

The 6 best South African shows, movies on Showmax this October

Trackers, Dominee Tienie, Someone to Blame, Axis Mundi, Zog, Ellen and more.

Trackers | Series

This highly-anticipated thriller is based on South African author Deon Meyer's best-selling story of diamond smuggling, rhino poaching and an international terrorist plot to attack Cape Town.

Why you should watch it:

M-Net's miniseries is a co-production with HBO-owned US network Cinemax (*Warrior, Banshee*) and Germany's public broadcaster ZDF. It's also the first series ever to dislodge M-Net's untouchable Sunday Night Movie slot – that's how excited they are about it.

Trackers stars Safta nominee James Gracie (*Semi-Soet*), multi-award-winner Rolanda Marais (*Die Byl*), Thapelo Mokoena (*Generations*), Sandi Schultz (*Die Spreeus*), Sisanda Henna (*Tsha Tsha*), Trix Vivier (*Waterfront*) and Safta-winner Emmanuel Castis (*Erfsondes*), as well as British actor Ed Stoppard (*The Pianist*).

Meyer supervised the screenwriting himself and the writing team included Amy Jephta (*Die Ellen Pakkies Story*) and Safta-winning director Jozua Malherbe (*Griekwastad*).

Dominee Tienie | Movie

With his congregation getting smaller every Sunday and his family growing increasingly distant, Pastor Tienie Benade begins to question his faith, his purpose, and even who he is. How can he save anyone when he is lost, and can he find his way back to what matters most?

Why you should watch it:

This is the third-biggest SA film and the biggest Afrikaans film at the local box-office so far this year, after *Kandasamys: The Wedding* and *Matwetwe*. And it's no surprise. This simple, uplifting story is beautifully told and powerfully delivered.



Q& A with *Dominee Tienie* director Sallas De Jager

Daniel Derksen 24 Jan 2019



Acclaimed actor Frank Opperman (*Orkney Snork Nie!*) is at his very best here, reprising his immensely human and sympathetic lead role from the highly successful play by Dana Snyman. He's supported by a stellar cast that includes actress, presenter and Safta-winning writer Henriëtte Gryffenberg (*High Rollers*), two-time Safta-winner Deon Lotz (*Skoonheid, When We Were Black*) and Thapelo Mokoena, who also stars in *Trackers*.

Also look out for Silwerskerm-winner Carel Nel (*Fynskrif*), the late Paul Eilers (*Stuur Groete Aan Mannetjies Roux*), Regardt van den Bergh (*Zulu*) and Annette Engelbrecht (*Orkney Snork Nie!*).

Directed by award-winning writer/director/producer Sallas de Jager (who wrote and directed *Free State* and *Jonathan: Die Movie*) and scored by Dawie de Jager (of *Klopjag* fame), this gentle, funny drama will help restore your faith, regardless of your religion.

Axis Mundi | Short Film

To rescue her declining ratings, a paraplegic talk-show host interviews a self-proclaimed healer, who claims he can make

her walk again – on live TV.

Why you should watch it:

Axis Mundi is an acting masterclass from two of South Africa's best actors – Safta-winner Antoinette Louw from *Die Laaste Tango* and *An Act of Defiance*, and two-time Safta-winner Deon Lotz from *Skoonheid* and *When We Were Black*.

It's co-written and co-directed by Matthew Jankes, who directed the Vimeo Staff Pick and Short of the Week *Umkhungo*, and Sean Steinberg, one of the writers on the record-breaking Showmax Original *The Girl From St Agnes*.

Steinberg made history at the Jozi Film Festival recently, scooping three awards: Best South African Short Fiction Film for *Axis Mundi*, Best Feature Film for *(S)he* and Best Director 2019. *Axis Mundi* also cleaned up at Kyknet's 2018 Silwerskermfees, taking the awards for Best Director, Best Screenplay and Best Film.

Zog | Animated Short

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?

Why you should watch it:

Round up the whole family for this one! This funny, endearing and empowering tale about a clumsy little dragon is brilliantly told, with an International Emmy nomination to prove it. The 27-minute animated short captures the magic of the Julia Donaldson/Axel Scheffler bestselling picture book with an all-star voice cast including the likes of Kit Harrington, Sir Lenny Henry and Tracey Ullman.

Animated in Cape Town by Triggerfish for the UK's Magic Light Pictures, *Zog* has already won Best Animation at the Shanghai International TV Festival and the Audience Award for ages three to six at New York International Children's Film Festival. It's co-directed by two-time Oscar nominee Max Lang (*The Gruffalo* and *Room On The Broom*) and multi-award-winning South African Daniel Snaddon (*Stick Man*).

Ellen: Die Storie Van Ellen Pakkies | Movie

In 2007, the death of 20-year-old tik addict Abie Pakkies created a stir in South Africa and the world. The most disturbing part of the case was that the murderer was his mother, Ellen. Based on this heart-rending true story, *Ellen* explores how this loving mother became desperate enough to take her own son's life, and why a judge let her off with a three-year suspended sentence and 280 hours of community service.

Why you should watch it:

Jarrid Geduld (aka Twist in *Boy Called Twist* and Randall in *Dwaalster*) won Best Supporting Actor at The Africa Movie Academy Awards for his performance as Abie, having already won at the Saftas and Silwerskerm.

Similarly, Jill Levenberg (aka Mymoena Samsodien in *Suidooster*) won both the Safta and Silwerskermfees prizes for Best Actress for her performance as Ellen and was nominated at The Africa Movie Academy Awards.

Ellen was South Africa's entry for the foreign film category of the 2019 Golden Globes and earned Daryne Joshua (*Noem My Skollie*) Best Director at this year's Saftas, where *Ellen* also took home Best Score for Quinn Lubbe.

Ellen was the third-highest-grossing local film of 2018 (at a much higher per-screen rate than either *Frank & Fearless* or *Stroomop*).

Someone to Blame | Documentary

Someone to Blame – *The Ahmed Timol Inquest* documents the landmark 2017 case that saw anti-apartheid activist Ahmed Timol's untimely death ruled a murder – not suicide, as apartheid police alleged in 1972.

The documentary follows the court proceedings, focussing on key witness testimony to paint a vivid, personal picture of the injustices of our past, and bring us into the courtroom for a ruling that established a crucial precedent for cases of human rights violations under apartheid to be reopened.



Why you should watch it:

Former apartheid policeman Joao Rodrigues will finally go on trial for Timol's murder this coming December as a direct result of the inquest. *Someone to Blame* follows on from director Enver Samuel's Safta-winning 2015 documentary about Timol, *Indians Can't Fly*.

Someone to Blame won Best South African Documentary at the recent Jozi Film Festival. It also won a Safta for Best South African Documentary Short, took Best Documentary at the Zanzibar International Film Festival, and screened at Input Bangkok, a conference showcasing the world's best broadcasting in the public interest.

But wait, there's more

Showmax also brings you the Safta-winning documentary *Six to Six*, which takes an intimate look at the daily lives of the forensic pathology officers at the Salt River Mortuary; international award-winning science-fiction short *Siklus*; and the short film *Isidima*, based on the story of the Eastern Cape's 'Lion Mama', which earned Mlingane Dube Best Young Director at this year's Jozi Film Festival.

Showmax now also has the first seasons of Mzansi Magic's recent hit shows *Ifalakhe*, a pre-colonial epic that's drawing comparisons to *Game of Thrones* and *Black Panther*, and *The Republic*, featuring Florence Masebe as SA's first female president, as well as new seasons of the always-popular reality shows *Survivor SA: Island of Secrets* (M-Net), *The Real Housewives of Johannesburg* (1Magic) and *Boer Soek 'n Vrou* (Kyknet).

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