

Mtukudzi set for Channel O honour

Legendary Zimbabwean singer Oliver Mtukudzi is set to receive the Special Recognition Award at the upcoming 2007 Channel O Spirit of Africa Music Video Awards ceremony, organisers announced on Friday, 31 August.

Tuku – as he is fondly known – joins a stellar line-up of past Special Recognition Award recipients. Last year saw South African kwaito star and youth culture icon, Zola, honoured while the world-famous jazz maestro Hugh Masekela received the accolade in 2005. Both Enoch Sontonga and Fela Kuti received posthumous awards in 2003.

It has been 30 years since Mtukudzi was initiated into the world of professional music when he joined the legendary group Wagon Wheels. Their first single Dzandimomotera went gold in Zimbabwe.

Tuku then joined the band The Black Spirits, the band that has backed him throughout his career which has seen an astonishing output of recorded and live work that makes him one of the continent's most prolific artists.

Alongside his music career, Mtukudzi has also ventured into the world of film and drama, participating in several documentaries on Zimbabwean music and going on to find film success playing the lead role in the Zimbabwean film JIT, which was also released in Denmark, France and the UK.

JIT's success was followed by the role of Neria's brother in the feature film Neria, for which he also wrote and arranged the soundtrack. Neria was a box office hit in Zimbabwe and earned Oliver the coveted M-Net Best Soundtrack Award in 1992 against stiff competition, including that of the highly acclaimed Sarafina.

Mtukudzi has never confined himself to his home country and has performed at various international events. His music carries strong messages, tackling issues like HIV/AIDS awareness, alcohol abuse, respect and dignity for the fellow man and the importance of family in today's world.

Channel O said in a statement: "In awarding Oliver Mtukudzi the Channel O Spirit of Africa Music Video Awards Special Recognition Awards, Channel O pays homage to this child of African soil and recognises contribution to African music and mankind."

The Awards ceremony will be held at the Johannesburg City Hall on Thursday, 11 October 2007. The event will be recorded and broadcast on Channel O on Thursday, 25 October at 8pm.

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