

Montu and Masebe
Trail that trail
2020

for Solo Viola

Mzansi Publishing



PREVIEW

Monthati Masebe

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2020

for solo Viola

Commissioned by Louise Lansdown

Programme Note

The ANC was getting international funding to train Mkhonto veterans to fight back, at the time pain was a predominant factor, and so room for negotiation seemed unfathomable. Years and years of oppression had built numbness and an inability to see a way to set our people free and deal with the perpetrators. The mandate was war. South African indigenous tribes come from generations of warriors, survival practices, wisdom and civilization. We have always had African names for divine power, healing, infrastructure, agriculture, economics, trade, culture. We have always had diverse languages. We hear stories about how the Basotho defeated Zulu warriors and colonizers using their landscape and topography. Instead of fighting with weapons and risking the deaths of our own people, we climb to the top of the mountain and push large rocks down every point till all the enemies are injured by “natural causes”. We have many stories of defeat. Many women who led revolutions and kept colonizers from conquering all of South Africa. So when we were systemically oppressed and reduced to slaves in our own land it felt like our historical pride was polluted by struggle and the misrepresentation of Africans. I grew up with family members who spoke about all the military training they received and all the soldiers they killed. I steal their weapons and build their arms. I also grew up in schools that taught us that “the blacks” had no mind and structure which made oppressing us easier. The inaccurate depictions of history being institutionally cemented brought pressing questions to the surface. Why do we have such a warped narrative, why are we painting pictures of a rainbow nation without reconciling the truth with the indoctrination? South Africans across race and class can all agree that everybody was impacted from white men being forced into conscription to young children having broken homes with deeply traumatized parents. The atrocities could not be ignored by anyone. We have an interesting opportunity to reassess what we give space to, and how to lighten the corners. Unfortunately we are still very segregated. One of the wealthiest business districts in Africa is a stone throw away from one of the most impoverished townships in South Africa. We recently had a riot out of riots and looting that led to racial turmoil and class segregation. Videos of vigilantes taking their arms to the street and shooting at the poor as a means to protect their property, political infiltration and a lack of resolution really showed itself in July 2021, and while the situation diffused it became quite clear that South Africa could be on the brink of resurgence. So where does that place us? How does it affect the lense we use to look at our history? What power do we have as the y

I knew that I did not want to write a metaphorical history lesson for the performers, I didn't want to pull at their heart strings or hopes to evoke empathy because many artists who came before me had already done so. Mphahlele Ndodana wrote an opera about Winnie Mandela, Miriam Makeba spoke out at the United Nations about what the apartheid government was doing and of course one of the biggest things which helped South Africa - the sanctions that many countries imposed on our country. I chose instead, to reflect on the historical impact on youth from all over the world now. I wanted to place performers and audiences into a cultural portal that invokes wander and pondering. I wanted to open the desire to question.

Trials that Trail are an intriguing combination of a deeply personal musical homage to history and a window into our present reality.

Monthati Masebe

Kathy

Ahmed Kathrada was known for bringing people from many worlds together. i-step / codessa is a dance in South Africa that has similar effects. I incorporated foot stomps with this piece to enhance the beauty flavour of uniting in movement.

Performance note: In bars 11 and 15, try to move in a circle as you land you back to forward facing. Video of example can be sent on request

Andante ♩ = 51

Viola

Foot stomps

mf *p*

9

16

f *espressivo*

22

p *f*

r r r r l r l r r r r r l r l r l

r r r l r l r l r r l l l l

29

r r r r l r l r r r l l

34

r r r

39

f

45

legno battuto

l l l l r r r r l l l l

r r r r l l l l r r r r

Backroom boy

Backroom Boy: Andrew Mlangeni defines humility to this day. Known for countless accolades, he still prefers to be defined by his township roots. And embraces the culture that being a backroom boy brought

Performance note: In bars 34-38 you can either play the long notes and use your feet to tap the rhythm or play the long note as a chord and tap the short notes on the viola.

Adagio

Viola

The musical score is written for Viola and Percussion. The Viola part is in 13/8 time, starting with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The score is divided into measures 1 through 18. Measures 1-14 are for the Viola, and measures 15-18 are for the Percussion. The Viola part includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and rests, with fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4, 0) and breath marks (V) indicated. The Percussion part is marked 'col legno battuto' and includes a 'pizz.' (pizzicato) instruction. A box in the Percussion part indicates 'effects with finger-tips on the wood'. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

1

3

1 2 4 0

4

1 4

3

7

3 2

0

11

3 3 3 3 3 3

1 2 2 3

1 2

3

15

col legno battuto

pizz.

3

2

18

effects with finger-tips on the wood

1

0

3

3

22 LH palm
RH knuckles

1.soft
2.loud

25 arco,sul tasto

29

33

36

Bombs books and guitars

In this piece we re-imagine the viola as a guitar, then as a book and lastly as a tremor. Making petrol bombs became a normalized tool for many black South African guerilla soldiers. If all you had was a room and a guitar with nobody to speak to... How many languages would you create to express how you truly feel?

Performance Notes:

X noteheads - tap board percussively

W headless noteheads - tap board with the front of your wrist

F headless notehead - tap board with finger

Hold like a guitar

Largo ♩ = 56

pizz.pluck with thumb

Viola

1 soft
2.louder

pizz.

5

1 pluck

3 plucks

9

12

13

w f w f w f w w w

15

w f w f w f w w w

19

sul pont.

run fingertips up
and down the board

cont.

rit.

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Golden

Andrew Goldreich epitomizes the power of art as protest. We can say and do so much with our art. We don't need to exist in social boxes created for us.

...And so in this piece, I decided to expand the idea of the instrument. The piece begins with chanting and drumming on the board of the viola like it is a drum. Take the opening phrase as an opportunity to re-imagine your space.

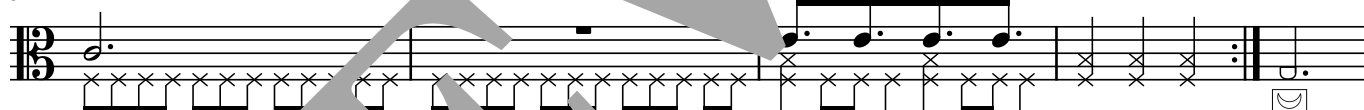
When saying "Ahhh" add a growl sound to emphasize the idea of protest. Umzabalazo is a big part of South African culture. I hope you get a taste of the fighting spirit when you chant these sayings.

Begin the piece seated with the viola on your lap as if it were a hand drum

Viola



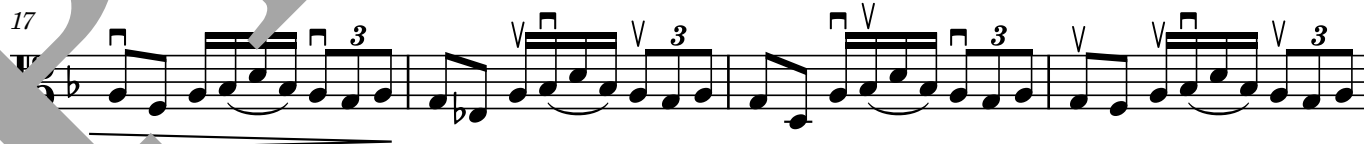
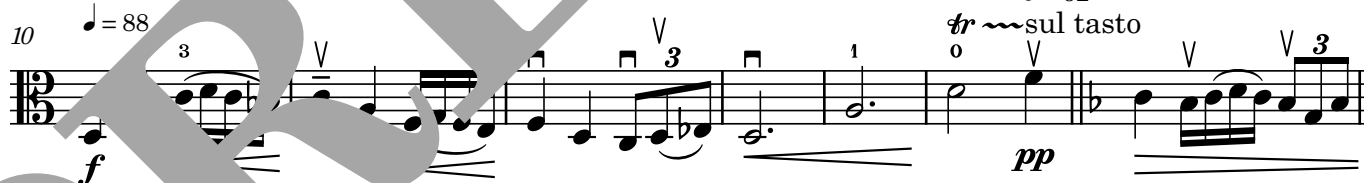
5



Take a deep breath and stand up

Ahhhhh

Riye riye riye riye



26 $\text{♩} = 100$

Lower 1/2 Upper 1/2 Lower 1/2

f *mf* *f*

30 *f*

33 *long*

37 $\text{♩} = 80-84$ pizz. *mp*

42 $\text{♩} = 100$ arco

48 *long* *long G*

54

58

This time use your fingertips to tap the rhythm and slowly fade into silence

The musical score is written for a 12-string guitar, indicated by the 12/8 time signature. It consists of several staves of music. The first staff (measures 26-33) features a sequence of eighth-note triplets, with dynamics ranging from *f* (forte) to *mf* (mezzo-forte). Above the staff, 'Lower 1/2' and 'Upper 1/2' indicate specific fret positions. A 'V' symbol marks a breath or bow point. The second staff (measures 34-36) continues the triplet pattern with a *f* dynamic. The third staff (measures 37-41) introduces a 'pizz.' (pizzicato) instruction and a tempo change to $\text{♩} = 80-84$. It includes fingerings (1, 2, 3) and a *mp* (mezzo-piano) dynamic. The fourth staff (measures 42-47) changes to an 'arco' (arco) instruction and a tempo of $\text{♩} = 100$. It features a long note with a 'V' symbol and a slur. The fifth staff (measures 48-53) includes a 'long' instruction and a 'long G' instruction with a fermata. The sixth staff (measures 54-57) shows a sequence of eighth notes with a box containing the instruction: 'This time use your fingertips to tap the rhythm and slowly fade into silence'. The final staff (measures 58-61) continues the eighth-note pattern.

Unlearning to heal the wounds

"Freed our bodies but not our minds. The guns may be put down but the words are not unwritten, neither is the behaviour unlearned."

To the performer:

Use the opening bars to produce wind impersonations using which technique is most fitting, and with any desired pitch

Notes marked with x indicate hitting the instrument either with the bow wood or hand (whichever is easier). Feel free to vary in the percussive sounds to your preference

The spoken words are pitched to match prosody. So use the pitch variance as a guide to place the tones when reciting the words

Try to think of the words as vocal percussions

*From bar 23 it might be easier to sustain the dotted notes while chanting if some them are played with gentle tremolo/ spazzolato, alternatively they could be played a quarter note while chanting then play bar 44 as written

♩ = 72
sul tasto spazzolato

Viola

duts du duts kats du du du

4

sul tasto

duts du duts kats du du de du du du duts du duts kats du du du

6

trem.

duts du duts kats du du de du du du

x notehead = slap

1. Play as written
2. Play all notes pizz
- 3 Play all notes arco

10 $\text{♩} = 45$

mp

13

- 1.No we don't know why
- 2.All my peo - ple die
- 3.Make the sys - tem

16

19

Still we have to try
And you heard the cries
All my peo - ple die

23 $\text{♩} = 72 \text{ accel.}$ * see note above

du du duts du duts kats du du de du du du duts kats du

29

du du duts du duts kats du du de du du du duts kats du

31

du du duts du duts kats du de du du du duts du duts kats du

33

du du duts du duts kats du du de du du du

ta - ka - di - mi ta - ti - ka ta - ti - ka ti - ki ta - ka -

The musical score is written for a single melodic line on a five-line staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 12/8. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. Measures 23-28 contain long, horizontal eighth notes, some with a 'V' marking above them. Measures 29-32 contain a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. Measures 33-36 continue with similar rhythmic patterns, including triplets marked with a '3' above the notes. The lyrics are written below the staff, aligned with the notes. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'PREVIEW' is overlaid across the entire page.

37

- di - mi ta - ti - ka ta - ti - ka ti - ki ta - ka - di - mi ta - ti - ka ta - ti - ki

39

ta - ka - mi ta - ti - ta ta - ki - ta ti - ki ta - ka -

41

di - mi ka ta - ki - ta ti - ki ta - ka - di - mi ta - ti - ka ta - ti - ka ti - ki dom

ta - ka - mi ta - ti - ta ta - ki - ta ti - ki ta - ka -

A healthy grave

James Kantor was a writer, film maker and one of the defense Lawyers in the Rivonia Trial. He was discharged quite early like many white trialists, but used the opportunity to write many stories on the atrocities of the apartheid system. Many of us carry privilege. Are we aware of the ways we can use that privilege to empower?

To the performer:

When playing this piece try to find a sweet spot between disbelief and acceptance. Feel free to play this piece in free time.

♩ = 80
freely, almost bitter sweet

Viola

7

14

20

25

legato

mf

f

lift

✓

30

34

38

44

49

mf

p

pp

spazzolato

The musical score is written in 13/8 time and consists of five staves. The first staff (measures 30-33) begins with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a slur over a group of notes, and ends with two measures of eighth notes. The second staff (measures 34-37) continues the melodic line with eighth notes and a triplet. The third staff (measures 38-43) features a triplet of eighth notes, a slur, and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The fourth staff (measures 44-48) includes a slur, a dynamic marking of *p*, and a triplet. The fifth staff (measures 49-51) begins with a triplet, followed by a slur, and ends with a dynamic marking of *pp* and the instruction 'spazzolato'.

Afritecture

Lionel Bernstein was an architect and political activist. Space is very political. Feeling comfortable in a space is external and internal. Bernstein understood this and made sure to consider the ways that colonial thought is perpetuated by structures and spaces.

"How do we use physical space and buildings to reinvent an exclusive society?"

In this piece, try to hear this repeating melody line as a marker for the repetitions of atrocity in many spaces. We can't keep evolving with our feet stuck in the ground. The blowing wind creates illusions of movement

1 separate
2. slurred

Viola

3

3 times

sul tasto

6

9

sul pont.
tip

11

13

16

19

22

25

27

29

31

f

mf

pp

lower 1/2
sul pont.

al tasto

sul pont.
tip

1 1 2

0 0 1 1 1

0 2 0 0 3

2 1

Colour me welcome

Mixed race complexities in South Africa are beautifully depicted by Walter Sisulu, as he carries Italian and Xhosa blood. Growing up in a racially segregational South Africa could not have been easy.

♩ = 72 *cantabile* *upper 1/2*

Viola *mf*

2

4

arco, behind the bridge *molto rit.*

Make a crackling sound
by brushing bow hair
the back of the viola

10

ing joy,
little morendo

don't press the fingers
sul pont. (seagulls)

17

port.

I II II III IV

22

23 *poco accel.*

25

27

28

30

31

32 vibrato

Baleka Bob

Composer's note:

I wanted to imagine the torn feelings Bob Hepple had when he realised that his privilege is affording him the opportunity to escape. That this ever so proves all the atrocious systems he has foughtfor. This piece is a musical interpretation of a mental battle that will only end when a decision is made. Is it the right or wrong decision? Is it even about right or wrong at this point?

To the performers:

Allow the discomfort of this very unclear sense of direction to bring out emotions of confusion and unsettlement.

The musical score for 'Baleka Bob' is written for three violas (Viola, Viola II, and Viola III) in 13/8 time. The tempo is marked as 144 beats per minute. The score is divided into two systems. The first system begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The Viola part starts with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a half note and a quarter note, then a series of eighth notes. The Viola II part starts with a half note, followed by a quarter note and a half note, then a series of eighth notes. The Viola III part starts with a half note, followed by a quarter note and a half note, then a series of eighth notes. The second system continues the musical themes, with dynamic markings of *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *f* (forte) for the Viola part, and *mp* (mezzo-piano) for the Viola II and Viola III parts. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings.

This musical score is written for three staves in 12/8 time, featuring a key signature of one flat (Bb). The score is divided into three systems, each containing two measures. The first system begins with a measure number '5' above the first staff. The first two staves of each system are marked with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic, while the third staff is marked mezzo-piano (*mp*). The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and slurs. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1 through 4. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'PREVIEW' is overlaid across the entire page.

12 *rit.* *accel.*

pizz. *mf*

16 *pizz.* 2 4 2 2 4

f *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *mp*

22

ff

sul pont.

sul pont pizz

ff

26

0

loco rit.
nat.

arco

Madiba

Nelson Mandela, Tata. a humble leader and a Xhosa royal. We take the opportunity to explore the Mthembu clan and the spiritual force that birthed a political king.

No bow, Thumb pizz.

$\text{♩} = 76$
pizz.

Viola

5 arco

8 sul tasto pizz.

11 arco *mf*

14 V V V V

17 V V *mf*

20 *p* *mf* *f*

col legno battuto

23

1

4

27

pizz.

arco

f

31

col legno battuto

arco

subito mp

34

3

3

1

2

3

1

37

1

3

0

1

3

0

V

40

f

45

V

V

b

trm

PREVIEW

Monthati Masebe Biography

Sound Artist, composer and healer Monthati Masebe offers a fresh lens on contemporary classical music with their fusions of South African indigenous sounds and electronic music. Born to a family of artists, Monthati approaches their music from a strong storytelling background with an emphasis on curated rituals that pay homage to their healing practices and expand our understanding of music's tone and quality. While you may find a wide range of works from classical ensemble repertoire to soundbaths, Afrotech downtempo there is a common theme of textural multiplicities overlaid with ethereal vocalizations and their unique throat singing. Monthati is currently based in the US studying toward a PhD at Duke University with a focus on orchestrating African folk instruments and exploring inclusive notation that suit the complexities of microtonality and polyrhythmic structures found in a lot of the traditional music and African compositions. Monthati is also known to South Africa as an actor and queer advocate pioneering non-binary representation through their famous role on *Generations: The Legacy*, a continental TV drama which has been leading South African entertainment for decades. Their music has been described as unearthly, eerie and transcendental. A true experimentalist, explorer and ancestral artist.

Background

Monthati Masebe: Louise Lansdown contacted me about doing a commission about the Rivonia Trial. Little did she know that I come from a very political family and that we were quite close to Madiba. I can remember being 6 years old in the house when he was on his birthday 18 July, and telling him that I don't agree with his birthday breakfasts with kudu because he's taking us away from school. I said "we also want to be big and powerful so we must go to school not sit on your lap". Looking back I laugh at that audacity but it also shows the resilient strength that our generation had to carry forward from our parents. All the struggle heroes from the Rivonia Trial gave us a taste of freedom. Many of us feel let down, and that the promises we were given didn't come to fruition, but I wanted this suite to offer a platform for us to redefine our struggles and ways we can find the road to freedom that was handed to us in a tangled ball.

Our liberation broke down the physical doors that barricaded access but we had to break the intangible chains which were embedded into systems which couldn't be simultaneously broken. So when this opportunity was presented we explored ways that we could teach the history of South Africa's road to liberation in a way that can provide guidance and create an impact. I'm grateful for the guidance Louise gave me both physically (the practicalities about the viola) and conceptually (crafting the message and shared solidarity between South Africa and the United Kingdom). All my personal aspirations about drawing links and highlighting intersections between western and african art manifested into this reflective suite entitled: *Trials that Trail*.

Louise Lansdown: The idea was to create a set of pieces for the viola remembering in music those who risked their freedom and risked their lives fighting for democracy and equality. The Rivonia Trial was a decisive moment in this journey, and with the last of the trialists passing away in 2020 I desperately wanted to be able to capture something of each of the uniqueness of their characters, struggle and triumphs. The voice of the viola is one that can cope with extremes, and Monthati's extraordinary creativity and knowledge has resulted in a musical kaleidoscope – an incredible addition to South African music and the viola repertoire. Working with Monthati has been a privilege and I have learnt so much from our collaboration. Their natural feel for the timbre and qualities of the viola, along with their amazing use of rhythm, singing and the instrument itself to create sound is an inspiration.

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