



BREEDERS BATTLE IT OUT WITH FRAT BROS

## Film

# Struggle hero's life story on big screen

DUNCAN GUY

NOT everything can fit into a writer's book or a film-maker's movie. Sometimes gems simply have to be put into storage to have their turn another day.

That's what American film-maker Abby Ginzberg has had to do with an amazing story she encountered while making the documentary *Soft Vengeance: Albie Sachs and the New South Africa*.

It is about the life of Struggle stalwart and former Constitutional Court Judge Albie Sachs, who lost an arm and the sight in one eye to a bomb in Maputo in 1988. The film will be shown this weekend at the Durban Film Festival.

"We were sitting outside the house where he was bombed (in Maputo)," Ginzberg recalled. "A guy came by and said to Albie, 'you don't know me. I knew you. I'm the pilot who flew you out of Mozambique.'"

Ginzberg said the man spoke about how, after Sachs was injured by a bomb planted by apartheid forces, Mozambique Airlines had called him, alerting him to the fact that he would have to fly over South African air space to take Sachs to Europe for treatment.

"He said it was one thing he was prepared to do for the freedom struggle in South Africa. He was a white Mozambican, probably of Portuguese descent. He said we did it and we made it and that's part of how you're okay today."

Sachs had all along believed he had been flown directly from the



**STORY TIME:** A documentary about Struggle stalwart Albie Sachs' life will be shown at the Durban International Film Festival today. It was produced by Abby Ginzberg, right, pictured with narrator Alfre Woodard.

Mozambique capital to London but the pilot also informed Sachs that he had in fact taken him to Paris, Ginzberg recalled. "He was then medi-vaced to London."

She called the story "an orphan that just didn't fit into the family" and hoped she could use it in a future production.

"In every film something doesn't have a strong shoulder and the film works without it."

Ginzberg said Sachs' story fitted perfectly with her genre, which focuses on character-driven stories, racial and gender discrimination and social justice issues.

She had first met Sachs in 1970, during his days in exile while she was a law student in California when friends from Detroit asked her to host him.

"I was part of a group of people who had an active understanding of South Africa. I saw it as my job to be supportive," she said.

"He became my personal link to the anti-apartheid movement."

It was only in 2009 that Ginzberg first visited South Africa for the International Aids Conference, thinking her next film would be on that topic.

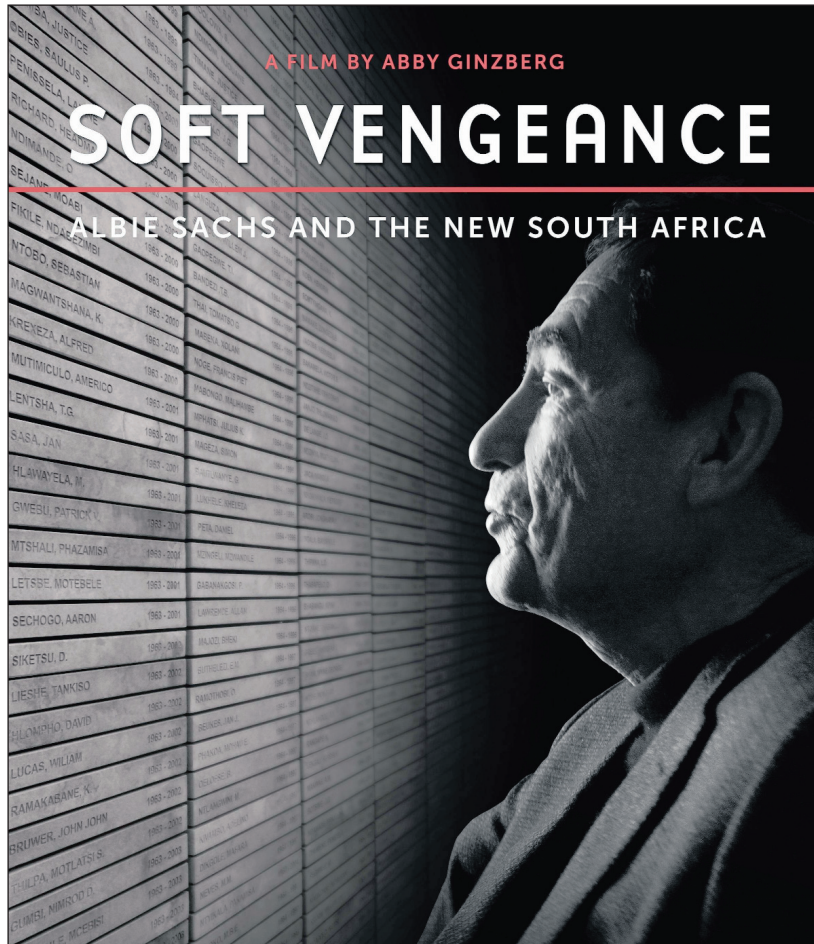
"On my last day here, Albie and I had lunch and the light bulbs flashed. I couldn't do an HIV story but I could do Albie's life story. I had done similar films and it had all the elements I look for. I needed to tell the story about someone I admire and respect."

Featuring in *Soft Vengeance* is an interview with Henri van der Westhuizen, who had organised the bomb and was granted amnesty by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

"I went on to Google and found a Henri van der Westhuizen on LinkedIn. I e-mailed him and he replied saying he was 31 years old and he had nothing to do with it. He was not responsible for any bombs."

"I realised it was a very common name."

When Ginzberg eventually



**STRUGGLE HERO:** A poster advertising the film, which is about former judge Albie Sachs, who was injured in a bomb blast.

tracked down the correct Henri van der Westhuizen, he agreed to be interviewed.

"But afterwards he told me, 'I didn't do it for you, I did it for Albie.' He knew Albie wanted it."

She also interviewed other judges – Arthur Chaskalson and Pius Langa.

"And (writer) Nadine Gordimer. They're all dead now."

She stressed that her greatest success with the film was that South Africans had given it their stamp of approval when it won the Audience Award for Best International Documentary at the recent Encounters Documentary Film Festival in Cape Town.

"I wasn't sure while making the film whether it would work in South Africa. I knew it would work in the United States."

Ginzberg said she felt she had honoured the history of many people and conceptualised Sachs inside a larger struggle that many South Africans felt they were part of.

"The film tries hard to show and highlight the contribution of many people who are not household names in South Africa."

● *Soft Vengeance* will be screened during the Durban International Film Festival at the Suncoast Theatre at 1.45pm today; and on Monday at 5.45pm at the Musgrave Theatre.

## Film

# The story of 'Monsieur Jacques' is revealed

A FASCINATING documentary on the quiet diplomacy that helped shape South Africa's recent history, called *Plot for Peace*, is being screened at the Durban International Film Festival.

The documentary has successfully toured the international film festival and commercial circuits, winning eight awards including best international feature documentary at the 25th Galway Film Festival and the special jury award at the Palm Springs International Film Festival.

The production team was led by multiple Emmy award-winning South African film-maker Mandy Jacobson.

The team uncovered the secret story of Jean-Yves Ollivier, aka "Monsieur Jacques", whose behind-the-scenes bargaining was instrumental in bringing about regional peace and South Africa's freedom.

Interviews with Joachim Chissano, Thabo Mbeki, Denis



**PEACE MISSION:** A scene from *Plot for Peace*.

Sassou Nguesso, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Pik Botha, Jorge Risquet and Chester Crocker bear vivid testimony to the secret dealings.

The premiere screening at the Durban International Film Festival, will be attended by Ollivier, director and producer Jacobson and chairman of the Ichikowitz Family Foundation, Ivor Ichikowitz.

**Screenings are on July 23 and 24 Sun at Sun Theatre 7, Suncoast Cinecentre. The premiere is at 6pm on July 23.**

## Theatre

# Dressed up to speak from the heart

CLINTON MARIUS

IT MAY be worn, and slightly battered, but the hat Cape Town actor David Muller wears in his Herman Charles Bosman show, *Oom Schalk, From The Heart*, has a history that even Bosman would be proud of.

A gift from a friend, the kudu hide headgear is a genuine relic from the Anglo-Boer War. And it's not the only item Muller wears during the show with an interesting history. His brown veldskoens were a gift from Dean Coetzee, author of the best-selling South African novel, *Winds of Change*.

Coetzee approached Muller in the Karoo *dorp* of Nieu Bathesda after one of his sell-out shows, and teased the actor about the inauthentic shoes he'd worn on stage. The author invited Muller to his home with a promise of veldskoens.

Upon Muller's arrival, Coetzee offered him coffee... and a disreputable-looking pair of old brown veldskoens. The only problem was one of them had a gaping hole. Muller



**TIMELESS:** David Muller and his hat in *Oom Schalk, From The Heart*.

PICTURE: MARILYN BERNARD

gladly accepted the coffee and shoes, and after a minor repair job, the latter became a permanent fixture of his show.

These personal anecdotes, as well as the brilliance of Bosman are captured in *Oom Schalk, From The Heart*, playing at Seabrooke's Theatre on the campus of Durban High School in Musgrave until July 26. Performances are at 7pm. Tickets are R80 a person, with the discounts for block bookings, pensioners & students. To book, call Ailsa on 083 250 2690.

## Dance

# Russian ballet to pirouette into town

STAFF REPORTER

FANTASY, fairy stories, gypsies, swans and sorcerers are all part of the mix of Russian ballet coming to Durban next month.

*Pearls of the Russian Choreography* comes to Durban for two shows at the Playhouse Theatre on August 6 and 7, compiled by former artistic director of the Bolshoi Ballet, Yuri Vetrov.

Presented by The Stars of the Ballet Russia Company, the first half of the programme features Acts 2 and 4 of *Swan Lake*. The second half includes the romantic pas de deux from *Sleeping Beauty* and the magnificent Grand Pas Classique from the popular *Paquita*, widely considered one of the finest achievements of choreographer Marius Petipa.

Danced to the music of Tchaikovsky (*Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty*) and the legendary ballet composer Minkus (*Paquita*), the creative direction of *Pearls of the Russian Choreography* is in the hands of Yuri Vetrov and Maria Bylova.



**ELEGANT:** *Pearls of the Russian Choreography* comes to Durban for two shows at the Playhouse Theatre on August 6 and 7, compiled by former artistic director of the Bolshoi Ballet, Yuri Vetrov.

Vetrov started his career as a principal dancer with the Bolshoi Theatre and then trained under the direction of renowned choreographer Yuri Grigorovich before completing his ballet master training at the Bolshoi Theatre in 1982.

He created the television film ballets *Adagio* and *This Wonderful World* and choreographed several famous dance scenes in the operas, *The Spanish Hour* (Ravel) and *The Masquerade Ball* (Verdi).

From 1990 to 1994 he was the artistic director of The Bolshoi Ballet and subsequently choreographed *Don Quixote* and *Cinderella* for the Russian National Ballet Company.

He works as a choreographer in various Russian and international ballet companies and teaches at the Moscow State University.

Maria Bylova has been described as one of the most outstanding ballerinas of all time. Her grace and elegance captivated audiences during her celebrated international career as a showcased prima ballerina of the Bolshoi Theatre.

Her performances are well archived on film and you will find many a young ballerina feasting on her extraordinary skill on YouTube clips. The *Spring Waters* pas de deux is one such favourite. Bylova is the ballet mistress to Stars of

the Ballet Russia instilling her exacting standards on this touring company.

The featured female soloists are Maria Sokolnikova and Maria Klueva from the Russian National Ballet. German Zhukovskiy, a 2012 soloist of the Bolshoi Ballet Theatre, will partner them. Mikhailov Mikhail, an award-winning lead dancer from the Kremlin Ballet, will join them.

All three featured ballets are cornerstones of the traditional classical ballet repertory.

Tickets range from R150 to R280.

Shows are at 7.30pm and tickets are available from Computicket.

## A taste for subscribers

THE INDEPENDENT on Saturday is rewarding its subscribers. Stand a chance of winning one of 40 double tickets to the demo kitchen experience at the Taste of Durban show at noon next Saturday. SMS "TasteSubIOS", your name and subscription number to 33963, before 9am on Monday.

## Party

# Revel in the '80s at top Durban night spot

STAFF REPORTER

FEELING a bit nostalgic about the good old days? Well, get ready to embrace the hit tracks of the '80s as one of the city's most glorious shows arrives.

The Ultimate 80s party experience at *Sky Sounds of the Eighties* will leave audiences revelling in nostalgia at the picturesque Sky Venue.

The event will be held at Southern Sun Maharani Tower next Saturday. Festivities start at 7pm. R380 will get you dinner and drinks.

John Aritho, general manager at Southern Sun Maharani Tower, said the event

would include retro fashion, dinner, dance and music that would "bring an evening packed with the most delightful surprises".

People wearing gear from the 1980s era stand a chance of winning great prizes.

"We believe there is a critical need for entertainment that appeals to the crowd which frequented the former Raffles nightclub in Durban.

"Sky is the ideal location that they connect with and events such as these show them a sense of belonging," he said.

Aritho said smash hits likely to thrill crowds would include music from bands like



Duran Duran, The Police and Dire Straits, The Human League, Culture Club, Thompson Twins and Depeche Mode. "On the other side of the Atlantic we had the more rocky sounds of Bruce Springsteen,

**GEARING UP:** Disco lights await partygoers at Southern Sun Maharani Towers' Sky Venue, host to next weekend's '80s party.

Tom Petty, Steve Miller Band, Blondie and Talking Heads." To make bookings, please phone Garika Ramdarie at +27 31 362 1300 or e-mail garika.ramdarie@tsogo.sun.com.



CINDY KRUGER



MYSTIC SISTERS

## Expo

# Psychic fair – out of this world

STAFF REPORTER

THERE'S something on the cards for everyone.

Whether you want a glimpse of what the future holds for you, to connect with a loved one who has died, or simply if you want answers to problems. This will all be on offer this

weekend at Suncoast Casino during The Psychic and Lifestyle Expo. The expo, said marketing manager, Louise Howell, will have different products and services to offer, including palm readings, angel readings and astrology.

"Many people turn to the spirit world to get answers,

advice or guidance on the past, present or future, which is why this event is so popular," said Howell, adding that this year's show includes beauty therapists, aromatherapy, reflexology, stress and wellness products.

International and national popular psychics like Cindy

Kruger, originally from Durban, who specialises in crossing over and communicating with deceased loved ones, are part of the line-up.

The participants will also include Durban's mystic sisters, Jayshree Rabia Mallaya and Melissa Mallaya-Pandya, who have a 21-year legacy providing clarity and snapshot



GAURAV DHAMEJA

Hinduism) and meditation to help people achieve success,

analysis to individuals on all aspects of their lives.

Gaurav Dhameja, an internationally renowned belief analyst and chakra healer who uses the power of belief-chakra-astrological analysis, rudrakshas (a bead rosary, a common aid to worship in

empowerment and healing, will also feature at the show.

The expo also includes hypnosis, crossing over, numerology, massages, reiki, reflexology, manicure treatments and much more.

The show started on Thursday and runs until tomorrow.

Tickets are available at the door for R30. The show starts each day at 10am.