

Theo "Bopsie" Bophela Appeal for Sponsorship

INTRODUCTION

One can not dispute the fact that South Africans have always been gifted in song (Ingoma). Not only was music a major form of entertainment but many centuries ago one may dare to say that warriors charged the enemy while singing. Coming closer to home in Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN), the well-known Zulus used to raise hair with songs of warfare and its accompanying Zulu dances. This did not take place only in war, but was ever-present in peace time also, when families and communities assemble.

During the time of oppression in South Africa, where Black Africans were despised, helpless and stripped of their dignity, they would sing to help soothe the pain. They sang in the fields as they engaged in heavy labor on the huge plantations to provide for for their tables. They sang around the fire in homesteads during family times. They sang at the rivers when doing their laundry. The custom of singing was particularly noteworthy during the struggle against apartheid. It can be undoubtedly concluded that comfort and inspiration was found in song and that it brought joy in the midst of pain.

It, therefore, is incumbent to pass the history of the most powerful compositions and songs that were born during the time of struggle, for indeed none should oppress this gift of the Creator. History was never relayed on pen and paper in the Black South African Community, but rather orally through storytelling. However, to protect the heritage and to make sure that it passes to future generations, it is necessary to reduce the beautiful history of music to writing.

In recognition of this necessity, the jazz legend of KZN, one of the greatest jazz pianists of our country, Mr. Theo "Bopsie" Bophela has compiled the music and the stories behind it, as a gift and legacy for the present generation and the generations to come.

BACKGROUND

Mr. Theo Bophela was born on March 15, 1931 in Estcourt (Esiphangweni). His mother died when he was only 2 years old, and his father passed away five years later, leaving him as an orphan to be raised by his grandmother in Umkhumbae4 (Canto Mayor). His first exposure to music was in church when he was still living with his parents. Thereafter, he was exposed to various types of music of the day including Marabi and Khwela music.

Bophela's passion and love for cord music in general led him to learn the basics from Patrick J. Chambers (a white man) who risked serious punishment from the racist government for teaching a black child at Chamber's home. Little did anyone imagine that this start would eventually produce one of the great musicians (pianist and composer) in South African history. The great breakthrough for Theo came in 1955 when he performed in an Africa Jazz and Variety show, accompanying Dolly Rathebe and other artists in the show like Hugh Masekela, Dorothy Masuku, Thandi Klaasen, Jonas Gwangwa, Miriam Makeba, the Manhattan Brothers, and Caiphu Semanya (to mention a few).

Theo has had the privilege to perform in many countries such as New Zealand, Greece, and Austria as well as in many places within South Africa. In celebration of his 80th birthday, Theo put together his compositions and an album that was showcased and performed to celebrate his life. But it can not end there because the assembled compositions and the story behind them are meant for all generations to see, enjoy and pass on. For this reason, Theo want to publish a book that has all the rich history of the SA music and the songs themselves.

PROFILE

Mr. Theo Bophela initially learned music from Patrick J. Chambers, a white man, who taught him after hours in his residence in Ridge Road, risking arreest by the Apartheid Regime. He later acquired formal music education and became one of the well-respected Jazz musicians in the province of KZN (KwaZulu-Natal) and in the country.

To date Mr. Bophela has taught various aspiring musicians on music theory and piano. He is a member of the KZN Arts and Culture Council, a member of the Social Transformation Sub-Comittee, an ex-member of the Board of Directors of the South African Recording Rights ORGANIZATION ITD (sarral), an active member of South African Music Rights Organization (SAMRO), Composer, Arranger, Band Leader, Pianist, Music Director/Educator and Orchestrator.

He presently lives in Inanda, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal with his wife and youngest son of his four children.

ACHIEVEMENTS

1952 - 1958 - Theory of music grade I to grade VIII, grade VI pianoforte - from London Trinity College of Music, and Royal schools of Music of London in Durban.

1955 - Accompanied great artists like Dolly Rathebe at the African Jazz and Variety Show.

1962 - Part of Gibson Kente music production "Manana the Jazz Prophet"

1965- 1966- Toured Australia and New Zealand with AFRICAN DANCERS BALLET CO.

1991 - Arts Award from Radio Arts Management for best performance of light music on Radio Zulu . Also led Dorkay Big Band in Welcoming Exiled Musicians "Unity - 91" at FNB Stadium - Gauteng.

1995 - Diploma on ligh music (19 distinctions) from Technkon Natal, now DUT.

1997- Formed Nqwelo Africa jazz group including students and seasoned musicians' mentorship (6 piece band + female vocalist)

2000 - Received a hall of fame award for “outstanding contribution for a lifetime of music”. Also directed the musical play “Madiba’s Farewell” at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg.

2012 - EtheKwini living legend award winner, from EThekwini Municipality (fifth Annual award). This coincided with the writing of his book at the ripe old age of 83.

COMPOSITIONS

1) African Express; 2) Amakhinotse (Keynotes); 3) Ahlobo Bethu Ninenigulayo (Our relatives who are sick); 4) Cool It!; 5) Emakhaya (At Home); 6) Emaqadini (Tribal Place); 7) Farmer Shand; 8) Gawulubheke (Beware of chopping the tree); 9) Ibuya (Return); 10) I’ll Remember Her/Him; 11) Isidlukuladlwedlwe (Something with violence in it); 12) Jazz Resurrection; 13) Mostly in the Night; 14) Ndlelanhle (Go well); 15) Ngomgqibelo (Saturday); 16) Ntantenti (Play wants love, wife is there); 17) No more Troubles; 18) Silindile (We are waiting); 19) So Sad Yet So Beautiful; 20) Somewhere, Somehow & Some day; 21) Theo’s Jump!; 22) Theo’s Mood; 23) Till the End; 24) Tshwala! Umubi Wetshwala (Drink, no good); 25) Ukuthuthumela (fear); 26) Ulwandle (The Sea); 27) Umhambi (Vagrant); 28) Uzungangishiyi! (Forsake me not); 29) Wenzenina Imini Yonke (What have you done in your life the whole day?); 30) What’s Up!; 31) Wo! Qaphela Bophela bonkabantu (Beware, watch out all will end up bad with unsafe sex); 32) Willy, Willy!; 33) Ziboshelwe (Inspanned - as in plowing with oxen).

THE VISION

The vision behind his book is to make sure that as music keep evolving and genres keep popping up, South Africans would still hold dear to the richness of the roots of music of their country. The songs written and presented by Bopsie are those set a South African apart from any other national. By virtue of playing and excelling in them, every SA musicians gets recognition as a performer of South African music.

The plan is not only to put the book on books shop shelves, but also to market this work for many years to come by way of music tours within the country and abroad. The concept is to work in collaboration with various national musicians in performing the pieces of music in the book and showcasing the rich music history in different provinces and perhaps internationally. It will be during these shows that this book will be introduced, as the performed songs will be in the book. This is envisioned not only to revive the Marabi, Khwela and township music, but also to market this book to all music lovers in South Africa and the world. He wants to publish his book with a CD on his 85th Anniversary.

It must be noted that this is the very first of its kind. As South Africans we have read the history of many other nations that have been able to write it down for the rest of the world. It may have seemed like we do not have our own great works for us and the world to celebrate, but that definitely is not the case. It has simply been the lack of documenting our great works. We have celebrated the world, it is high time that we now celebrate ourselves and the world will, no doubt, celebrate with us. Let us therefore stand behind this work and have our very own music history book that will benefit many generations to come - a book written by a fellow South African, the legend, Theo Bophela.

SEARCH FOR SPONSORSHIP

The painful truth is that we do not have solely music literature publishers in South Africa. We also do not have a history of sales of such literature since we do not have a history of producing music literature of our own. For this reason, in order to get this work into the market it may be necessary for Mr. Bophela to self-publish. The first of its kind usually needs to take this route as it takes time for others to believe in the idea that has never been executed before. You are therefore requested as a friend, a musician, a music lover, a history maker and a fellow South African, or “foreigner”, to support and/or sponsor Mr. Bophela in the publishing of this book. Your contribution towards this project will not only bless the visionary but many South Africans, young and old, who will take pride in seeing this work of their very own. There are many anticipated expenses (Professional writer, Book publishing, Editing, Printing, Distribution, etc.) associated with the project. Recognition and acknowledgement of the sponsors will be done. The names of individuals or companies will appear both in the book as well as in all marketing material. They will also be announced in the marketing productions throughout the country (both locally and abroad). Your support in this project will be highly appreciated. To provide sponsorship and support please use the following contact details:

Mr. Theo Bophela

Telephone / FRax (031) 510 1253

Cell: 083 278 4238

Email address: theobophela@yahoo.com

He will provide banking details upon receipt of your inquiry.