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From AFRICA to AGGIELAND

Overcome with A&M's spirit and traditions, an African actor/student finds a world of difference between his hometown and Aggieiland

By Terri Welch
The Battalion



TED ALBRACHT/The Battalion

An internationally acclaimed black actor from South Africa has become an Aggie.

Rapulana Seiphimo, a freshman theater arts major from Soweto, a black township near Johannesburg, decided to attend Texas A&M for its ethnically diverse theater program. But it was the university that found him and not vice-versa.

Dr. Roger Schultz, the professor-director who instituted multicultural theater at Texas A&M in 1985, recruited Seiphimo through the African Arts Fund (AAF), a non-profit support group in New York.

"Multicultural theater involves selective casting of individuals of various ethnic backgrounds in roles traditionally assigned to Anglos," Schultz said. "The objective is to enhance the play's meaning by creating characters of greater depth and more resonance."

Rapulana Seiphimo, freshman theatre arts major from Soweto, South Africa, will play three roles in the Aggie Player's production of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* on Oct. 3.

But Seiphimo has experienced much more than just the theater in his first month here at A&M.

"I went to the L.S.U. yell practice and game," he said. "I never imagined so many people coming together for such events. It was strange, but fun."

Aggie traditions are not the only differences between Seiphimo's life in South Africa and his life in Texas. English is now a part of every aspect of his activities.

my culture would be considered immoral."

For example, people here call out a name and mean come here by wiggling their finger toward them. Seiphimo said it is considered very rude to use a gesture to call someone in his culture.

with are freshmen, but Seiphimo said that in South Africa all the professors do is lecture and answer questions on their own time, if they have time.

"It is rewarding for an individual to be able to ask questions," he said. "At A&M you can easily raise your hand and ask a professor to explain something."

"I am used to seeing lots of black people. It is kind of scary on this side and there is a tendency here to be more loose about things that in my culture would be considered immoral."

-Rapulana Seiphimo

"You can't say just 'Hi' to someone," he said. "You have to ask how they are, if they are feeling well, and if there are any problems before settling down."

These differences are funny to him, but Seiphimo said he is adjusting and going along with them as time goes on.

It is quite tough, but I write a lot and that helps."

His family includes one older brother, two younger brothers and a younger sister who are still at home. He is sure they would love to come here, but that would be a difficult thing for them to do.

The school system is something he said is also very different. In South Africa, they speak in terms of first year course, second year course and so on, not in terms of hours.

"It is a far-fetched dream to go the United States because of money," Seiphimo said. "It is hard enough just to go to Capetown from Johannesburg."

"When it comes to lectures and professors," he said, "It's hats off. The professors take so much time to make sure we understand."

Seiphimo is a long way from his home cities, but here he is not far away from another home, the stage. He will make his collegiate debut when he plays three roles in the upcoming Aggie Players' production of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* on Oct. 3.

He is not sure if it is because he and the students he is in class

with are freshmen, but I write a lot and that helps."

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Guns Continued from Page 7

think they could use keyboardist Dizzy Reed as a permanent member of the band (even though I can hardly hear most of his lines). Former drummer Steven Adler is lost somewhere in a lawsuit against the band, and former Cult drummer Matt Sorum plays on most of the new tracks - but that's old news by now, anyway.

My first impression of the whole two-disc collection was the best; I'm a little disappointed especially that for 25 bucks, I only got 22 "new" tunes. But the more I listen to it (and the louder I turn the volume), the more I like the whole thing. G'n'R fans will have to have them both. Those of you who aren't sure, get *Use Your Illusion II* first, and it'll convince you to try out I.

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