Press Release
For immediate release
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Note to Editors: High-resolution photos available at http://uniontheater.wisc.edu/press/index.html

VUSI MAHLASELA, THE “VOICE OF SOUTH AFRICA,” COMES TO THE WISCONSIN UNION THEATER

The “voice of South Africa,” Vusi Mahlasela, will perform at The Sett in Union South on Friday, February 15th at 8PM. Tickets are $22 for the General Public, $18 for Memorial Union Members, UW-Madison Faculty and Staff and students in other schools. This is a Family Savings Event, and tickets for Youth under 18 are only $14 with the purchase of an adult ticket—limit two youth tickets per adult ticket. Youth and adult tickets must be purchased at the same time, and age will be verified at the door. Tickets for UW Madison students are only $10 with valid ID. Call the Box Office at 608-265-ARTS (2787), buy online, or purchase in person at the Campus Arts Ticketing box office in Vilas Hall, 821 University Ave. Please note that there is a Men’s Hockey game this evening, so please allow extra time to find parking.
Although almost 20 years have passed since the end of apartheid in South Africa, the emotional and political legacies lives on. Vusi Mahlasela, poet, troubadour and activist, turned his music and lyrics against the politically and socially oppressive South African apartheid government. His activism began after he witnessed the massacre of more than 200 black Africans in the Soweto Uprising. Evoking the brutality of apartheid, the hope for a new South Africa and the release of nelson Mandela from prison, his song “When You Come Back” quickly became an anthem for the struggle, exhorting Africa to “Sing loud and sing to the people/ Let them give something to the world and not just take from it.” For his activism, Mahlasela was held in solitary confinement and harassed by the police.

In the years since the end of apartheid, Mahlasela’s music has focused on reconciliation but also the continued political struggles of South Africa, both domestic and international. His recent song, “Say Africa,” balances the troubles of being a traveling musician from South Africa--”UN loans and passport controls”--with the African rhythm in his feet. He sings about being from a town whose name, Tshawne, means “we are the same.”

This performance is sponsored by the Wisconsin Union Directorate’s Performing Arts Committee and supported in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board, Wisconsin Union Theater Endowment Fund, and the Anonymous Fund. Media sponsors are WORT, 89.9 FM and Capital City Hues.