

'Simba' seeks local TV fame

For nine years he has been the face of the international phenomenon The Lion King, but Andile Gumbi has left Broadway behind for a chance at local TV stardom.



A mask from the stage production Lion King in London. (Image: [Steve Evans](#) from Citizen of the World, via I-Net Bridge)

Could his breakthrough come on the most talked about show right now, Isibaya? Although Gumbi said yesterday he's still unwinding at home in Umlazi before looking for screen work in Johannesburg, The Times believes it's a done deal.

A tweet from the show's casting director, Kutlwano Ditsele, saying "soon you'll be seeing him on screen" is also a giveaway.

Gumbi performed the role of Simba in London, Sydney, Melbourne, Shanghai and South Africa, and was the face of the production on billboards, adverts and TV commercials before moving to the Big Apple on a further year-long contract.

That expired at the end of August, allowing him to take stock of his career.

"I felt it was time to get into TV and do something else, otherwise I'd be stuck with The Lion King for a long time," he said yesterday.

"I've no screen experience, [but] you need to stretch yourself as an actor. You won't do that by playing one stage character, no matter how many countries it's in."

The Durban University of Technology alumnus had never flown before landing the role nearly a decade ago, and his mother worried he'd be a drug-trafficking victim.

But he began sending money and pictures home, and found love with Aussie actress Amy Edwards.

When Gumbi moved to London with The Lion King, she moved with him to do Priscilla, Queen of the Desert Edwards later moved to Los Angeles.

Gumbi said: "[The Lion King] has been a huge stepping stone for me. It took me to a new level. It's been amazing for my CV."

He is now awaiting confirmation of his green card, which will allow him to go back to work on Broadway.

"People religiously go to theatre overseas. Maybe it has to do with the standard of living and disposable income," he said.

Source: The Times, via I-Net Bridge

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>