lenny Henry and Tracey Ullman. It's co-directed by multi-award-winning South African Daniel Snaddon (*Stick Man*) and two-time Oscar nominee Max Lang (*The Gruffalo* and *Room On The Broom*).

This year, *Zog* has been named Best Animation at the 2020 International Emmy Kids Awards and won the Children's Programme Award from the Royal Television Society, among other honours like Kidscreen and Annie Awards nominations.

Another Donaldson and Scheffler adaptation, [The Snail and the Whale](#), was also recently added to Showmax. Made by the same team as *Zog*, *The Snail and the Whale* follows the amazing journey of a tiny snail who longs to see the world and hitches a ride on the tail of a huge humpback whale. As the snail, Sally Hawkins (*The Shape of Water*) won Best Voice Performance at this year's British Animation Awards, where the short was also up for Best Longform Animation and Best Use of Sound.

[Rage | Showmax Original](#)

In *Rage*, a group of school-leavers descend on a tiny coastal town for a celebration of their freedom. Roxy, Sihle, Kyle, Leon, Tamsyn and Neo party on the beach and drink themselves silly every night. The townsfolk, Hermien and her son Albert, are welcoming – too welcoming. During a psychedelic trip on the beach, the friends witness a disturbing birth ritual, which could be a hallucination, or not. Soon fertility figurines start to appear at random places, and what is supposed to be the best holiday of their lives turns to horror as the teenagers are picked off one by one.

Nicole Fortuin, whose previous film, *Flatland*, opened the Berlin Panorama, stars as Tamsyn, with *The Girl From St Agnes'* breakout stars Jane de Wet (*Moffie, Still Breathing*) and Tristan de Beer (*Alles Malan, Doctor Who*) as Roxy and Kyle; two-time Silwerskerm winner Carel Nel (*Dwaalster, Hum, Slaaf*) as Albert and two-time Vita winner Lida Botha as Hermien; Sihle Mngwazana, who co-wrote and acted in *The Fall*, a *New York Times* critic's choice play, as Neo; Shalima Mkongi (*Isithembiso, Nkululeko, Keeping Score*) as Sihle; and Fiesta, Kanna and Fleur du Cape nominee David Viviers (*Kanarie*) as Leon.

Rage is directed by Jaco Bouwer, a multi-award-winning theatre director who's one of three Best Director nominees in the drama series category at the 2020 Saftas, for *Dwaalster*. His short film, *this country is lonely*, premiered at International Film Festival Rotterdam in 2018 and he also directed *Die Spreeus*, one of the 10 most-watched local series on Showmax in 2019.

Rage has been hailed as “*briljant*” (*Son*), “hair raising” (*Daily Sun*), “gripping” (*IOL*), “scary as hell” (*9Lives*), “quite stunning and brilliantly filmed” (*Channel24*) and “genuinely creepy... one of the best attempts at the genre ever made in this country” (*Fortress of Solitude*), with *Daily Maverick* saying it will “scare the living daylights out of you.”

[Noughts + Crosses S1](#)

From 11.30pm on Thursdays. Binge from 16 April 2020

“Over 700 years ago, the Aprican Empire invaded Europe. Aprica colonised the continent and reached as far as Albion. Albion has been under Aprican rule ever since.”

So begins *Noughts + Crosses*, a controversial six-part BBC One series based on Malorie Blackman’s multi-award-winning novel.

South African Masali Baduza (*Trackers*) and Bafta-winner Jack Rowan (*Born To Kill*, *Peaky Blinders*) play Sephy and Callum, two star-crossed lovers in the tradition of Romeo and Juliet. Sephy is the privileged daughter of the Home Secretary, Kamal Hadley, while Callum’s mother, Meggie, is the Hadleys’ housekeeper. While Sephy and Callum grew up together, they may as well have lived in different worlds.

Shot largely in Cape Town with Film Afrika, the series also stars Paterson Joseph (*Peep Show*, *The Leftovers*) and South African actress Bonnie Mbuli (*Invictus*, *Wallander*) as Sephy’s parents, Kamal and Jasmine, with Bafta nominee Helen Baxendale (*Cold Feet*, Emily in *Friends*) and Tribeca-winner Ian Hart (Professor Quirrell in *Harry Potter*) as Callum’s parents, as well as Josh Dylan (*Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again*, *The End of the F***ing World*) as his brother Jude.

Noughts + Crosses has an 83% critics rating on *Rotten Tomatoes*, with *The Times*(UK) calling it “mesmerising... It’s important, this one. We’ll be talking about it for years.”

[A United Kingdom](#)

The year before South Africa formalised Apartheid in 1948, King Seretse Khama (two-time Golden Globe nominee David Oyelowo) of the neighbouring British protectorate of Bechuanaland married a British white woman, Ruth Williams (Oscar nominee Rosamund Pike). This upsets both their families, not to mention the governments of South Africa, South West Africa, Rhodesia and the United Kingdom, who try to declare Khama unfit to rule.

The opening film of the 2016 BFI London Film Festival, *A United Kingdom* is more than just a heart-warming true story of love overcoming all odds: it’s also the story of Botswana’s independence, its transition to democracy and its fight to retain the rights to any diamonds found within its borders.

Director Amma Asante (*The Handmaid’s Tale*) won the Black Reel Award for Outstanding World Cinema Motion Picture; Guy Hibbert (*Eye in the Sky*) won a British Screenwriters’ Award for Best British Feature Film Writing; and South African

actress Terry Pheto (*Tsotsi*) was nominated for a British Independent Film Award for Best Supporting Actress for her role as Seretse's sister, Naledi Khama.

South African actor Vusi Kunene (*Isibaya*) has a great role as the regent king, Tshekedi Khama, while Jack Davenport (Norrington from *Pirates of the Caribbean*) and Tom Felton (*Harry Potter's* Draco Malfoy) co-star.

A United Kingdom has an 84% critics rating on *Rotten Tomatoes*, with *The Guardian* hailing it as "a beautifully shot, crowd-pleasing gem... Its true-life tale of unity in the face of cultural apartheid and political expediency remains as relevant as ever in these divided times, but it is Asante's talent for making the personal political – and vice versa – that is the real story here."

[Frank & Fearless - First on Showmax](#)

If life is feeling too serious for you right now, Showmax has the escapist movie for you: *Frank & Fearless*, the most recent comedy by South African box office phenomenon Leon Schuster.

When rhino calf Reini is orphaned by poachers, 10-year-old Fearless (Themba Ntuli from *Meerkat Maantuig*) decides to take action. Teaming up with Sonny Frank (Schuster), a lovable and possibly certifiable rogue, Fearless, Reini and a big black dog set out to find justice for Africa's last remaining rhinos, gangster-style. Their quest goes horribly wrong when they run into a platoon of merciless poachers but fortunately Africa itself seems to be on their side.

Safta-winner Kenneth Nkosi (*Tsotsi*, *White Wedding*) is head-poacher Dolf and the cast also includes Khanyi Mbau (*Happiness is a Four Letter Word*), Safta nominee Jennifer Steyn (*Goodbye Bafana*, *Madam and Eve*) and Safta-winner David Dennis (*Soul City*, *The World Unseen*).

As usual for Schuster, *Frank & Fearless* was the highest grossing South African film of the year in 2018.

11 more since, well, lockdown...

Also look out for these recent hits:

- [Somizi & Mohale: The Union](#), the fabulous celebrity wedding special that set the record for the most first-day views on Showmax of any show, ever
- [Madam & Mercy S1](#), featuring the mother and daughter duo who stole the show on *The Real Housewives of Johannesburg's* hit first season
- [Matwetwe](#), a hilarious coming-of-age adventure set in Atteridgeville township over the course of one action-packed

New Year's Eve. Directed by Kagiso Lediga (*Queen Sono*) and executive produced by Black Coffee, *Matwetwe* was the second biggest local film at the South African box office in 2019

- [Skemerson](#), a drama about screenwriter and lead actor Pietie Beyers' own struggle with obsessive compulsive disorder. It's up for four Saftas this year: for Best Cinematography, Best Sound Design, Best Original Score and Best Supporting Actress for Elize Cawood
- [Die Seemeeu](#), a modern-day South African adaptation of Anton Chekhov's classic play *The Seagull*, directed by Christiaan Olwagen (*Kanarie*, *Poppie Nongena*). Sandra Prinsloo is up for Best Actress at the 2020 Saftas, where co-star Albert Pretorius is up for Best Actor for his performance as Konstant, and Cintaine Schutte is up for Best Supporting Actress as Masha
- [An Act of Defiance](#), the true story of how lawyer Bram Fischer risked his career and freedom to defend Nelson Mandela and the Rivonia trialists in 1960s South Africa. The film has won eight international awards and is up for two 2020 Saftas, for Costume Design as well as Makeup and Styling
- [Three Days To Go](#), the fifth biggest local film at the South African box office in 2019, about four estranged siblings who must survive three days under the same roof as they return to their childhood home to lay their father to rest
- [Jan S2](#), about Jan Hendrik van der Westhuizen, the first South African chef to earn a Michelin star. The first season won the 2019 Safta for Best Variety Show
- [Mnakwethu S1](#), the controversial hit reality show that sees married men set out to convince their current wives to agree to a polygamous relationship. The last two episodes are coming to Showmax first, on 10 and 17 April, a day before they air on Mzansi Magic
- [18 Hours](#), the first Kenyan film to win Best Movie Overall at the Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Awards, in 2018. Based on a tragic true story, *18 Hours* follows Zack (Nick Ndeda from *Shuga*), a rookie paramedic who, along with his driver Mark (Brian Ogola from *Lusala*), spends 18 hours fighting to save the life of a road accident victim who is denied admission at multiple hospitals in Nairobi
- [Potato Potahto](#), a Ghanaian-Nigerian romantic comedy about a divorced couple who decide to share equal space in their matrimonial home. Written and directed by Shirley Frimpong-Manso (*Rebecca*, *Devil in the Detail*), *Potato Potahto* stars multi-award-winners Joselyn Dumas (*A Northern Affair*), OC Ukeje (*Alan Poza*) and Joke Silva (*White Waters*), who won Best Actress in a Supporting Role at the 2018 Africa Movie Academy Awards, where the film was also up for Best Actor, Best Actress and Best Screenplay

To see everything on Showmax in April, click [here](#). Please note this release schedule is subject to change.

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