

# Binge *Skemerdans*: "The type of storytelling that South Africans have longed for"

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All 13 episodes of *Skemerdans*, a Cape Flats neo-noir murder mystery, are now available to binge on Showmax. The whodunnit is set at the Oasis jazz club, the centre of a power struggle between two brothers, a scorned widow and an organised crime syndicate.



An organic, hyper-local mix of both Afrikaans and English, the half-hour series was filmed along Voortrekker Road and at Club Galaxy, Cape Town's oldest club, which opened in Rylands in 1978. Galaxy is doubling as both The Oasis and the Adams brothers' strip club, The Velvet Room.

*Skemerdans* builds on the success of previous Showmax Originals like the SAFTA-winning *Tali's Wedding Diary*, the SAFTA-nominated *The Girl From St. Agnes*, and this year's critically-acclaimed series *DAM* and *Tali's Baby Diary*.

Early reviews for the latest Showmax Original are similarly glowing. *Africa is a Country* says, "Every moment is loaded with tension," adding, "While it feels like you're walking into an old-time noir novel, the show is also viscerally relatable and immediate because we know these spaces... This noir series makes the familiar iconic.... It is a *mal* interpretation of Cape Flats nightlife. We can't wait to see the drama unfold."

*9Lives* raves, "*Skemerdans* is unlike any other South African series or film I've seen before. It's about time that South African entertainment is shaken up and brought alive by the sounds, sights, and experiences of the viewers it attempts to entertain. This is a fast-paced show worthy of the same enthusiasm with which international shows are binged, and I believe it's setting the pace for the type of storytelling that South Africans have longed for."

*All4Women* says *Skemerdans* shows "the Cape Flats like we've never seen it before... in a story, the likes of which we have yet to see from South African productions... a full-on murder mystery with all the dark and dingy trimmings." And *Channel24* says the first episode "had me hooked... While everything looks good on the surface, tensions are bubbling underneath, and it all comes to a head with a cliffhanger ending."

On Twitter, *IGN's Crushing On* podcast host Caryn Welby-Solomon [tweeted](#), “The writing is so good, the cast is fire, and I got so emotional seeing the inside of Club Galaxy again”, while *TVMzansi* [tweeted](#) that the series is “captivating and relatable... the most endearing look at Cape Flats nightlife.”

*Skemerdans* revolves around the Fortune family, whose eldest son Glenn (SAFTA winner Kevin Smith from *Isidingo* and *Arendsvlei*) owns The Oasis with his wife, Shireen (SAFTA winner Ilse Klink from *Stroomop* and *Isidingo*). Other members of the Fortune family are played by SAFTA winner Brendon Daniels (*Four Corners*, *Sara se Geheim*, *Arendsvlei*); SAFTA nominee Vinette Ebrahim (*7de Laan*, *Binnelanders*); Carmen Maarman (*Arendsvlei*, *Lui Maar Op*, *Belinda*); rising star Trudy van Rooy (*Die Byl*, *Sara se Geheim*); and Ceagan Arendse (*Suidooster*, *Arendsvlei*), who tragically passed away in February 2021. The first episode is dedicated to Arendse.

“*Skemerdans* is about power struggles within a family, which is something that we all relate to,” says Smith. “It really unpacks what happens when a family is put under pressure in a crisis.”

Fleur du Cap winners Sanda Shandu (*The Kissing Booth* 1 and 2) and Mbulelo Grootboom (*Sara se Geheim*, *Projek Dina*); Fleur du Cap nominee Ann Juries-May (*Arendsvlei*, *Ander Mens*); Danny Ross (*Nommer 37*, *Arendsvlei*, *Suidooster*); Kim Syster (*Binnelanders*, *Suidooster*); and legendary Cape Town muso Alistair Izobell all feature prominently as staff at The Oasis.

2019 Comics Choice nominee Carl Weber also stars as one of the Adams brothers, mob bosses who are buying up the strip around The Oasis. Bongo Mbutuma (*Die Spreeus*, *Erfsondes*) plays his partner in crime and brother from another mother.

“This was the first time that I, as a coloured actress, was working with a virtually all-coloured cast in a professional setting, so this was absolutely amazing,” says van Rooy. “You haven’t seen us represented like this before on TV.”

Klink agrees. “Part of what attracted me to *Skemerdans* was it tells the story of coloured people of affluence. They’re not downtrodden; they’re not living on the breadline. This is a very important story to tell, where coloured people are not just seen as gangsters and other stereotypes.”

2019 Standard Bank Young Artist Amy Jephta (director of the award-winning upcoming feature *Barakat* and writer on *Die Ellen Pakkies Storie* and *Trackers*) is executive producer and showrunner, co-directing alongside Ephraim Gordon (producer of *Barakat* and director of *Sara se Geheim* and *Suidooster*).

Nagvlug Films (*Rage*, *Meisies Wat Fluit*) is producing and the crew includes SAFTA winners like DOP Chris Lotz (*Jan*, *The Endless River*, *Rage*) and costume designer Ayesha Khatieb (*Die Boekklub*, *Fynskrif*).

“Galaxy is one of the heritage places, as far as I’m concerned, with regards to Cape jazz,” says Ebrahim, who plays the Fortune family matriarch. “Anyone in my age group grew up with the Galaxy. If walls could talk, the Galaxy could probably throw out lots and lots of secrets. When we shot there, it felt weird being back. Even the smell of the place is the same. Anyone who went there as a regular would recognise which corner was which, and which table is which. So *Skemerdans* is going to bring back a lot of memories.”

Amy’s brother, 2017 Standard Bank Young Artist winner Benjamin Jephta, scored the soundtrack, which also features nostalgic Cape Jazz classics guaranteed to take you back to your own time on the Galaxy dancefloor.

The edgy show has a 16 age restriction. “When I read the scripts, one of the first questions I asked was, ‘What time slot did you guys get?’ admits Daniels. “And then I heard Showmax and it all made sense.”

“*Skemerdans* is shot in Cape Town but it’s a different angle. We don’t see the mountain or the sea in this entire show. So this is not the regular Cape Town; it’s what happens after dark,” says Klink.

As *Daily Vox* says, “*Skemerdans* is more than binge-worthy; it looks like it will be repeat-watchable.”

Watch the trailer:

Binge *Skemerdans* first on Showmax:

<https://www.showmax.com/eng/tvseries/mir6sn8h-skemerdans>

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