

Black Coffee launches R65 000 music bursary scholarship

WENDYL MARTIN

DJ BLACK Coffee's towering frame swooped into a packed room at the SAE Institute campus in Woodstock this week.

He has made waves on the music scene as a hitmaker and award-winner. Black Coffee, whose real name is Nkosinathi Maphumulo, was at the institute to launch a R65 000 bursary.

Maphumulo gained attention in 2009 with the release of *Home Brewed*. It featured collaborations with music stars like Ringo Madlingozi, Zonke and Hugh Masekela. The album produced the hit single *Juju*, made with Durban producer Zakes Bantwini, and won Black Coffee the best urban dance album and best male artist awards at the 2010 South African Music Awards.

Little known is that Maphumulo is disabled. He lost the use of his left arm as a teenager when he was among a group of revellers celebrating the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 and a vehicle



HIGH NOTE: Black Coffee during the Africa Rise concert at Walter Sisulu Square in Kiptown, Soweto, last year. PICTURE: MATTHEWS BALOYI

crashed into them.

This is why Maphumulo's left arm was carefully placed in his jeans pocket during this week's press conference and used his right hand to adjust his glasses, wipe tears and hold the microphone as he announced the launch of the Black Coffee Foundation/Bridges For

Music Scholarship.

In 2009, when he first spoke about his disability, Maphumulo said: "I never wanted people to know that I had a disability. But with everything I have achieved, it's a miracle. I have only played with one arm since the beginning of my career. I am an example to others. I feel special, but I

must also give back."

He created the Black Coffee Foundation, which raises funds for disabled people, and played a 60-hour DJ marathon in 2010.

Now, he is backing a bursary at the SAE Institute, which offers creative media courses in animation, gaming, film-making, web design and audio engineering. The bursary will provide a disabled student a R65 000 course in sound production.

The school, which originated in Australia, has 50 campuses in 24 countries.

Maphumulo, who studied music at the former Technikon Natal (now the Durban University of Technology), was impressed with the institute.

"This place is a dream... it is such a blessing for me to have this collaboration with Bridges. It is great that it (the scholarship) is for someone with disabilities. Hopefully, we can fund more than one student. One day, I would like to cover more than tuition.

"With the release of my debut

(self-titled) album in 2005, the last thing I wanted was to use my disability as a marketing tool. I wanted people to love and respect me for my music. By 2009, I was ready to start my foundation and I was ready to speak about it."

Maphumulo is self-deprecating about his career in music.

"I can't sing. In Standard 5 (Grade 7) I joined a music class at school. I was a nightmare singer but I refused to leave and I kept at it until matric. I chose to study music after school. The auditions at Technikon Natal were for jazz. I told them the reason I was there was for music production."

Maphumulo was so determined to succeed that he made a copy of a key for the campus studio, which was only accessible to more senior students at the time. "After class, I would open the studio and press every knob. I mastered the studio within my bridging year."

● For more information about the bursary see www.capetown.sae.edu/en-gb/campaign/2252