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World-renowned South African cellist and composer Thokozani Mhlambi set to perform in Johannesburg



Dr Thokozani Mhlambi is set to perform in Johannesburg.

Photo: Supplied

Musician, songwriter, and cultural pioneer, Dr Thokozani Mhlambi, is ready to mesmerize Johannesburg audiences with his latest musical production: *Hail to the King! A Musical Story*.

Dr Mhlambi is an honorary research fellow at the University of Cape Town's (UCT) Archive and Public Culture Research Initiative. Written, performed and produced by this multi-talented musician, this hot-property musical genius is ready to take the stage at Theatre On The Square, Sandton, for a once-off, must-see performance on Sunday, 20 August 2023.

The 37-year-old KwaZulu-Natal composer is known for incorporating art with music, having held an artistic residency at the prestigious Cite International des Arts in Paris, France, and having his music used as a soundtrack for an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

In this concert, Mhlambi presents a body of work fusing African and classical elements. It features himself on baroque cello and voice, plus five other string players. The cast also includes a 4-piece vocal ensemble.

Hail to the King! A Musical Story is based on a site visit to the ancient Zulu capital of King Dingane. The story is a retrieval of the aura of the ancient capital of King Dingane, the Zulu emperor, in the 1830s. His capital, Umgungundlovu, was a site of fascination for African communities and European settlers alike. Reports of the capital travelled as far as the kingdom of Basutho, the Cape and many other places.

Mhlambi said he compositions to be showcased culminate years of work researching and developing the music. "This work was inspired by my involvement in the Five Hundred Year Archive project at UCT. For the music, I had to look at the works of historical predecessors like the late icons Prof Mzilikazi Khumalo and BP Tyamzashe - who were great composers in the African tradition, fusing the old and new, African & modern elements, towards a whole new sound," he added.

Following a Fellowship in Germany, Mhlambi presents a suite of new music composed for himself on the baroque cello, plus other instrumentalists and vocalists.

The work is made up of three main sections, including meeting of the elephants, the unveiling of the royal woman, and the king's dance.

"This is the first arrangement of my music for a full string ensemble and vocal consort. Jozi people are in for a treat with me playing cello, singing as well as directing the ensemble, while the important historical message is told on stage," said Mhlambi.

The work is proudly supported by UCT, the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences, and Afropolitan Explosiv.

Mhlambi also recently released his latest single, *New Sensation of Life*, which is currently available on all major streaming platforms.

Tickets for the concert can be purchased via [Webtickets](#).

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Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department

Ridovhona Mbulaheni

Media Liaison and Monitoring Officer
Communication and Marketing Department
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch
Tel: (021) 650 2333
Cell: (064) 905 3807

Email: ridovhona.mbulaheni@uct.ac.za
Website: www.uct.ac.za