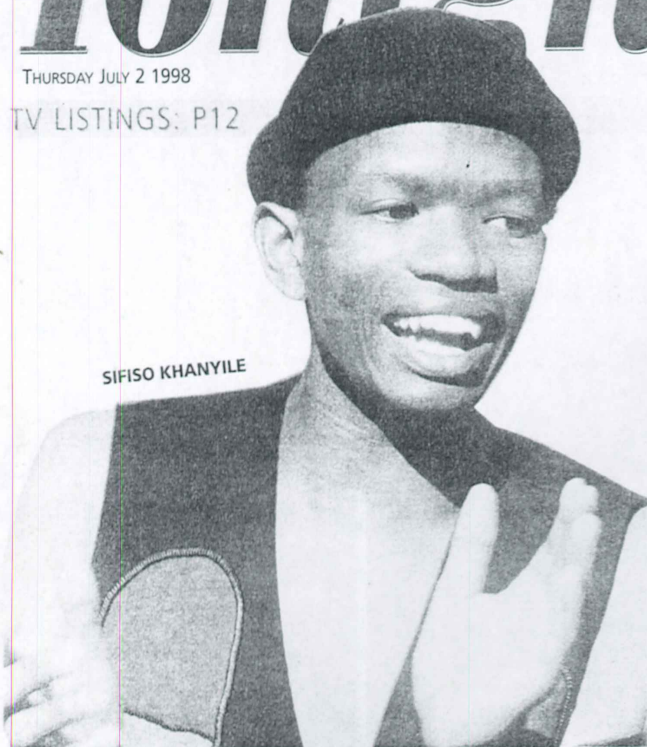


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SIFISO KHANYILE



XOLISA GOOLI

PICTURES: GISELE TURNER

# Fiording ahead



The doors are opening for our young musicians. GISELE TURNER speaks to two of the three students from Technikon Natal who are on their way to Norway, where they will share their musical heritage at the largest international festival of folk music.

THREE talented music students from Technikon Natal leave for Norway tomorrow to participate in Shuttle '99, an exciting intercultural exchange project.

It will provide the students - Xolisa Gooli, Sifiso Khanyile and Lihle Nene - with the opportunity to work with young Norwegian musicians on a presentation for the Forde Folk Festival.

Shuttle '99 is an initiative of the Norwegian Concert Institute (NCI), on behalf of the Norwegian government.

Earlier this year, two representatives of the NCI, Tom Gravlie and Anne Moberg, whizzed around South Africa auditioning between 40 and 50 acts, before settling on the three singers from the Tech. I asked Susan Barry, the

senior lecturer in the Tech's music department, what special ingredient the students have that enabled them to be chosen.

"Apart from their very beautiful voices, their choice of music made a big impact.

"Overseas folk are interested in traditional African music; they don't want to hear American stuff. Young people here just don't value their own music. They are always looking to America," said Ms Barry, who has been co-ordinating musical preparations for the trio.

Khanyile chimed in: "I come from Imbali township in Pietermaritzburg, and we are very Americanised. My peers think that traditional music is barbaric. They have been laughing at me.

"I must admit that I have shared their attitude, and it is only now that I am going to be representing my country that I have developed a respect and interest in my roots. So this is a very important breakthrough for me in more ways than one," Khanyile said.

The trio will present a rich and varied programme for the festival. They will sing a traditional Pondo song, a pre-colonial composition *Ingcema Balabala*, the ever-popular *Ilanga Ni Tshonile*, as well as some compositions by Gooli, two Xhosa songs written within the traditional framework.

"It will be a privilege to perform our songs," says Gooli, who has a very impressive musical history for one so young.

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## African folk amid the fiords

G OOLI has performed with Kenyan singer Simba Morri, done backing vocals for Sergio Diaz from Brazil and local diva Busi Mhlongo, as well as co-written a song which won the Radio Metro song contest earlier this year.

I first heard Gooli years ago when she was still a student, singing at Spice 'n Things, and I was bowled over by her voice and vibrant stage personality. I thought at the time that this was a talent that could really go far, and I asked Gooli when she first realised that she had something.

"When I was a little girl I would just sit by the speakers and listen to music - I loved it so much. Then one day my sister took me to a concert and I heard a song that I really wanted to remember. So I wrote it down on

my hand in tonic sol-fa, even though I had not yet been taught it. My mother was very excited when I showed her. Then I knew that I had something special."

Khanyile, on the other hand, had no idea that he could sing until he went on a school camp and was required to perform.

"I sang *Shosholozo*," he chuckled, "and people really liked it. So I joined a gospel band, writing and arranging songs as well as singing. Then I decided that music was my life and I joined the Technikon in '95."

Nene, who was unable to attend the interview, was a soloist in her local church and was part of an a-cappella gospel group at school. The youngest of the group, she has completed her bridging year, and is in her first-year at Tech.

Apart from their presentation, these three young people are required, together with Textito Langa and Stelio Lamussene - two youngsters from Mozambique, to create a special piece with some Norwegian musicians.

The Norwegian contingent comprises prize-winning fiddlers, a saw-flute and recorder specialist plus a player of a two-rowed accordion. The Mozambican contributions will be the timbali (a type of marimba) and a traditional drummer.

Peter Rorvik, of 3rd Ear Music, has been assisting with the project locally.

Next year, South Africa will be hosting a return concert. In the meantime, we wish our young ambassadors *bon voyage*, knowing that we can be proud of our home-grown talent.