

Dr Thokozani Mhlambi to perform at Baxter Theatre

 By [Martin Myers](#) 9 Sep 2021

Accomplished cellist and composer Dr Thokozani Mhlambi is set to showcase a program of musical heritage on 18 September at the Baxter Theatre.

After his stint of performing in France over the past two years he kicks off his homecoming tour in Cape Town, presenting his new material created in Paris as well as some of the favourites from his debut album

“I’m really excited because Baxter Theatre has established a Garden venue, which is in keeping with the times, in terms of health protocols. Performing in an outdoor setting has a different kind of communication with your audience than a traditional theatre venue,” says Mhlambi.



Image: Supplied



Mhlambi is joined on stage by Cape Town-based dancer/choreographer, Theo Kolisile Ndindwa, jazz pianist Lonwabo Mafani and AfroFuturistic Soul singer, Kitso Seti

Tickets are available via www.webtickets.co.za.

I chatted to Dr Thokozani last week.

‣ ***The new decade means:***

Reinvention. It's what keeps you alive and kicking. Music is also about fascination: when you are no longer fascinated, because you have seen it all, then there is no longer any creativity.

‣ ***Fame is about:***

Purpose. Just having a large following on social media is not enough; but the purpose of how you are using that platform is more important.

‣ ***I don't do:***

Threesomes, and wild parties that get shut down by the cops.

‣ ***What does music mean to you?***

It is that energizing feeling in the atmosphere. No talking, no meddling, just you and your senses.

‣ ***My music is about:***

Gesture, it's more than just about sound, but the experiential act. The idea is to get you lekker cosy, and then spoon-feed you one difficult truth at a time.

‣ ***I would love to co write with:***

He is now probably very old. But Quincy Jones is still someone I would like to do something with. I probably would have loved to work with Russian Ballet producer Sergei Diaghilev had I lived during his time. He

invigorated the careers of the likes of composer Stravinsky, dancer Nijinsky, and famous painter Matisse, I mention a few.

‣ ***Where do you go for inspiration to create?***

I like taking walks where there's trees and water. Although it is not my genre, but I get quite a kick from listening to House Music anthems, and other popular music.

‣ ***The song you must do in every show:***

"Kulungile Sthandwa Sami," from my debut album *Zulu Song Cycle*. This is a love song, every show must least have one love song. PS: I am not a softie.

‣ ***Any funny moments on stage?***

At the State Theatre in Pretoria, I once had a little girl who just could not stop dancing, while I was performing. Through her dance steps, I felt that I had stepped back and she took over the stage. The stage can be a very lonely place.

‣ ***My heroes:***

HIE Dhlomo, a cultural critic from the 1920s to 1940s, who redefined culture in contemporary African life & what it can do for us as mankind. It sounds a bit cliché, but I do think being in jail for 27 years unjustly, and then still smiling after that is quite remarkable. That's our man, Nelson Mandela.

‣ ***My style icon:***

New York-based slam poet, Saul Williams. Locally, I really like the work of Seth Shezi on Instagram.

‣ ***What is your most treasured possession?***

My instrument which is handmade baroque cello. While in Paris, it underwent some alterations by famous violin-maker, Claire Ryder. It sounds amazing. I am a gadget freak, I love my Sony hi-definition headphones.

‣ ***It's your round what are you drinking?***

I'll probably have the cheapest thing on the menu, since I will be paying. Lol.

🎵 ***Dream gig to do:***

I would really do something grand somewhere in the rural places in KwaZulu-Natal. And have us all sitting under stars, with a fire, like our ancestors once did. I come from KZN, but we could change the venue. Maybe Brazil or the Congo forests.

🎵 ***Nicknames:***

I don't have one. But I have been told that in Ekasi everyone has a nickname, and if you think you don't have one the kids down the streets have one for you.

🎵 ***If you were not a musician what would you do?***

I would be a dancer. Simply because I love body movements.

🎵 ***Who would you play in a Hollywood Blockbuster and why?***

I would be Denzel Washington, a fatherly hero in every role.



Image: Supplied

🎵 ***Pick five words to describe yourself?***

Energetic, light, Sintu, god, music

🎵 ***5 favourite SA albums:***

Ndikho Xaba - *Ndikho Xaba and the Natives*

Busi Mhlongo - *Urban Zulu*

Hugh Masekela - *Still Grazing*

Shiyani Ngcobo - *Introducing Shiyani*

Simphiwe Dana - *Kulture Noir*

‡ ***What song changed your life?***

Boom Shaka's *It's about Time*, in the 1990s, it renewed our confidence as a nation as we were moving into democratic rule. As kids we felt sassy and proud from what we as a nation had done together.

‡ ***Favorite fashion garment:***

I have a collection of vintage hats that I like.

‡ ***Give us some real proper slang and what it means:***

Shandisi is popular slang in KZN, it means 'thing'

‡ ***Your greatest achievement:***

To stand as I do today and call myself a musician. There were so many things that could have stolen my attention, but to stick to the art and have my community steer me in that direction is something I feel is an achievement.

‡ ***What do you complain about most often?***

Time.

‡ ***What is your fear?***

I still fear heights, I probably won't go cleaning skyscraper windows.

‡ ***On stage I tend to:***

Talk as well as play. I think when you are refining a new style/sound it is important to talk about the 'how' of the process as well, so that your audience can have a better understanding.

‡ ***Wishes and dreams:***

My dream is to see African creativity take its place in the world. I believe that it has an important story for the lifetime.

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