

# Tevin's got the right moves

Billy Suter

**B**LAME it on his elder brother's gymnastic skills and Michael Jackson – that's the word, together with a wink and a wide smile, from Durban dance and drama student Tevin Kunene.

The 21-year-old, originally from Richards Bay and now living in Berea, is discussing how he got bitten by the dance bug – and how it led to his being chosen to perform three routines at a free entertainment event at the Stable Theatre in Durban's Warwick Triangle area tomorrow.

He will be part of a variety-packed Valentine's Day entertainment programme that will start at noon and last for two hours.

It will include performances by poets Nkululeko "Page" Ngwenya and Thando Ngcobo, contemporary dancers Thandanani Qwabe and Zonke, popular isicathamiya group Zulu Messengers and traditional artists Thekwini Sisters.

A dance and drama student at the Durban University of Technology (DUT), specialising in contemporary ballet, African and modern dance, Kunene will perform a Michael Jackson routine complete with glove and hat, as well as dubstep and breakdance routines at intervals between noon and 1pm tomorrow.

His elder brother, Nhlakanipho, who studied gymnastics, introduced Kunene to backflips and somersaults.

That whetted his appetite for dance, and the passion solidified when he started to copy moves from Jackson's music videos.

By the age of 11, Kunene had proved himself polished enough to enter a variety show at the Mtunzeni Prawn Festival, where his Jackson impersonation won him first prize, a R1 000 gift voucher from a butchery.

"That's when I started to realise that, hey, there could be profit in this.

"My family were very chuffed that they ate well for a

couple of weeks, and I thought to myself: 'Well, at least my passion puts food on the table,' " he laughs.

Kunene furthered his dance training at Felixton College near Empangeni, and in 2008 appeared with 29 fellow Grade 10 and 11 pupils in an interschool competition at the Durban International Convention Centre.

The event was called Rock Challenge, and Kunene's contribution of hip hop elements to his school's routine helped them to win the event.

## Passionate

He is now in his third year as a dance and drama student at DUT.

He is also passionate about scriptwriting.

He talks excitedly about his first script, *The Game: Blessing's Tale*, which he wrote as a college project and will be directing at DUT in May as part of his course requirements.

"It's about a kid being sucked into a video game to go

in search of his girlfriend who is lost there," he says.

"It has a cast of 17 and will incorporate lots of martial arts. I also plan to get a cage fighter in to help choreograph moves," he says.

Kunene is also happy about soon performing at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown in a DUT work titled *Sarcophagus*, a musical work by and featuring third-year students, and is hopeful he will be selected at DUT auditions for a dance work to be presented in September at the Dance Umbrella in Gauteng.

Although dance is his priority, a long-term aim is to produce more of his own music: "I have danced to some of my original stuff, a mix of New Age R&B and hip hop, and have about 30 songs done."

Kunene also hopes to go to London next year to study music at the Royal School of Music.

For more information about the free concert event tomorrow, telephone the Stable Theatre at 031 309 2513.



Dance student Tevin Kunene with Ayanda Khowa-Fali, arts co-ordinator at Durban's Stable Theatre, where a free Valentine's Day entertainment programme is planned for tomorrow.