

Comedian to host new M-Net game show

Capetonian comedian Soli Philander is the host of M-Net's new game show, Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader?, which tests adult contestants' knowledge of Grade 1 – 5 level school work. Sponsored by KFC, the show premieres on Sunday, 27 January 2008, at 6pm.



According to 94.7 Highveld Stereo news, the show is being filmed in high definition (HD) TV, “the first ever local series” to do so.

While contestants stand the chance to win R1 000 000 in cash should they answer all their questions correctly, they also face the ignominy of having to admit to camera – and the whole country – that they are indeed not smarter than a fifth grader.

Philander – a familiar face to South African television viewers – is looking forward to testing the contestants' knowledge. “I'm a bit of a trivia freak – I can remember the most obscure facts – and have also been through grade five five times now!” he says. “Once myself, and four times with my four children – so I know what to expect.”

Despite topping his class at Eureka Primary School in the Cape in grades six and seven, Philander admits to being a bit of a terror at school. “The abiding memory of my time at school is hearing the teachers shout ‘Philander, shut up!’” he says.

Balance of fun and tension

The self-confessed crossword puzzle fanatic says he appreciates the balance of fun and tension which makes up the show. “I'm a giving person and I would love to see a few contestants walk away with the R1 000 000 – but it's not going to be easy! In my experience NOBODY is smarter than a fifth grader! They know everything!” he says.

Having excelled at biology, accountancy and languages at school, Philander says he would hate to stake the chance to win R1 000 000 on his knowledge of maths. “Everyone thinks it's so easy when they're sitting at home in their armchairs – but wait until you're up there in front of an audience of millions, under hot lights, staring at a solitary question which stands between you and more money than you've ever seen before!” he warns.

The show is reported to have been smash hit around the world after originating in the US, where it is hosted by comedian Jeff Foxworthy.

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