

# Oh Schuks, Schuster's on the loose

TERESA SMITH

WHEN *Tonight* first mentioned that Leon Schuster was working on a new film, we jokingly called it *Oh Schuks, Diego's on My Stoep*, in reference to the impending soccer mania.

Turns out we weren't that far off the mark since it's actually called *Schuks Tshabalala's Survival Guide to South Africa 2010*.

Schuster teams up with director Gray Hofmeyr and his long-time collaborator Alfred Ntombela for a combination of dramatic narrative and traditional candid camera gags.

In the film Schuks Tshabalala (Schuster) and Shorty (Ntombela) are commissioned by the 2010 tourism body to produce a movie as a visual guide and aid for foreigners coming to SA for the World Cup.

As teacher and tour guide to a mixed bag of tourists who take his survival guide very seriously, Schuks (with Shorty in tow) embarks on a series of hysterical demonstrations of life in SA as they attempt to answer all the questions posed by the

potential visitors.

Some of the issues they tackle are negotiating our public transport system, explaining how it is that squatter camps can mushroom overnight and whether unemployment is a deadly issue, or not, as the case may be.

In the process they manage to "candid camera" some famous celebrities and test soccer fans' enthusiasm to the limit with the vuvuzela.

The last candid camera film to grace our big screens was in December, when André Scholtz's *Rainbow Skellums* made more than R2 million at the local box office and played for just over a month.

Schuster gained his popularity in the candid camera field with *You Must Be Joking* and its many sequels, but successfully crossed over to slapstick with a narrative with the highly successful *Mr Bones*. Its sequel, *Mr Bones II*, made more than R30m at the local box office (in a country where local movies which make more than R3m at the box office are considered a success).

Shot in and around Cape Town,



**SURVIVING SA STYLE:** Shorty (Alfred Ntombela) leads his cheerleaders, South African style, in the new Leon Schuster movie.

*Schuks Tshabalala's Survival Guide to South Africa 2010*, which is co-written by Schuster and Hofmeyr,

opens nationwide on May 28.

● In a total, but somehow relevant aside, the Afrikaans love story *Jakhalsdans* made R600 000 on its opening weekend, which makes for the strongest opening weekend for an Afrikaans language feature film since *Lipstiek Dipstiek* opened back in November 1994.

Over the past 20 years 18 full-length Afrikaans feature films have been released on our local screens, and *Jakhalsdans* earned seven percent more at the box office this weekend than the 2008 teen comedy success story *Bakgat*. (Henk Pretorius's sequel, *Bakgat 2*, opens locally on September 10).

*Jakhalsdans* was the best-performing feature film at 17 of its release sites and its producer Anton Ernst pointed out that Saturday's box office was practically double that of Friday's, which

is proof positive that word-of-mouth advertising plays a big role in local audience's viewing patterns.

It's the first film released by the new distributor on the block, Indigenous Film Distribution, and their CEO Helen Kuun is understandably encouraged.

"This level of opening weekend takings makes it the best-performing local feature film released this year," Kuun said.

Indigenous Film Distribution will distribute *Schuks Tshabalala's Survival Guide to South Africa 2010* and later this year they will bring us the psychological thriller *The Unforgiving* as well as the Afrikaans musical *Liefing*.

And in other news, SA-born Oliver Schmitz's film *Life, Above All* (previously called *Chandas Secrets*) has been selected for screening at this year's Cannes Film Festival on the official sidebar section, *Un Certain Regard*.



**LOVE STORY:** Darrel Roodt's latest cinematic offering features (from left) Theuns Jordaan, Elizma Theron, Janke Bruwer and Christina Storm.

