



MHLAHLANI '14' Shabalala in St Lucia after a Maskanda concert in 2002. The South African music industry is mourning the death of this talented musician

PICTURE: DAILY NEWS ARCHIVES

Local music industry mourns '14' Shabalala

MAURICIO LANGA

THE South African music industry is mourning the death of well-known KwaZulu-Natal Maskanda musician Mhlahleni James "14" Shabalala, who died at his Bergville home after a long illness.

David Marks, of 3rd Ear Music Company, which organised most of the Shabalala's shows and eventually introduced him

to Ladysmith Black Mambazo, said Shabalala had been battling liver cancer for the past six months. He died last week.

He had been nicknamed "14" Shabalala by his grandmother because he was apparently abandoned by his mother when he was 14 days old.

"He was much loved and admired by musicians, and all who heard him perform were mesmerised. He was utterly

unique ... one of a kind and will be sorely missed by all," said Marks.

Neville Dube, "14" Shabalala's friend and adviser, said Shabalala did not get much media coverage and this was detrimental to his career.

"He used to play mainly in festivals and people liked his music, but they could not buy his CDs or cassettes in music shops," said Dube.