

BANTWINI WRITES OWN SCRIPT

Singer to record his first live DVD on Youth Day, writes Noni Mokati

HE HAS captivated fans with his dance moves and collaborations alongside house music maestro DJ Black Coffee. The songs *Juju*, *Bam Bam* and *Clap Your Hands* have sent masses of music lovers on a hip-swaying venture.

And now Zakes Bantwini is dishing out more.

Bantwini, 30, will flip the script on June 16 when he presents his new theatre show titled *Upfront with Zakes Bantwini*.

The musical production in association with Hansa is set to be held at the newly built 400-seater Soweto Box Theatre where Bantwini will also record his first-ever live DVD.

The much-anticipated one-night show will delve into the Durban-born musician's *Lights and Music* album, giving a tinge of his usual urban jazz, kwaito and house beats.

Bantwini, born Zakhele Madida, will also put a twist to his popular zesty tracks and smooth choreographed moves.

Those in attendance on the night will be given a glimpse of what is likely to happen when house and kwaito music meet ballet and a string quartet.

"I've realised that one does not need to release a new album every year. I still enjoy performing all my old songs at gigs.

"It is what you do to constantly improve your craft that matters... it is about giving people something new every day... placing something new to a song makes it



GETTING DOWN: Collaborations by Zakes Bantwini, right, and DJ Black Coffee, have taken the house music scene by storm. Bantwini will be performing at the Soweto Theatre on June 16.

still relevant years later," said Bantwini, who broke out into a jazzy rendition of his song *Nomathemba*.

"*Nomathemba* can be sung in different ways and in any different environment, that is what music is largely about," he said.

Bantwini's decision to take a break from creating a new album also comes as no surprise as his songs are still relevant on the dance floor. Speaking about the forthcoming show on Youth Day, he said when the concept of creating a theatre show was born, he wanted

something intimate.

"I didn't want to be at the stadium. With this production I just want to have fun, make music and have a production that can be taken anywhere," he enthused.

Bantwini said his show was dedicated to Sophiatown.

"I fell in love with the story of Sophiatown," he said, adding that as a musician he sought to bring the culturally rich era to life.

Bantwini said the era was a time in the nation's history that brimmed with musical talent.

Miriam Makeba, Letta Mbulu and Dolly Rathebe once called Sophiatown home.

The show will also include 26 cast members and performances by veteran jazz player Siphon "Hotstix" Mabuse and the likes of Xoliswa Dlamini and Culoe The Song, to name a few.

Bantwini's acquaintance with theatre dates back to his childhood.

At the age of 11 he was a regular at the Play House Theatre in Durban. He later progressed to perform a choreographed piece at the Dance Umbrella. He also travelled with French ballet company Durieux in Europe and Africa.

Boredom in theatre and not being able to express himself the way he wanted to led Bantwini to establish his own company Mayonie Productions which has managed various artists including the late musicians Andile Mseleku and DJ Budda who was killed in a car accident.

He holds a diploma in jazz which he obtained from the former Natal Technikon and last year scooped the Best Male Award at the Metro FM Awards and another accolade at the Channel O Awards.

● Tickets to the show range from R250 to R300 and can be bought online at WebTickets.co.za