

Shaka's life and death in Zulu

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TELLING the tales of one of the most influential leaders of the Zulu kingdom, Shaka, Durban University of Technology (DUT) presents the production *Nawe Mbopha KaSithayi* at the Courtyard Theatre at DUT this week.

Written by Lindinkosi Mbatha and directed by Siza kaMnisi Mthembu, a lecturer in DUT's drama department, the production charts the rise and fall of the legendary Zulu king in epic style.

The Zulu play takes on the assassination of King Shaka that was engineered by Mbopha, who was his chief adviser, together with his half-brothers, Dingane and Mhlangana.

In an interview with Tonight, Mthembu explained why he chose to stage this production: "I think it is essential to preserve the Zulu history and tell the story in our (Zulu) language."

When asked if he thinks the production might stir up controversy among some of the royal Zulu communities, Mthembu said: "As director, I haven't changed much from the original script, I just added life to it, and since it's a published play, I doubt the royal family will have any issues, I salute iLembe King Goodwill KaBhekuzulu."

Mthembu said audiences could

expect powerful dialogue in *Nawe Mbopha KaSithayi*, with strong performances from a group of second-year students, accompanied by soothing music from Aphiwe Namba and choreography by Mdu Mtshali.

"I think it's really important to promote South African productions such as this so that people are able to understand their own stories in their own language."

Drama, humour and excitement were some of the words he used to describe this production. Mthembu has directed many shows, including *Sophiatown*, *Woza Albert!* and Athol Fugard's *Boesman and Lena*, which was part of the Fugard Festival last year.

The gifted director also writes for Ukhozi FM Radio Drama.

In a statement, Mthembu said he wrote a short film in 2010, entitled *Umkhuleko*, which was part of the Durban Film Festival.

He also worked as a dialogue coach for a feature film, *Iphupho*, directed by Zuko Nodaba.

Mthembu's passion lies more in directing and writing but he encourages all those passionate about theatre to study through a reputable institution.

● *Nawe Mbopha KaSithayi* ends Friday. R20 at the door. For more info, call Lebo Sibisi at 031 373 2194.



DUT's talented lead actors in a scene from *Nawe Mbopha KaSithayi*.

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