



THANDISWA

Thandiswa Mazwai is one of the most influential musicians on the South African music scene today. She began her career in 1998 with Bongo Maffin, one of the pioneering bands of Kwaito. After 6 award-winning albums with Bongo Maffin she ventured onto a solo career. *Zabalaza'* (2004), her debut project, reached double platinum status and won numerous awards including a Kora Award for Best African Female Artist and Four South African Music Awards. It was also nominated for the BBC Radio 3 Planet Awards. Her critically acclaimed second album *'Ibokwe'* (2009) reached gold status in the first few weeks of its release and her recent live DVD *'Dance of the Forgotten Free'* (2010) won South African Music Awards for Best Female Artist and Best Live DVD in 2011. The Guardian recently called her "South Africa's finest female contemporary singer."

Born in the year of the Soweto Uprising (1976), she has always felt that she has the soul of a rebel. Both her parents were journalists and political activists and she was raised in a home filled with books and thick with political discussions. It was this environment that nurtured her perspective as an artist. Her work has always been inspired by the writings of people like Biko and Fanon, Achebe and Nkrumah, she says, "My work gave me an opportunity to share my thoughts and have a meaningful conversation with my generation about Blackness, Africaness, about some of the social ills that plague us, and also about freedom and joy. Music gave me an opportunity to feed my revolutionary self." Her music travels through the village into the ghetto and raises the roof in the city. Her compositions today include traditional Xhosa rhythms, mbaqanga, reggae, kwaito, funk and jazz. Through this, Thandiswa straddles the urban and the rural, effortlessly melding the traditional with the modern.

And it is with this spirit that Thandiswa has performed all over the world at venues including: the FIFA 2010 World Cup Opening Ceremony, The Apollo Theatre, Radio City Hall, Womex, The Cannes Film Festival, The Barbican, Africa Brazil Festival, Fespaco Film Festival, BBC World Music Awards and several Mandela 46664 concerts. She has shared the stage with Salif Keita, Skunk Anansie, Cesaria Evora, Stevie wonder, Angelique Kidjo and many others. At home, Thandiswa has collaborated with musicians like Hugh Masekela, Stimela, the late Busi Mhlongo, and the BLK JKS. Her creativity has led to collaboration with stellar international artists too. For instance, Thandiswa collaborated on two songs with US musician Meshell N'degeocello on her album *'The World Has Made Me the Man of My Dreams'* which was nominated for a Grammy in 2007. Most recently, she featured on Paul Simon's *Graceland 25th Anniversary Tour*, performing to audiences all over Europe.

Thinking about the future, she says "I would like to play all over the world to new audiences and share my music and perspective. I also want to make albums that will merge the sound from my part of the world with the sounds of Mali, Jamaica, the jazz underground in the USA, Brazil, Cuba, and the Congo. I am also interested in exploring electronic music, dub and funk, even punk...I guess I want to do it all."

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