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WHEREFORE MUSICIAN?

The Collaborative Experiences of Theatre Musicians at the Market Theatre, 2010-2014.

Bongile Gorata Lecoge-Zulu

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (in Music Research).

Johannesburg, March 2016

DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own unaided work. It is being submitted in fulfilment of the degree of Master of Arts in Music Research to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination to any other university

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Mandla Mbothwe, James Ngcobo, Tshepo Mngoma, Ezbie Moilwa and
Thapelo Kutoane.

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved mother, Mpho Lecoge. I am ever grateful to you for being with me at every turn. Your love and encouragement are my greatest source of strength. Ke go leboga go menagane Mme.

ABSTRACT

The thesis entitled *Wherefore Musician?* is a critical engagement with the experiences of musicians who were involved in dramatic theatre productions at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg between 2010 and 2014. The study is a narrative inquiry, which uncovers the lived experiences of musicians from their narration of select collaborative encounters. The narratives speak to integrated cross-disciplinary models of theatre making, where various signifiers and performance texts contribute towards a cohesive production.

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INTRODUCTION

> The use of live music always adds life and more layers of communication to the theatre, and energises performers, permitting an actor's sense of discipline to develop. Actors, on the other hand, stimulate the imagination of musicians beyond the tacitly accepted limits of their musical style. (Bicât and Baldwin 2002: 79)

This research sets out to critically analyse the experiences of some of the musicians who were involved in dramatic theatre productions at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg between 2010 and 2014. The musicians' narration of their collaborative experience is fundamental to this analysis, an analysis that seeks to cast light on the nature of the collaborative process in theatre practice where live music is involved. This has been achieved by mapping out the experiences of select musicians and collaborators who have been involved in theatre collaborations at Johannesburg's Market Theatre; and analysing them. Collaboration here refers to the recursive process by which musicians and theatre practitioners work together toward achieving a mutual goal. It entails a cross-disciplinary engagement of collective creativity wherein the goal is the development and crafting of a theatrical performance inclusive of both theatrical and musical elements.

The methods employed to conduct the study are housed mainly in a narrative research approach. Through narrative research/inquiry, the study draws on the lived experiences of musicians who have participated in the process of creating theatre performances. "Narrative inquiry rests on the epistemological assumption that we as human beings make sense of random experience by the imposition of story structures" (Bell 2002: 207). The primary mode of data collection was by a series of narrative interviews conducted by the researcher with the aforementioned selection of artists who have been involved in collaborative productions at the Market Theatre between 2010 and 2014. As explained by Kvale, "Narrative interviews focus on the stories the subjects tell, on the plots and structures of their accounts. The stories may come up spontaneously during the interview or be elicited by the interviewer" (2007: 72).

The investigation seeks to understand how the musicians' experienced the merging of musical, visual, performative and textual elements of theatre in the selected theatrical offerings. Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou posit that,

> [W]e frame our research in terms of narrative because we believe that by doing so we are able to see different and sometimes contradictory layers of meaning, to bring them into useful dialogue with each other, and to understand more about individual and social change. (2008: 2)

Using experiences of the collaborators and additional research around the productions, the study evaluates how the collaborative process of theatre and music shaped the theatrical products.

The study does so by looking at practices employed in collaborative theatre performance creation between 2010 and 2014. It limits itself to the following four productions, staged at the Market Theatre: *The Mother of All Eating* (14/05/2014 – 01/06/2014) directed by Makhaola Ndebele, *Agreed* directed by Sylvaine Strike (08/01/2014 – 02/02/2014), *Hayani* (18/09/2013 – 27/10/2013) directed by Warren Nebe, and *Ukutshona Ko Mendi* (11/02/2014 – 16/03/2014) directed by Mandla Mbothwe. These four productions display different styles of dramatic theatre and thus provide an array of collaborative strategies and methods. Exploration of these allowed for a broadened insight into the nature of collaboration in contemporary South African theatre.

This research contributes to knowledge around the creative function of live musicians in dramatic theatre by engaging with the collaborative experiences of musicians (performers and music directors). Their narratives reflect on the nature of collaboration in contemporary South African theatre. It is their stories that form the main focus of this research. In the spirit of genuinely collaborative process and balanced research principles, I also trace the voices of the theatre practitioners, including directors, to understand their modus operandi regarding the collaborative process with musicians. Drawing from musicians' and theatre practitioners' experiences, the study picks up on some common threads or notable differences in the experiences and desires of the collaborators.

The study uncovers how the lived experiences of the performers speak to the differences between how theatre artists and musical artists view the process of theatre making as a means of creative collaboration; and how musicians attempt to cross what they experience as a cross-disciplinary divide. Furthermore, it speaks to the range of the musicians in terms of their ability and experience within their own discipline:
the differences in approach of art musicians and popular/jazz musicians extends the range of successful ways musicians are involved in collaboration; and the style of preparation and process of rehearsal differs among the musicians themselves, depending on the genre with which they perform.

Naturally the study is hinged mostly on the content (what was said) of the narratives. However, the manner (how it was said) in which the stories were told also provides great – albeit subtle – insight into the interviewees' experiences. The greater the detail of the interview and its capturing, the better the quality of the data. Where quality "refers to the what, how, when, and where of a thing – its essence and ambience […] to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbolism and descriptions of things" (Berg 1995: 3). All of which allow for greater understanding of the meaning of the experiences shared. The narratives are anchored in accessible formal analysis of the music; as such, the value of this research is derived from the validation of the musicians' multiple roles and functions in the creation and performance of the theatre work.

Why, where, when, how, in what way – and arguably, for whom – do live musicians fit into the theatre making puzzle? How might we critically engage with theatre making as a collaborative practice and interrogate the musicians' practice of it? By unpacking the experiences of the collaborators the study reveals the creative contribution of the musician and the extent to which collaborating in the theatre enables (or disables) their creative practice. The work pays particular attention to the ways in which cross-disciplinary collaboration is expressed and sustained in a contemporary South African context. Gunn states, "To bring two or more disciplines into significant interaction with one another requires considerable mastery of subtleties and particularities of each, together with sufficient imagination and tact, ingenuity and persuasiveness, to convince others of the utility of their linkage" (1992:

239). Though not the focus of this particular research, it is worthwhile to note that there are a number of theatrical genres in which the incorporation of live music is a key component. Examples of these would be: music theatre, “Music theatre is theatre that is music driven (i.e., decisively linked to musical timing and organization)” (Salzman and Desi 2008: 5), musical theatre, and incidental music. This study offers a critique of the theatre-making paradigm of scripted works, regarding the manner in which live music is incorporated into its practice by exploring the concept of the ‘musician’. It highlights certain key assumptions that underlie the role of musicians and function of music as a particular practice in theatre making. For example, that the music will predominantly be incidental to the action, and will assume “the traditional role of music in theater” – “to physicalize the moment”; or that it will be an ambient gel underscoring the action so as to, “sweeten it, make it more amusing or even more thought-provoking” (2008: 52). Interrogating these assumptions, revealing the deeper levels of subtlety that are possible in more conscious collaboration, will hopefully encourage both musicians and theatre directors and writers to invest more time in the process of extended collaboration. The give and take, openness to various methods of collaboration, and slow development that characterise the case studies in this thesis will hopefully encourage future work in this vein, and help avoid the misunderstandings and disciplinary exclusivity that lead to unhappiness in some collaborative experiences.

Paul Barker posits that, “barriers between session musicians and company members may create a divisive atmosphere. The mere presence of professional musicians may inhibit or inspire the rest of the company in their quest for musical expression” (Bicât and Baldwin 2002: 79). This study does not only look at session musicians; it considers composers and performers as well. It inquires around the approach to and execution of collaborative theatre processes. The question it seeks to answer is: how do the experiences of musicians reflect on the nature of collaboration in contemporary South Africa? It does so by looking to the collaborators to cast light on the intricacies of the process.

There is a gap in the South African body of literature on the use of live musicians in contemporary theatre, particularly around the interface of music and theatre outside of musical theatre as a genre. Not only regarding the stories of the musicians, but the

story of the co-relation and inter-relation of the collaborators in the creative space, too. Reviews of plays may make mention of the live music element but often fail to go into any detail in their commentary. Careful analysis of the stories of the collaborations compared to the records (footage, scores and audio recordings) of the productions is the manner in which I, the researcher, accessed the creative conversation between the music and theatre practitioners. The narrative research paradigm offers methods of analysis which enable the researcher to code and qualify findings from interviews. This study pays much attention to the inquiry into the collaborative conversation between music and theatre. As such the research will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding process and perhaps methods for inclusive collaboration between music and theatre in a South African setting.

As mentioned above, collaboration here refers to two or more parties working together towards the same goal. Within each art's disciplinary bounds, collaboration occurs all the time – for example between instrumentalists and their conductor; or actors and their director. The act of merging the two art forms requires skill in order to overcome the challenge of collaborating across the disciplines. Extra knowledge, finesse, prowess is required such that each remains solidly grounded in their own task and skill whilst being open enough to adapt and cross over. It is an awareness that almost allows the collaborators to be in two places at once: in their own discipline, while simultaneously being aware of where the other collaborators are to ensure they gel. This exploration of notions of collective creativity looks at music that serves a more than incidental role in collaboration. In considering the use of music one must consider how music functions – what it can do in a collaborative space. The way in which the music is used in the collaborative context gives it meaning. Music works in the realm of affect and it is apparent that directors feel that productions profit from the affective dimension of the music.

In locating the study in the modes of collaboration I am not aiming to offer a general theory of collaborative theatre making between musicians and theatre practitioners; nor to suggest pragmatic, exemplary or idealised ways of working in collaborative creation. By extrapolating from general principles about collaboration between a varied selection of artistic collaborators, I was able to observe what they did, how

they did it and why they did it. Thus, uncovering resonances between the collaborators' practices.

This research is aware of the Market Theatre's role in fostering collaborative workshopped plays that feature music strongly, "During the past three decades, The Market Theatre has evolved into a cultural complex for theatre, music, dance and the allied arts" (http://markettheatre.co.za/view/about-us/history). As such the Market Theatre served as an ideal location for the study. The Market Theatre has played a pivotal role in housing collaborative theatre; historically in the form of protest theatre: "[I]t was at Johannesburg's Market Theatre complex that innovative management, production and performance techniques, radical oppositional politics and multi-racial theatre and dramatic artists would come together most successfully" (Coplan 2007: 371). The Market theatre was founded because Barney Simon and Manny Manim (and others) found they needed a space to create and showcase their work. More specifically a space to create multi-racial theatre, which they could perform to multi-racial audiences. Prior to their acquisition of the fruit market that now stands as the Market Theatre, they would perform wherever they could:

> We were nomads on the face of Jo'burg; this is before '76, before we found the Market, when we were a base without our own performance space. We played in store-fronts, we played in hotel dining rooms and we just made theatre. Before that, I was working independently in multi-racial theatre, doing theatre privately in backyards always to invited audiences. Once I played next door to a man under house arrest so he could watch over the fence in a backyard; it was quite agile, a sort of guerrilla theatre, as you might say. (Davis and Fuchs 1996: 225)

Finding the Indian fruit market was indeed fortuitous, especially the zoning of the area permitted audiences of all races. Much of South Africa's theatre practice, particularly that with which the Market Theatre engaged, stemmed from the integrative protest model. This is a theatre based in an improvisation and devising culture of performance creation. Directors and performers shared a willingness to collaborate. There was an equality of collaboration where the creative responsibility was shared among the collaborators involved. It was a shared collaborative process and all the elements were created more or less at the same pace, where the value of the roles was equal.

The likes of Gibson Kente, Athol Fugard and Barney Simon contributed greatly to this model with works that were devised in a consciously collaborative manner. Much of Simon's work focused on the creation of performance texts from scratch in collaboration with actors (Davis and Fuchs 1996: 228). Some of these works also included musical elements: "often in his productions, powerful songs were interwoven with action and monologues" (Benson 1997: 129); *Born in the RSA* is one such example. This culture of workshopping carried through to the ethos of the Market Theatre. Playwrights, directors and performers were especially accustomed to song, as they encountered it in everyday life in church, at school, in clubs, shebeens, political meetings, and even on the streets.

The protest theatre model in South Africa uses musical elements such as song and rhythm in an integrated manner that does not elevate one art form over the other, "[…] the action is infused with choral and solo singing and interludes of music and dance, and the subject matter is township life" (Larlham 1985: 70). The Market Theatre continues to be a space that produces integrated performance projects, "committed to providing the highest level of artistic excellence in all aspects of the performing and visual arts" (http://markettheatre.co.za/view/about-us/mission). The Market Theatre as an institution is not the focus of this particular research, however, given its roots in protest theatre and its continued endeavours to produce integrated work, the Market Theatre served as an ideal location for this study. Its position in relation to the evolution from protest theatre to contemporary practice provides a backdrop for the discussion of musicians' present-day experiences in theatre.

I went into this project with the assumption that collaboration tends not to be successful or fully inclusive, wherein I thought I would be addressing a lack of inclusive cross-disciplinary collaborative practice. In looking for contemporary productions using music, the productions that I ended up with were productions that had a recent run at the Market Theatre, that were in fact highly successful. In this paper I argue that the Market Theatre as a theatrical platform allows for collaboration. It is a pivotal institution for such work, having nurtured and fostered collaboration over a long period of time; and having remained open to sustained music collaboration. These plays being performed at the Market Theatre suggests that they

are of a certain calibre given the prestige associated with the theatre. The collaborative nature of the works speaks back to the historical foundations of the Market Theatre's artistic principles. By bridging some gaps in knowledge around collaborative creativity, this research reclaims the idea of an organic South African way of creating performance, and validates the voices of old collaborative practice.

Considering that past experiences often inform and frame future decisions and actions, this research facilitates collection of knowledge around the happenings of the past and how these pasts have informed subsequent decisions, leading to the occurrence of these collaborations. Connelly and Clandinin state, "We restory earlier experiences as we reflect on later experiences so the stories and their meaning shift and change over time" (1990: 9). Were the musicians are concerned their prior experiences informed how they collaborated. The recounting/restorying of these collaborations further shifted their understanding of the nature of collaboration. This study highlights the ways in which the context and practices of a collaborative space can open potential ways of theatre making. Where the role of the musician is enhanced and affirmed via the interrogation and storied response of how musicians' creativity is allowed in the space and the ways in which creativity manifests itself in a collaborative process.

Narrative research offered a relatively flexible framework for experiential exploration; accommodating memory and retrospective meaning on the part of the participant whilst allowing for the reflexive impulses of the researcher:

> [W]hen researchers take people's stories and place them into a larger narrative, they are imposing meaning on participants' lived experience. Although good practice demands that researchers share their ongoing narrative constructions, participants can never be quite free of the researcher's interpretation of their lives. (Bell 2002: 210)

The narrative interviewing process focused on the collaborative process of theatre making as a lived experience of the musician as a collaborator. The group of interviewees consisted of a combination of musicians, theatre practitioners, directors and music directors so as to present a relatively balanced and contextualised outlook. The narrative research approach has allowed for each story to substantiate the others

by providing layers of context and meaning, wherein the voice of one validates and is validated by the voices of the others (or the many). The research looked to narrative interviews as a method to locate the voice of the musician in a space where it may appear to have been silenced and the musician's creativity may have been stifled.

The interviews initially opened with an event-centred (Labovian) dialogue referencing the production as an entry point. They then proceed to more of an experience-centred narrative:

> What is shared across both event- and experience-centred narrative research, is that they are assumed to be individual, internal representations of phenomena – events, thoughts and feelings – to which narrative gives external *expression*. (Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou 2008: 5)

The outcome was a piecing together of the collective narrative of the collaborative theatre making process, by triangulation of the individual stories offered. Collating these stories served as an interpretative exercise in finding the inter-textual links between them.

There are, however, limitations to using a narrative research method that were taken into consideration. Its retrospective nature imposes a great level of subjectivity. The use of a variety of data collection methods within the framework such as: observation of patterns, insights from experience, and identification of unique instances or outliers served as a means of mitigating these limitations. Patterns that emerge from the varied array of accounts, roles, and contexts over a period of time indicated some reliability and credibility of the sources.

There are various modes of data collection offered by narrative research. Data can present itself in the form of pictures, diary entries, letters, documents – to name but a few (Connelly and Clandinin 1990: 5). For this particular study however, narrative interviews have been the primary mode of data collection. Material available on the productions at the Market Theatre was also sourced to contextualise the works that are referenced. Material such as: scripts, rehearsal notes and journals, performance bills, reviews, director's notes, and rehearsal and performance footage. The

triangulation of these data sets mitigated the aforementioned limitations of the methodology.

The data triangulation primarily focuses on common themes emerging from the interviews. As Berg articulates, “the important feature of triangulation is not the simple combination of different kinds of data, but the attempt to relate them so as to counteract the threats to validity identified in each” (Berg 1995: 5). This triangulation of the data has aided in identifying the environmental and methodological ingredients of the collaborative theatre making process that are important to the collaborators. The element attended to or storied herein is the experience of musicians in the theatre; and how fellow collaborators experience them, too. This research contributes to the ongoing narrative of collaborative theatre practice in Johannesburg.

Overall, the narrative methodology generated a vast amount of data and analysis of which entailed a bricolage of techniques. Kvale describes *bricolage* as “mixed technical discourses where the interpreter moves freely between different analytical techniques” (2007: 115). Upon which Denzin and Lincoln elaborate:

> The product of the interpretive *bricoleur*’s labour is a complex, quilt-like bricolage, a reflexive collage or montage – a set of fluid, interconnected images and representations. This interpretive structure is like a quilt, a performance text, a sequence of representations connecting the parts to the whole. (2003: 9)

RESEARCH METHOD

Given that this study seeks to gain insight into phenomena that are essentially unquantifiable, it lends itself well to a qualitative paradigm. I paraphrase Uwe Flick in saying that qualitative research is intended as a means of understanding, describing and sometimes explaining phenomena by analysing experiences of individuals or groups, by analysing interactions and communications in the making, and/or by analysing documents (in Kvale 2007: x). In qualitative research the researcher is in essence the research tool; it is the researcher who therefore, "seeks to discover the meanings that participants attach to their behaviour, how they interpret situations and what their perspectives are on particular issues. Just as situations can influence perspectives, so people can redefine and construct situations" (Woods 2006: 3). Where "*verstephen* (deep understanding) is sought researchers will pursue an "*emic*" study" (Padgett 2008:16). The phenomenon under scrutiny here being collaboration across two artistic disciplines: that is the approach to and execution of collaboration. Beyond that, what is under examination here is the creative function of the musician in a collaborative setting.

Qualitative research, by its very nature, is difficult to define; and it is often easiest to do so by outlining some of its qualities. Qualitative research allows its researchers to look at process as a dynamic and evolving phenomenon. Which means it can be explored and analysed after the fact. Since the focus is not necessarily being on a concrete result or product, the researcher has flexibility to look at specific issues either during or after their occurrence. Furthermore, there is an understanding that the process itself, and what the meaning is being made from, is what is under scrutiny. As Woods explains, "Qualitative researchers are interested in how understandings are formed, how meanings are negotiated, how roles are developed […]. These are processual matters, not products. Social life is ongoing, developing, fluctuating, becoming. It never arrives or ends" (2006: 4).

With regards to qualitative research, I have found that a key question is: how does one generate a rich data set? Qualitative data tends to be copious as there is no finite, or quantifiable boundaries. How then in its vastness does one collect data that is

pertinent to the study? The collection of relevant data allows for more coherent analysis later on in the research process. My research employed a multiple methods approach, where all the methods used were from the same paradigm of qualitative research. Padgett offers that, "qualitative researchers may deliberately mix and match qualitative approaches to find the right combination. This occurs within two plausible scenarios: 1) a fusion or hybrid approach; 2) a juxtaposition of two approaches side-by-side or in a sequence" (2008: 39). Here we see methods fused rather than juxtaposed. The use of a multiple methods approach allows for a broader and richer data set where each method enhances the findings of the others and as a means of verification, "for certain situations, to enhance the accuracy and meaningfulness of your conclusions, to have a complete picture of a situation, and to reconfirm your findings, you need more than one method belonging to one or both of the paradigms" (Kumar 2014: 19).

The particular focus on human experience around a specific type of event further allowed for the study to be approached as a narrative inquiry. The research is centred on the experiences of a given set of participants; and seeks to understand what factors in the collaborative theatrical environment contribute to their experience. Webster and Mertova put forward that; "Qualitative research is typically looking for outcomes and frequently overlooks the impact of experience, while narrative inquiry allows researchers to get an understanding of that experience" (2007: 5). Therefore, in as much as the event (collaborative performances) is key, the study predominantly looks to the participants' *telling* of their experiences in collaboration. As such I used a research paradigm that revolves around its methods for the retrieval, analysis and understanding of personal experience, "The appeal of narrative method lies largely in its ability to explore and communicate internal and external experience. It also has the capability of crossing the boundaries between research and practice" (Webster and Mertova 2007: 10).

At the forefront of these methods was narrative inquiry. However, formal analysis of the productions being studied was used concurrently, resulting in a parallel/simultaneous mixed method design. Creswell offers that a concurrent triangulation strategy is viable, "as a means to off-set the weaknesses inherent within one method with the strengths of the other method" (2003: 217). These methods

separately and in combination aided my understanding of collaborative experiences, and of the musicians' viewpoints and/or perceptions of their interactions. Narrative inquiry lends itself to the use of mixed methods:

> Should a narrative inquirer insist on one grand theory, one methodology/ method, or one type of analysis in a single study without crossing the boundary of his or her own discipline? If so, then, how would it be possible for us to address the issues of intersectionality between class, race, and gender, genre blurring of representations, and multiple truths and different voices? Perhaps there is a need for a narrative inquirer to use multiple epistemologies or multiple forms of representations. (Kim 2016: 257)

This is especially justified given that the study crosses over two disciplines and that it deals with multiple voices, each with its own experiential truth.

NARRATIVE INQUIRY

The theoretical framework makes up much of the method; in turn, the method of this research implies said framework of narrative inquiry. The research is looking at the nature of collaboration itself – as perceived and expressed by the collaborators. Webster and Mertova offer that, "Narrative inquiry is set in human stories of experience. It provides researchers with a rich framework through which they can investigate the ways humans experience the world depicted through their stories" (2007: 1). Narrative inquiry allows researchers to see how people make meaning of their lives by recounting their experiences. This type of inquiry gives the tellers agency as the experts in their own life stories. Narrative exploration further looks at how people tell the stories of their experiences to thicken the meaning of their experience. As a methodology it focuses on addressing human performance in various settings. It aims to provide a comprehensive, holistic approach wherein the participants have agency.

Narrative inquiry offers flexibility that other methodological frameworks do not; as such it has been used across multiple disciplines and each discipline has its own theorists. It is commonly found in sociology, anthropology, education, medicine and psychology. It allows researchers to adapt existing modes of investigation, or even to

design their own modes of data collection and analysis to suit their research: "[U]nlike other qualitative research perspectives, narrative research offers no overall rules about suitable materials or modes of investigation, or the best level at which to study stories" (Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou 2008: 2). Narratives can be gathered in oral, written or visual form. As such it also lends itself well to being used alongside other methodologies. Narrative research in itself is collaborative and is also suited to inquiry around collaboration and interdisciplinarity: "Narrative inquiry attempts to capture the 'whole story', whereas other methods tend to communicate understandings of studied subjects or phenomena at certain points, but frequently omit the important 'intervening' stages" (Webster and Mertova 2007: 10). Given that ethnographic observation, where I could observe the collaborative engagements first hand, was not a viable option for this research, narrative inquiry still afforded me a holistic research approach. It allowed me to draw out the participants' stories of how they experienced specific moments in their lives, where they could speak of their feelings, challenges and understanding as they experienced them. This provides a far less passive approach than the researcher attempting to create knowledge around the participant's experience without the participant's insight. Being centred around the creation of stories from experience, narrative methodology also accommodates gaps in the data collection process. Naturally, there were some gaps in the research process. The main one being inconsistent access to the productions under review, where the research materials available varied from production to production.

There are three main reasons why the narrative framework was most fitting for this study. Firstly, as explained above, I did not have access to the rehearsal process for the performances. Therefore, the study had to be undertaken retrospectively. Cole states:

> To observe directors and actors in rehearsal is clearly a delicate undertaking; it can be perceived as an intrusion upon, and even a repression of, the conditions necessary to rehearsal (e.g., risk-taking, spontaneity, intimacy). But there is no other way to document the collaborative creation of rehearsal except to be present there. (1992: 3)

With narrative research I have found that there is indeed another way of observing the rehearsal process, more specifically the collaborative process. It also presents a more

sensitive and less intrusive means of accessing the process, since the extent of the detail disclosed is left to the teller's discretion. The narrations gave the participant's perspective of their own experience as opposed to an imposition of my perspective of their experience. This provided another level to the analysis of the experiences.

Secondly, my research looks at four productions that were staged at the Market Theatre. I did not watch the Market Theatre runs of all of these productions. Nor is there footage of all the Market Theatre runs. For those that I did watch, my analysis is based primarily on my memory of what I saw in the performances. Therefore, my mode of inquiry and data collection needed to be one that accommodates memory. The retrospective nature of this framework and its allowance of subjective understandings was therefore suited for my inquiry.

Lastly, this research is in part aimed at giving voice to the experiences of musicians – in their own voice(s), as it were. A voice that has seemingly become lost in the discourse of collaboration despite the fact that their skills are used:

> By focusing on narrative we are able to investigate not just how stories are structured and the ways in which they work, but also who produces them and by what means; the mechanism by which they are consumed; and how narratives are silenced, and even explain important aspects of the world. (Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou 2008: 2)

Narrative interviewing allows the interviewee to speak more freely (with little or no limitation) about what they feel is relevant and important. Even though upon first listening, the stories may sound tangential to the arc of the research topic, analysis tends to reveal themes that provide great insights.

The focus of narrative investigation is on the story that is being told. Narrative inquiry presents a flexibility that accommodates the parallel presence of multiple time frames where both event and action can be woven into the story. Since narratives exist in multiple temporal spaces simultaneously, narrative inquiry gives room for these complex and constantly changing human experiences. They were experienced in the past, and are retold in the present for analysis and understanding the future. With the passage of time between these points of experience (past), re-experience

(present) and re-storying (future), perspectives change with new experiences, which constantly and continuously reshape the effect that the storied experience holds; "Narrative illustrates the temporal notion of experience, recognising that one's understanding of people and events changes" (Webster and Mertova 2007: 2). Meaning therefore is constantly being made in retrospect as new experiences accumulate and re-frame previous ones. It is due to its recollective nature that narrative inquiry is ideal for researching change, transition and process, as it is done after the fact.

My use of narrative inquiry was very much centred on the experiences of the collaborators that were involved in the productions listed in the introduction. The group one selects from which to draw data needs to be carefully considered since the initial questions are very open. As such the focus may become scattered. A carefully selected group of participants helps to streamline the content such that even with the natural digressions common to the framework, some coherence is maintained. Narrative investigation looks at real experiences that happen in a real setting. There is a focus on natural settings that are not hypothetical. Often in these settings there is an event that anchors the narrative. This is true of my research; the event of the collaboration (rehearsal to performance) in question contains the narratives.

For some theorists the layers of subjectivity associated with narrative inquiry are problematic. Narratives are very personal encounters and their telling and analysis will naturally be subjective; for example, looking at the past-present (i.e. how it was experienced), in the present-present (here and now) for consumption in the future-present (in this case a master's dissertation). It is further dependant on who does the talking and to whom they are talking. An interviewee will not say one thing in the same way to two different interviewers. The setting of the interview and the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee partly determine which story unfolds and how it progresses. Furthermore, there is the added subjectivity of the researcher's interpretation: "This is a complex matter because both *interpretation* and *experience* are highly relative terms. Subjectivity is at the centre of the process of life storytelling" (Gubrium and Holstein 2001: 133). There are many possible outcomes, perspectives and interpretations depending on the interpreter's own position. Narrative theory does take into account the complex interactive processes of

presentation, remembering and language. All at once these elements are at play. They, along with omissions made by the teller for relevance and coherence, filter the meaning, giving the researcher access to only the story and not the life or experience itself. “Narrative is not an objective reconstruction of life – it is a rendition of how life is perceived. As such, it is based on the respondent’s life experience and entails chosen parts of their lives” (Webster and Mertova 2007: 3).

Narrative inquiry is subject to academic bias on the grounds of reliability. It is reliant on the researcher’s sole interpretation in creating meaning, which is deemed a weakness. Kim notes a number of problems inherent in narrative meaning. Narrative meaning is not tangible, nor is it easily grasped, because it presents itself in modes such as perception, remembrance and imagination, which are hard to investigate. Furthermore, the researcher does not have direct access to the realm of meaning of the storyteller, and so is at the mercy of the storyteller’s recollection or introspection (Kim 2016: 190). The aim of narrative research is not to represent the exact truth. Instead it aims for, “‘verisimilitude’ – that the results have the appearance of truth or reality” (Webster and Mertova 2007: 4). Thus subjectivity is accommodated and narrative can reveal qualities of experience that other methods cannot, since “virtual reality or verisimilitude […] has the capacity to have the reader vicariously experience the reality of the text” (Kim 2016: 109).

Proceeding from a conviction that the musical collaborator is not represented in writings and reports of collaboration, and an understanding that we experience the world in narrative, I chose narrative inquiry as,

> It does mean that the practitioner, who has long been silenced in the research relationship, is given time and space to tell her or his story so that it too gains the authority and validity that the research story has long had. (Connelly and Clandinin 1990: 4)

The framework does not disregard the impact of the experience itself by focusing solely on its outcomes. Beyond just telling or retelling the story, researchers employing a narrative approach to inquiry must strive toward an “analytical examination of the underlying insights and assumptions that the story illustrates” (Bell 2002: 208).

INTERVIEWS

My primary method of data collection was interviewing. Given my chosen research paradigm, I framed my research interviews for the most part around the narrative interview:

> After the initial request of a story, the main role of the narrative interviewer is to remain a listener, abstaining from interruptions, occasionally posing questions for clarification, and assisting the interviewee in continuing to tell his or her story. Through questions, nods, and silences, the interviewer is a coproducer of the narrative. (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015: 180)

Minichiello et al offer descriptions of multiple interviewing techniques, although not specifically narrative and generally more qualitative. For example, "focused or semi-structured interviews" in which researcher uses interview guide, which consists of a list is of topics to be discussed. These questions have no fixed ordering and serve as a guide to the interview content. "In-depth interviews" on the other hand are described by Minichiello et al as repeated face-to-face encounters which are directed toward understanding informants' perspectives on their lives, experiences or situations as they express them (Minichiello et al 1990: 103).

This research process entailed one-on-one interviews with a select group of collaborators who were involved in the aforementioned productions. Semi-structured or focused interviewing models were used:

> [I]nterviews in which there are no fixed wordings of questions or ordering of questions. Rather the content of the interview is focused on the issues that are central to the research questions. Interview schedules are often employed to aid the interviewer in maintaining this focus. (Minichiello et al 1990: 104)

Knowles and Cole eloquently liken the act of interviewing to that of musical accompaniment, which required attentive listening on the researcher's part:

> The act of interviewing can be conceptualized as accompaniment that requires attentiveness to the other's voice. The interviewer is not in the limelight but

> uses her aural sensitivities to create a structure for the interviewee's reflection and communication. Mutuality is part of that process. (2008: 228)

In an effort to gather stories of personal experience it seemed fitting to use a method that enables the teller to get as personal and detailed as they wish. Two of the overarching questions that the research process was looking to shed light on were: how do the experiences of the musicians reflect on the nature of collaboration in contemporary South African theatre? And, how do theatre artists and music artists view the process of collaborative creation? During each interview I listened for how the participants' responses spoke to the research questions. The initial interviews I found were more explorative – an opportunity to figure out what some of the recurring points and issues may be. This information filtered into subsequent interviews, and themes started to develop as the research progressed.

Each interview began with a broad description of the research project and my objectives in doing the research. The open (and undetailed) description of the research allowed the interviewee to discuss what they felt was important in their experiences of collaborating in theatre. The description was followed by me asking the interviewee to tell me about their experience working on the specific productions they collaborated on as a way of extracting the story. For the most part, at the beginnings of the interviews the interviewees did most of the talking. Kim describes this as the "*narration phase*". At this point in the interview, the participants tended to give an extensive narration. The interviewer here aims to restrict his or her interventions to the minimum while keeping the narration going (Kim 2016: 167). As the interviews progressed I found I interjected with specific probative questions or topical suggestions, moving into the "*conversation phase*" of the interview (2016: 169). By seeking some clarification, I contributed to the narrative. It is to be noted that the two interview phases do not necessarily have to take place in a linear fashion. In some instances, I found myself oscillating between being the expert interviewer and being an unknowing subject whose own story could very well be used in the study. This points to the "mutual self-disclosure" (Gubrium and Holstein 2001: 113) of in-depth and narrative interviews where there is room for the researcher in the narrative. Narrative interviews level the power dynamics between interviewer and interviewee, which results in a combined construction of the narrative: "The research interview is an interpersonal situation, a conversation between two partners about a

theme of mutual interest. In the interview, knowledge is created 'inter' the points of view of the interviewer and the interviewee" (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015: 149).

All the interviews were recorded on an audio device and later transcribed for analysis. The transcriptions are notated in a manner that is mindful of the pattern of speech. The process of transcription itself is highly subjective and often results in the meaning being altered to some degree. Different systems if notation (punctuation and symbols) result in different ways of understanding the text as they highlight different points of emphasis. Therefore, the transcriber must attempt accuracy in maintaining the meaning of the utterances with their chosen notation. For this reason, it is probably best for the researcher to do their own transcribing.

From an analytical point of view, the audio recording of the interviews was the first abstraction of the interview, and the transcriptions was the second. Via these two processes the data became more removed from its original state (one-on-one interview). During each interview I made detailed notes of the interviewee's body language, facial expressions, gesticulations and points of vocal emphasis. In so doing, much of the essence of the interview as possible, past its occurrence, is preserved. My personal notes are not included in the transcriptions but they served as a personal reminder of the interview during transcription allowing for more in-depth coding and analysis of each transcription.

FORMAL ANALYSIS OF PRODUCTIONS

Chapters two to five are formal analyses of the productions into which are interweaved the experiences of the musicians. These analyses of the productions reference the research interviews and performance footage relating to the productions being considered. The analyses entailed the description and discussion of both dramatic and musical elements and how they worked together in the productions. I have argued that collaboration heightens the production, develops meaning, and enhances impact of the production. I employed a non-participant observation method when analysing *Agreed* and *Hayani*, by using video footage, "observations in which the researcher is not an 'active' part of the setting in which the behaviours and/or interactions are being observed" (Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998: 106). For *The Mother*

of All Eating, I observed the performance as an audience member. *Ukutshona Ko Mendi* is analysed using only interviews and relevant literature.

Although not an ethnographic study, thick description was necessary in the formal analyses. Thick description being description that inscribes context to establish the significance of an event such that the description is happening simultaneously with interpretation and analysis: "[A] multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and which he must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render" (Geertz 1973:10). The challenge therefore lies in the interpretative skills of the researcher to isolate events and substantiate their meaning by way of understanding the surrounding occurrences; "A good interpretation of anything – a poem, a person, a history, a ritual, an institution, a society – takes us into the heart of that which it is the interpretation" (1973:18).

The formal analyses, inclusive of the interviews, footage and literary material, provide a more detailed thick description. For this research the tool of thick description is a necessary one as it prompts one to see beyond what is presented at face value. That is to say, thick description is an effective means of creating meaning by contextualising the collaboration, contributing to the depth of the overall analysis of the study.

This paper will go on to provide a detailed description and analysis of the productions being considered. Each chapter includes the findings of the narrative research process framed within a formal analysis of the production.

The study looks at different types of production with varying styles and therefore different ways of integrating music. We will see that there are a number of ways in which music can be present in collaboration as accompaniment, as underscoring, as commentary, and even as dramatic character. As a result, there is a broad data set, which includes a monologue (*Agreed*), two two-man shows (*The Mother of All Eating* and *Hayani*), and a production with a much larger cast (*Ukutshona Ko Mendi*) – each with a different approach to inclusion of music. In chapter one I deal with *The Mother of All Eating*, which leads to a discussion of the diegetic incorporation of music and

the musician. Chapter two, *Hayani*, provides a contrasting example where the musician's role is a seemingly peripheral one, allowing for a brief comparison with the previous chapter. Chapter three, *Agreed*, looks at the work of classical cellist Kutlwano Masote, which leads to a discussion of the ways in which the range of the musician affects the extent to which they access collaboration. Chapter four looks at *Ukutshona Ko Mendi*, in which the director's methods of including all elements from the very beginning comes into focus. The paper will conclude with a discussion of the findings of the experiences of the musicians.

CHAPTER ONE: THE MOTHER OF ALL EATING

The Mother of All Eating was written by South African playwright Zakes Mda and directed by Makhaola Siyanda Ndebele, both of whom studied in Lesotho (although at different times). The play was written over twenty years ago and was first performed at Sechaba Hall, Victoria Hotel in Lesotho in 1992 under the direction of Zakes Mda. The plot is centred on a Lesotho government road works tender that goes horribly wrong and is Mda's satirical take on government corruption. Even though it is set in Lesotho, it is intended to be representative of many developing African nations where corruption is rife between governments and the private sector. It speaks to the continuing issue of socio-economic inconsistencies in the Southern African context. Themes addressed in the play include social justice and equity issues, corruption, greed and bribery, to name a few.

The Market Theatre run of *The Mother of All Eating* was staged from 14 May to 1 June 2014 and performed by Jerry Ntsonga and Mpho Osei-Tutu. I was unable to see this particular run. I did, however, watch the production in 2011 when Ndebele directed Tefo Paya. Paya performed a number of runs in Botswana, Lesotho and South Africa. Originally, the play was scripted to be performed by one actor. For the Market Theatre run, however, Ndebele made an adaptation and split the character between two actors – Mpho Osei-Tutu and Jerry Ntsonga. In May of 2015 I was able to watch *The Mother of All Eating* again at the South African State Theatre in Pretoria.

Due to the absence of footage, my analysis of this production relies heavily on my memory of the two versions of *The Mother of All Eating* that I watched in 2011 (Botswana) and 2015 (State Theatre). This analysis also makes reference to the interviews I had with the musician and director of the production. The combined use of formal analysis and narrative, sets the mould of what I am going to do in this thesis. This is justifiable in the case of this research because my focus is on the recounting of the musicians' experiences, not necessarily the minutiae of each production. Given that my research is located at the Market Theatre between 2010 and 2014, I have had to use information from the interviews to piece together the

ways in which the runs I saw differed from the one at the Market Theatre and create an overall idea of what the Market Theatre run actually entailed. My analysis therefore does not include the performances prior or subsequent to the run at the Market Theatre as that lies outside the scope of the research. However, it is those runs that have helped clarify my knowledge of the Market Theatre performances.

From a dramatic standpoint, the run at the State Theatre appears not to have differed much from the Market Theatre run. The most significant change was the substitution of Jerry Ntsonga by Pusetso Thibedi in his role. Other than that the changes were small – for example the lighting and staging, which were adjusted for the practicalities of working in the new and different space. Mulungo later added two compositions for the State Theatre run which were not included at the Market Theatre. These two compositions will therefore not be included in this analysis. However, as you will see below, they are a product of extended collaboration.

Pianist/composer Bernett Mulungo has been both musical director and performer for this production since its initial run with Tefo Paya in 2010 as part of the South African Theatre Season at Wits University. Director Makhaola Ndebele feels strongly about the effect of music on a production and articulates, "[W]hat I'm realising and […] I haven't proved it yet; there's something about music that transcends the cognitive; the thinking mind" (Interview 2, 00:15:15). This in his view is what gives music the capacity to "make the journey more engaging" (Interview 2, 00:17:33). Ndebele here works from an instinctive feeling that music does something in a dramatic production. That theatre in combination with music (though somewhat inexplicable and unquantifiable) is highly affecting. It is for this reason that Ndebele broadens the music beyond the limits of what was scripted.

The playwright, Mda, indicates in the script that there ought to be music. The instrumentation he suggests is drums and guitar, which Ndebele and Mulungo decided to change to piano. When working with a band (regardless of its size), musical ideas need to be locked down to a great extent to minimise the margin of error. Cues need to be set and adhered to at all times. Therefore, once ideas are decided upon there is little or no room for changes or additions when working with a band; quite simply for the reason of keeping everybody together. A solo instrument,

piano in this case, gives the performer more leeway and allows the music to ebb and flow with the action, which is likely to vary with any given performance. Therefore, flexibility is key. Even though the compositions and framework are set, there is room for additional improvisation and embellishment on the piano. This is also idiomatic of jazz music, the genre in which the composer is most comfortable. The piano as a solo instrument can also behave as the reduction of a band as it can sustain multiple voices at once.

Beyond the instrumentation, Mulungo and Ndebele changed the points at which music and sound is used in the play. In the script Mda specifies short musical interludes in between scenes as a transitionary tool in between scenes. For example, at the end of scene one, "Guitar and drum music for about two minutes" (Mda 2002: 6). The music – as suggested in the script – merely provides an ambient break in the action. It does not feed into the action. Cole offers, "What is constructed by the playwright, and reinscribed by the director, is mediated by the physicality of persons and objects, a physicality that leaves its own traces in the process of creation" (1992: 7). In the case of *The Mother of All Eating,* this mediation extends to the treatment of the music. Mulungo and Ndebele stretched the use of the music far beyond this, more and more so with each run.

Mulungo challenges the way in which music is incorporated – if at all – from the point of the very writing of it. In his own writing he reflects that,

> music directions aren't incorporated into scripts; that is music isn't part of the creative conception of the play. And this perpetuates the perceived idea that the primary focus is the acting and staging of the play and that music is only a secondary element. If music is to be incorporated in a theatre production it is done so at the director's discretion. (Mulungo 2013: 1)

This is a point which he is acutely aware of in his practice as a collaborator. His own starting point therefore was one of further annotating the script to add music where in his view it was not yielding the greatest collaborative possibilities.

> [W]hen I got the script. We sat down with Makhaola. We looked at the points where Zakes had said, "here we going to have music", and I went through all of those […] in between scenes. So typical of theatre scripts where in between

> scenes you'll have music, those were the points where Zakes pointed out where music should be. Then, after we started working on that, I sat down with Makhaola and said can we do more? And if we [are] doing more then where can we start fitting in music. (Interview 1, 00:12:40)

This is a description of the conceptual stages of the collaboration. Since the decision to use music was made from the outset, the integration of musical ideas was too. With the integration of a live music element thought needs to be put into what purpose the music will serve and how the performance will be executed. Mulungo came on board the production in his capacity as both composer and performer. The ways in which he chose to use music shifted with the each run of the play (as discussed in detail below) and long term this marked an evolution of sorts in the overall use of the musical element.

The inclusion of the musician from the outset fostered a more integrated process, as opposed to having the music come in as a last minute add-on which merely fills in the spaces. In dramatic theatre productions, musicians can find themselves in a position where the dialogue is competing with their sound. Richard Peaslee comments on this point when he says, "I'd love to write for dance. There you have a lot of advantages you don't have in theatre. Nobody competing with your sound!" (Peaslee and Silverman 1976: 46). A solution to this, therefore, would be to add on or fit in the music around the (outwardly) more important dramatic text and action. Mulungo argues:

> [I]f musicians understand that there's a script, surely […] the actors as well can put in a bit of effort into understanding that there's music, it has to be done like this […]. This music is not trying to upstage […], it's just here to enhance what I'm doing and I'm also enhancing what it's doing. So it's a give and take between the two. (Interview 1, 00:38:44)

Often with collaborations involving more than one discipline, one of the disciplines is ascribed a role of lesser significance. In collaborations of this nature emphasis is often heavier on the action than the music. The music then may be viewed as something that merely serves the drama and not as an element that has

its own consequences, to which the action and text can also contribute. Gunn states that,

> [T]he redescriptive impulses of interdisciplinary studies almost of necessity place one discipline in a position of subordination to another. As a result, the subordinated discipline is not only destabilized but threatened with subsumption in an anomalous, substitutionary structure that on the pretext of situating itself, as the prefix *inter* implies, between the two more traditionally constituted matrices, actually manages to incorporate them both in some larger hegemonic framework. Whether one construes the new interdisciplinary formation as merely a product of the merger of the other two, or as itself metadiscipline beyond them, seemingly matters scarcely at all. (Gunn 1992: 244)

It is this subservient role that contributes to the collective loss of the musician's voice. It further silences the narrative around the creative function of the musician.

Initially, Mulungo played arrangements of well-known South African pop and jazz standards from the 1980s and 1990s when Ndebele directed Tefo Paya in *The Mother of All Eating* as part of the South African Theatre Season in 2010 at Wits University. The focus of the festival was South[ern] African plays from the 1980s and 1990s, so the choice of music was fitting for this particular festival. He arranged music from the likes of Hugh Masekela and Brenda Fassie. Subsequent to this run, the production travelled to Lesotho where Mulungo incorporated music by the popular Lesotho band Sankomota, which was also very suitable to the setting of the play itself, and to where it was being performed. After the run in Lesotho, all of the music changed to original compositions by Mulungo: "that's when the whole thing now changed to original music from beginning till end" (Interview 1, 00:08:30). The sustained engagement between the musician and the production over a long period of time produced a strong collaboration, allowing the function of the music to expand.

During his years with *The Mother of All Eating*, Mulungo not only grew in his creative capacity as a composer and collaborator; but in so doing he was also able to support the director's vision of the production,

> [M]y interest as a director is how best to capture or take the audience on an emotional journey and music is a very strong tool to do that. So it was how you capture the audience emotionally through music […] and then also to honour the integrity of the script. (Interview 2, 00:11:05)

During the State Theatre run (which most closely resembled that of the Market Theatre) the audience enters the venue to a very dimly lit stage. The set is mostly white and gold and looks like the living room of an affluent household and represents modern upper class opulence. There are a lot of mirrors set at different angles, and clean reflective surfaces. Mulungo enters first and sits at the grand piano, which is placed downstage right. It is on the periphery of the main set but very visible. With his understanding of the greater dramatic themes, the musician identifies the use of the grand piano as something that adds aesthetically to the set,

> The idea of a grand piano for me completes that idea of how rich people would have a grand piano in a house, even if there's no one who can play it but it's there, and it will forever be polished and made sure that it's really clean, […] even though no one ever touches it. (Interview 1, 00:04:43)

The pianist is positioned with a diagonal sightline, facing upstage. His back is towards the audience. He is adorned in an emerald and chocolate coloured velvet suit. With tails, epaulets, tassels and all. He looks like an over-dressed butler. There's an absurdity to how lavishly he is dressed. Too much effort has gone into to making him look like he is in the livery of some affluent household. By occupying the liminal space of the fourth wall, the musician in *The Mother of All Eating* can be perceived as one who curates the action from where he sits.

The musician in this case serves a dramatic role over and above his musical one; he plays an actual character in the play. This immediately elevates the role of the musician and function of the music from that of add-on. Audiences mainly go to *see* a play; as such additional auditory ingredients in a production may go unnoticed to a great extent. Making the musician a visual component as well draws attention to his function:

> Music [in] theatre frequently reconfigures the classical performance space by placing instrumentalists and actors on the stage. This arrangement suggests that

> the instrumental music can no longer be presumed to have a subordinate or supporting function (as is implied by the consignment of the orchestra to the pit), and it also enables a greater interaction between performers. In some instances the instrumentalists actually become *dramatis personae*, crucial to the action. (Adlington, 2005: 236)

Mulungo himself adds another diegetic element to the production by being a dramatis personae. His music also manifests diegetically, as we will see demonstrated in the rest of the chapter.

The actors Mpho Osei-Tutu and Pusetso Thibedi enter and establish themselves such that the audience understands who they are. Together they play the character of the unnamed protagonist "The Man" – the Principal Secretary of His Majesty's Government. They are dressed in identical white sequined suits with gold ties and brown suede shoes and this reads as one character. The Man speaks with a received pronunciation but occasionally slips into his mother tongue – Sesotho – when he expresses astonishment or frustration. Sesotho expresses his reality, whereas the posh English communicates pretence and aspiration.

From a dramaturgical point of view, having two actors perform the role of one character allows greater scope for interpretation, cleverly displaying multiple perspectives at once. Having two performers immediately gives double the energy – and this rendition of *The Mother of All Eating* was nothing if not high-energy. It also allowed for both deeper and broader understanding of this one character. The two actors share the text, which was originally intended to be performed by one actor. The text bounces from one to the other with the occasional overlap in lines and at certain points they speak in unison. At certain points they represented two different sides of the same man, like Jekyll and Hyde; and at others times they read as the inner and outer voices of the one character displaying different levels of the same thought or emotion. Actor Mpho Osei-Tutu explains that:

> [A] big theme was obviously the multiplicity of corruption […]. [T]hose were the sort of the major overarching themes we were dealing with: duality, multiplicity, mirroring, and we physically had mirrors on stage […] and pieces

> of the stage were covered in mirrors. The idea was to play with all that, when [an] actor talks, the [one] actor gazes at the other actor. (Interview 7, 00:04:30)

The plot of *The Mother of All Eating* revolves around the character of "The Man". He, like many of his government colleagues, has found loopholes in the system and he prides himself on his corruption. Such government officials award tenders to members of the private sector who are willing to give them a cut of their earnings thus providing them a means accruing great wealth with very little effort. The metaphor of "eating" is therefore used, as a "sardonic word for living on corruption" (Mda 2002: x), revealing the fraudulent manner of achieving and revelling in material comfort. These employees are able to build empires while working at mundane office jobs. The Man arrives at his Maseru mansion (where the play is set) to find the house empty. His pregnant wife is nowhere to be found. The plot unfolds as he receives visits from disgruntled colleagues and his concern about his wife grows with each passing moment. One of the road works tenders that he awards goes wrong and all of his corrupt decisions come back to bite him when he finally finds out that his pregnant wife and a colleague Joe were in an accident on one of the poorly built roads he signed off on.

Once the musician has taken his seat at the piano, downstage right, a dim orange light is cast on him. He opens the play, which is significant as it demonstrates the curatorial agency that the musician has, setting the tone of the performance with a mbaqanga inspired composition. It follows a I, IV, V chord progression with non-traditional harmonies which obscure it such that it is not typically mbaqanga yet still highly reminiscent of it. Mulungo describes, "I've added some alteration to the harmonies, but it still stays in the […] I, IV, V chord progression and then melodically, I've tried to keep it within the South African call and respond type thing" (Interview 1, 00:21:48). Mulungo's introduction, entitled "Certain Townships in the Township (ala Matshikiza)" is a swung ballad in E-major. This short composition then flows seamlessly into an upbeat mbaqanga theme in F-minor. There is a comedic edge to this excerpt with its repetitive staccato quavers, which alternate with bars made up entirely of staccato (short and detached) crotchets. The composer also plays around with semitone intervals, which also contribute to the amusing

nature of the excerpt. This excerpt returns later in the performance as the theme music for the character of Mr Modise, and is titled as such.

Mbaqanga, which has come to be known colloquially as South African jazz, was internationally popularised by the recording industry in the 1960s and also by its incorporation of electronic instruments. Kivinick expresses, “the driving instrumental bass, upbeat melodies, and relentless vibrance of *mbaqanga* are so much a part of black urban life” (1990: 225). Ndebele and Mulungo use this distinctively Southern African sound to locate the play. Therefore this soundscape also serves as a signifier of geographical location.

When the whole stage is fully lit, the audience can see the white and gold theme that carries through from set to costume. The reflective surfaces also become very apparent in the light. Some of the mirror tiles have text embossed onto them but the writing is difficult to decipher when seated in the audience. Instead of a full musical score, Mulungo has an annotated script in front of him with cues and there is also a scored framework. Aesthetically it reads as the butler playing the piano from sheet music.

Scene One serves as an introduction to the play. It is an exposition of the setting, and characters and establishes dramatic events that will drive the action. Stage directions at the beginning indicate that there be music. Early on in the play, the phone rings. This ringing is created by Mulungo playing two glissandi on the piano: F–G–A♭ (F-minor) in the uppermost register of the piano in rapid succession. He pauses for a beat and then plays them again. This is a literal imitation of a sound, or re-creation of a sound effect that in many instances would be a pre-recorded sound effect played through a sound system. There is a novelty around creating sound effects with an instrument that is typically used in the theatre space to heighten emotion and dramatic action using commonly expected conventions of melody, rhythm and harmony. It enhances the performance and creativity in that it is played by a live musician and not merely borrowed and juxtaposed onto the action. The live sound effects add to the overall notion of creative collaboration by displaying the scope and creative agency and ability of the live musician. This is a further indication of the musician’s full

integration into the performance, where the instrumental function is so deeply ingrained into the fabric of the performance.

At the other end of the telephone line is the character of Jane. The Man tells Jane that he came home only to find that his wife was not home; and expresses his concern at her being out so late, especially considering her pregnancy. Jane also explains that her husband Joe, with whom The Man works, has also not come home. Jane has her own theme music, which, Mulungo starts to play once The Man has answered the phone. Jane's theme plays around on the E♭ Phrygian mode with a smooth, free feel created by the liberal stretching of time (rubato). There is a delicate descant melody that floats high above the sparse chordal movement in the bass line. There is a seductive femininity to the character that is suggested by this somewhat nostalgic melodic idea, the register it is played in, the fluidity of rhythm, and the incomplete cadences; also by the lightness with which Mulungo plays it.

Mulungo repeats Jane's theme with very little variation for the duration of the phone call. This theme and the ringing phone played on the piano come back every time Jane does and both become recognisable associations for the audience. Every time it comes back there are subtle changes in articulation and/or rhythm, for example occasional syncopation and some melodic embellishment. The variations are done in accordance with the atmosphere of the play so as to contribute to the mood created by the action – or serve the intentions of the dramatic action. The audience, however, never gets to see the character of Jane; she is only alluded to throughout the entire performance. The audience picks up her side of the conversation from what The Man says in response to her. The gentle character of the music and the manner in which The Man responds to the music, or rather the sound of Jane's voice, further reveals the tender nature of their relationship.

There is a brief intermission during which the musician takes on the role of a lobby performer – or in this case the butler – entertaining the audience while the actors are off-stage. This is the only point where the music fulfils the intermezzo function it was originally intended to fulfil as per Mda's instructions in the script. Mulungo therefore

adds a whole level that is not indicated by the playwright in many other ways he incorporates music.

Scene Two opens with a fierce knock on the door. The piano plays two sets of low register triplets on the piano, doubled in octaves with pedal to mimic the knock. This has a similar function as the phone ringing, where the piano is used to create sound effects. Triplets played like that outside of this context would mean very little but within this context they add another level to the collaborative fibre. The character at the door is the Chief Engineer of the Ministry that The Man works for. Instead of seeing the character conventionally portrayed by the actor/s, this character is quite literally played by the piano; the piano serves as the voice of the character.

The Chief Engineer is an angry and spirited character. He wants a share of the money that the man has acquired. As the character gets angrier, the piano part becomes more aggressive. He is represented by a fast, edgy, mid-register melodic improvisation. As he gets angrier, there are loud chords that interject the melodic runs: "Chief Engineer, he is very rude hence the rhythm of everything is so edgy, the chords are played loud and the melodic improv' there is also fast" (Interview 1, 00:15:37). The inflection of questions is communicated by inconclusive melodies that do not resolve, mimicking the upward inflection of a question.

The piano manages to embody the character in the imagination of each audience member. This is yet another clever choice made on the part of the director and musician which involves the music in a very integrated manner. This character, like Jane, is never seen – he is suggested by the tone set up by the piano and the responses given by The Man in the conversation. There is no text written for the character. In short, The Man is having a conversation with the piano; with the music. The exchange also takes the shape of a conversation. In this instance, music is used to capture what words would have.

There is a second knock – this time the musician knocks on the wood of the piano. This is a more literal representation of the sound but done on the instrument, whereas some of the others (like the phone ringing) work more by the association of a sound to some short musical idea. The Director of the Department of Tenders is now at the

door. His music, which in essence is his voice, is more sombre, with a thicker, chordal texture. “The Director Department of Chambers is a chilled guy […]. So, you have those long sustained chords at the bottom of the register” (Interview 1, 00:15:51). He comes with a far less aggressive approach, simply enquiring about the money. The smooth, dark, sustained chords in the low register build in intensity and volume but the same motif is generally played over and over again. Yet again, the resolution of phrases or lack thereof implies the conversational inflections.

The character of Joe, Jane’s husband and colleague to The Man is the only one the audience gets to see. He is not played by the piano and he’s the only character other than The Man and his butler, who is seen in physical form. In Scene Three, The Man transforms into Joe, “Perhaps I will tell the story best if I become Joe – just for a short while though, for I wouldn’t want to be an idiot for a long time. Okay, I am Joe now” (Mda 2002:18). In essence it is one character (The Man) playing another character (Joe). He is described by The Man as an uptight, morally upstanding man who has passed up all opportunities to eat, “He tried to be a goody-goody who wanted to stop everyone from eating” (Mda 2002:23). As Joe drives around, the musician plays rolling arpeggios on the piano. They speed up to suggest Joe revving the car or accelerating.

The Managing Director, Mr Modise, who is Joe’s boss, is represented by the theme that was first introduced at the beginning of the play and features here again. He gets into a conversation with Joe and as the discussion heats up the cascading scalar passages are interspersed with the accented crotchet chords. Accented dissonant chords in the upper register indicate the angry Managing Director.

In Scene Four, The Man enters as himself again. Mulungo plays a ballad entitled “Hayani”, which later comes back as the closing number. It is a very calm piece of music and flows freely through chords and the time shifts between two and three beats per bar. The fluidity and ease of the piece mirrors The Man’s calm state as he enters at the beginning of the scene. There is another loud knock at the door. It is The Man’s messenger. After confronting the messenger and sending him away without his share of the bribe, The Man goes into a tailspin. He comes apart at the threat of poverty. The thought of being judged for his behaviour also sends him reeling, he

stands by his conviction that what he is doing is right and just and that he should not be judged for it, “Poverty is a sin punishable by death” (Mda 2002: 31). Poverty is his big fear. This episode is underscored by an unnamed theme in ternary (ABA) form. The A section serves a more atmospheric function, with the bass oscillating in semitones, building the tension. The treble part repeats D to B flat in crotchets, adding to the tension. The B section follows the mbaqanga harmonic structure that Mulungo described, but chord II substitutes for chord IV. The jazzy harmonic progression is embellished with typically classical arpeggios in the right hand.

The amount of consideration that goes into the music creation in this production challenges the widespread supposition that music is incorporated to respond to the action or provide a nice backdrop to the action. As much thought and creativity goes into the musical contribution as into the action, and the use of music is very involved in the narrative. In his own writing, Mulungo explores the position of music in theatre: “I argue that music plays a more significant role in creating the dramatic theatre experience […]. I reflect on the idea of music as background sound to theatre, therefore questioning the significance and workings of music in the theatre” (2013: ii). His own compositional and collaborative research interest in music for theatre has made him more attuned to both the challenges and possibilities of such collaboration.

The action leads to a climactic point where The Man finds out that his wife and Joe were involved in an accident on one of his shabbily built roads. The accident kills Joe and The Man’s unborn baby and leaves his wife in a critical condition. This is the only time where the phone ringing is not followed by Jane’s theme. Instead what follows is a slow, pensive musical idea which Mulungo has aptly named “Lament for Rust”. It underscores this final conversation between The Man and Jane in the play. Where, there are chords played in this theme they are clustered quite close together with a simple lamenting melody – which also does not have a wide range – that seeps into the chordal movement. It contrasts Jane’s usual melody which has much more open chordal arrangements, where the treble part spans as much as three octaves from the bass line.

Moments after he hears this news, The Man is confronted by all the people he owes from his dirty dealings. The play culminates with all of the characters that have been

introduced throughout the play coming after The Man and confronting him about his greed. It ends with all of them ganging up on him and beating him half to death, with no sympathy whatsoever for his personal tragedy of a dead baby and a critically injured wife in the hospital. Since the characters did not appear in physical form, the audience sees The Man (both actors) react to punches and kicks in a choreographed unison sequence. Aesthetically it looks like he is in fact beating himself into his own grave, which as a metaphor echoes the moral undertone: of greed and corruption leading inevitably to one's own demise. This fight sequence is underscored by the smooth mellow musical accompaniment of "Hayani", which is quite contradictory to the action and is in turn very ironic.

Dramatically speaking, the way the play was interpreted presented an absurdist take on Mda's writing. The over-elaborate costumes, for example, reveal the pompous, pretentious nature of The Man. This is blown up to ridiculous proportions and is heightened by the recurring theme of multiplicity. The splitting of the character of The Man provides an exaggerated, multi-dimensional persona, both physical and dramatically. There is an excess of him (which is also accentuated by his reflections in the mirrors), to the extent where he is suffocated by his own abundance.

In as much as it is difficult to portray such abstract notions at face value in a musical sense, the music here draws attention to the dramatic absurdity and satire by often providing a soundscape that contrasts with the action, heightening the dramatic tension, and playing the serious off against the comical, where the music itself is not comedic. The stark contrast of the absurdity with this normal – almost serious – music is what highlights or heightens the absurdity. The style in which the musician plays grounds the production in a very real world; and this played adjacent to the larger-than-life acting emphasises the satirical effect.

Creating this satirical effect where the music and drama work in contradiction with one another proved to be a challenge in rehearsal. There were definite points where the choice to have the music function as if outside the play presented a challenge in trying to maintain this disconnect. Mulungo says,

> Sometimes the actors tend to sit on the rhythm of the music […]. And now they feel like they, they singing and you are accompanying the singing, whereas

> things have to go opposite directions so you need to have the rhythm but you have to move. So […] that pull and drag between music entered as well unfortunately it can be a bit tricky so those are some of the things that we had to work quite hard at. (Interview 1, 00:24:26)

Osei-Tutu here expresses a similar experience of this collaborative challenge. In narrating his experience, we see how Osei-Tutu's voice echoes that of the musician. He describes,

> [J]ust the accompanying of the music and what it does to you emotionally as an actor is interesting […]. A few times in rehearsal and also in performance where we would not be listening to him at all […] we'd change the entire complexion of the performance and sometimes we would listen to him but we would, we would lose ourselves in the motion of the music and we wouldn't necessarily be skating on it. (Interview 7, 00:06:26)

Their identification of similar challenges indicates their awareness of each other across the disciplines – whereby each party is able to identify the challenges of the other. It is also a marker of the music and drama developing at a similar pace and tackling similar conceptual obstacles in their effort to merge.

Kaye and Lebrecht articulate,

> Sound can help breathe life into rehearsals. As the actors work with the score or effects, they can respond to sound as if it were another character onstage and draw motivation from it […]. If the actors rehearse with all the [design] elements in mind, those elements seem integral to the production, rather than embellishments tacked on as afterthoughts. (Kaye and Lebrecht 2009: 118)

They advocate for a more integrated process, such as this one, and echo the convictions of the musician that treating music as an add-on is not desirable. Collaboration in rehearsal allows the performers to work out challenging moments. Full integration fosters a great cross-disciplinary awareness between actors and musician, to the extent that the disciplines become intertwined and somewhat interdependent. Osei-Tutu became very aware of the presence of the music as the process went on, "[T[here were times obviously when he wasn't there, and we had

rehearsed with him, […] it literally was like, there's something missing here" (Interview 3, 00:07:05). Mulungo facilitated by dedicating time in the rehearsal process solely to listening to the music so that the actors could familiarise themselves with it. This way both actor and musician come to understand each other in the creative space.

> [T[here were days throughout the rehearsals where it was time to just listen to the music, so we would sit down, and I would play everything that we do in the play and the actors would listen and the actors were invested in the process. They reached a point where they wanted to know everything that was surrounding them on stage. (Interview 1, 00:30:36)

The actors' own keenness to know their surroundings on stage cultivates a stronger, more genuine interaction between the collaborators. That is to say that the collaborative interest or stake of the collaborators has an impact on the effect and success of the collaboration.

The idea of multiplicity is echoed in the role of the musician and the multiple functions of the music: "the music was on three different levels. It was as special effects. You know there was knocking and different sounds. And then it was also as character […]. And then thirdly it was movement" (Interview 2, 00:06:46). The musician himself fulfils a dramatic function wherein he plays a butler, and as the butler, he plays music of a more incidental or ambient nature. During long passages of text, the piano serves as underscoring which is often ominous and pre-empts the final tragedy that is only revealed towards the end. In so doing he stretches out the suspense and builds the anticipation over a long period of time. For a brief moment, Mulungo also plays an accompaniment to a chant: "join the civil service and be a millionaire". I would posit that this too is done in the character of an obedient servant. He provides a modal jazz accompaniment playing minor chords in fourths. Accompaniment is therefore another function, however small (Interview 1, 00:22:53).

Salzman and Desi propose that music on stage ought to "provide the real diegetic stage music (dance music, phone or door-bell ringing, sound of thunder, etc.) as well as give the context or commentary expected from an ongoing, through-composed score" (2008: 36). One of the greater functions of the music that runs through this

play speaks directly to this proposition. That of guiding the audience by creating sonic associations with recognisable musical themes and sound effects. Everyday sounds are recreated on the piano, such as the knock on the door and the ringing phone. And other sounds are created on the piano. For example, when Joe has a near car accident, the piano represents this with a loud dissonant chord with each hand playing at the extreme end of its register. This in turn eliminates the need for pre-recorded sound clips. These sound representations give clues as to what the musician's process may have been in order to re-imagine what a certain thing would sound like when translated onto piano. The recurrence of these sounds and musical ideas (like Jane's theme) guide the audience because they give clues as to which character is about to return or what event may unfold.

The most striking use of music in terms of creativity and collaborative engagement in my view is when the piano personifies characters in their conversations with The Man. The music follows the ebbs and flows of a conversation and patterns of speech; as Mulungo says, "It was a matter of trying to get the rhythm of the other character in terms of what they are saying" (Interview 1, 00:15:27). Osei-Tutu mentions that he was able to identify these characterisations in "the quality of the music, and the notes he was playing and the chords, all of that informed who we were talking to. This person, how big are they? [Is he] obnoxious, is he shy?" (Interview 3, 00:22:02). The music and the text delivered by The Man overlap similarly to how speech overlaps in conversation. Some ideas played on the piano also end mid-phrase – again, much like normal conversation, where people tend not to speak in full sentences. The character is fully created in the choices the musician makes for each one, such that the audience can almost picture a particular personality with certain traits and features. The musician relies on key, register and rhythms to create these characters. The result is short, distinct musical ideas for each character represented, and this idea is then looped for the duration of the conversation this character is engaged in. Mulungo also relies heavily on repetition for the purpose of creating association. Sometimes this repetition includes one or two variations, such as a change in register, or slight rhythmic changes.

Naturally, Mulungo stuck to the idiom in which he composes most comfortably, which is jazz. His process was as much one of sitting and composing outside of the

rehearsal space as it was one of collaborative experimentation in the space with both the director and the actors:

> So most of the time then I tried material by sitting down with the director, playing it for him outside of the scene […]. And then, try it with the actors […] Where now they do their text and I'm busy playing. […] It was that constant composing and testing it immediately and rehearsing and coming back and expand on it. (Interview 1, 00:18:17)

His compositional approach to the creation of the music for this collaboration is revealed in the naming and scoring of the individual themes. The character themes in particular were composed specifically for the production; still, they can function outside of the context of *The Mother of All Eating*. Each run of the production has allowed Mulungo to reinterpret the music and in some cases add in compositions that were not included in a previous run – all the while staying true to the themes and structure of the play. Mulungo had continually modified and refined these in the years leading up to the Market Theatre performances. By the time *The Mother of All Eating* was performed at the Market Theatre it consisted fully of original compositions. He explains:

> What I've done is that throughout the stagings where we used original music, I've always modified and changed some of the compositions, by modify as in expand on the composition, change a few things in terms of harmonic settings and all that stuff but all of this was done in view of the overall story that we [were] trying to tell. So it wasn't just a showcase of the music, it was still trying to stay within the bounds of the story, so modifying the music but still in view of what the, the story is all about. (Interview 1, 00:09:30)

Mulungo's experience of this collaboration became more and more integrated over time. As each performer immersed themselves in their own process, their awareness of one another grew – in particular, the actors' awareness of the music. The musician's core function is hinged upon his awareness of the theatrical art, but full collaboration occurs when each is equally aware of the other. The run at the Market Theatre showcased a fully integrated production where every element had its place and none was dispensable. The actor's response to the music affirms this: "We call this a one-man, and he called it a two-hander, the character of the piano and the

pianist was, you know there is no *Mother of all Eating* without that element" (Interview 3, 00:06:02). Therefore, as the process unfolded over multiple rehearsals and runs the collaboration moved from a rather asynchronous one towards one that was more synchronous, as per Kim's explanation:

> In collaborations where each art form is a dependent creation, the process can be synchronous or asynchronous. In the synchronous dependent collaboration, collaborators work closely together at approximately the same time, building a work whose […] components grow contingent with the development of each other. In the asynchronous dependent collaboration, one half of the collaboration is created before the other is begun. (Kim 2006: 27)

Having done it many times before, Mulungo had the freedom to expand ideas and experiment further whilst managing to focus on expressing the core ideas of the play; all the while contributing to the director's vision. The preparation process became more integrated as it moved from its conceptual stages to crafting; and even more so with each performance run. *The Mother of All Eating* stands out because it employs an uncommon way of incorporating music into theatre, opening up the collaborative discourse to the possibility of different treatments. And we get to see the play almost as if it were mediated by the musician himself. The manner in which he uses the music opens up the performance in a way that far exceeds the effect of incidental music.

CHAPTER TWO: HAYANI

Hayani (Directed by Warren Nebe) is an autobiographical theatrical work based on the memories of select experiences from the lives of the two actors: Nathaniel Ramabulana and Atandwa Kani. It stitches together moments of their personal stories in a quilt-like fashion; with little blocks of narrative told from multiple perspectives; family members, friends and neighbours played by the two actors. Matthew MacFarlane, who was the musical collaborator on this production, explains that,

> "the play is very fragmented. It has literally snipped two characters […]. And what's happening is that the way it unfolds it shows snippets from their lives growing up. Short portions of significant events that unfolded. From one scene to the next, the changes are so rapid and also very contrasting in a way. (Interview 4a, 00:05:18)

Each little snippet is self-contained and stands alone as a short scene. Even though the two characters' stories run parallel and do not intersect at any point, they fit seamlessly into a larger context. Coming together to create an overall picture of their shared sentiments about the notion of 'home' – which is what *hayani* (a Tshivenda word) translates to in English.

The actors narrate most of the play in the first person. Episodically, they shift in and out of other characters. That is to say, specific scenes are dedicated to a particular friend or relative recounting a memory, and this memory is portrayed from the perspective of that character. Other scenes show the interaction between multiple characters; for example, a young Atandwa and his brother playing in the backyard. The manner in which the scenes flow from narration in present time to re-enactments of past events is indicative of the temporal fluidity that is typical of memory. The manner in which the play is structured is reminiscent of the cinematic editing device of montage. Denzin and Lincoln elaborate:

> Montage invites viewers to construct interpretations that build on one another as the scene unfolds. These interpretations are built on associations based on the contrasting images that blend into one another. The underlying assumption of montage is that viewers perceive and interpret shots in a "montage sequence not

> *sequentially,* or one at a time, but rather *simultaneously*" (Cook 1981: 172). The viewer puts the sequences together into a meaningful emotional whole, as if in a glance, all at once. (Denzin and Lincoln 2003: 7)

The first ever performance of *Hayani* was in 2009 at the Wits University Nunnery. By 2013, when *Hayani* was performed at the Market Theatre (18 September to 27 October), it had already been running for a considerable amount of time, performed by the same company that it began with. Having rehearsed and performed a number of runs at various theatres, festivals and schools, the music presented a far stronger collaborative presence during the Market Theatre performance. MacFarlane reveals, "[T]he only time I felt the music was working from my perspective was in 2013 […] the music was nicely consolidated and integrated into the play because at that point I was comfortable with the script thing" (Interview 4b, 00:09:00). Having come from seemingly random bits and pieces of sound, by 2013 everything was more fluid and integrated. The performers had consolidated their parts both individually and as a unit. *Hayani* is one collaborative example that provides evidence that collaboration favours close working conditions over an extended period of time. A point to which MacFarlane can attest, "I personally feel – and I am sure the other guys will agree with me – that we reached a point that we were happy with in 2013" (Interview 4a, 00:07:55). The musician's performance in particular evolved from being a semi-improvised response to the dramatic action to being more settled and confident in the flow of the performance. Over the years MacFarlane also shed a lot of the instruments he had used in the earlier performances. In 2009 he had two different guitars, bells, whistles, percussion, and a harmonica. By 2013, however, he was down to only one guitar and electronic echo effects. In his view, keeping the instrumentation, set and costume minimalistic allowed the audience to focus on the story and, "basically draw you into visualising" the world of the characters (Interview 4b, 00:21:04).

The piece opens with actors Nat Ramabulana and Atandwa Kani establishing a rhythmical theme by making sounds commonly associated with a train – a combination of their stomping feet, 'chugging', and 'toot-toot' of the train's whistle. This rhythmic pattern then transforms into a chant maintaining the same basic rhythmical elements. Trains elicit thoughts of distant travel and the notion of travel is

a recurring feature of the production. The roundabout route they use to get on stage further emphasises this metaphor. This entire opening sequence happens in darkness. Dim red lights come up as Ramabulana delivers the opening line, “I see my dad. He is in a tunnel. It’s pitch black so I can only see his outline”. Ramabulana goes on to describe a detailed image of his late father. There is a spotlight on Kani (who is just in front of Ramabulana) as he enacts the description that is being narrated behind him. At the end of the description the lights fade to black.

Out of the darkness comes Kani’s voice as he belts out the popular Xhosa song “Qula Kwedini” [defend yourself young man]. This song was popularised by the late Zim Ngqawana. From a Xhosa cultural perspective, it is sung when young men are escorted up into the mountains for their initiation rituals, and also when boys and men stick fight. The lights come up again, still with a reddish tint to them. The backdrop is now revealed more clearly. It is a spray-painted mural of the two actors as children, and as men. The mural includes images of their homes and their fathers too. Aesthetically speaking, the graffiti adds a modern edge to the visual element of the production. On the floor, taking up most of the stage, is a map showing Johannesburg, Venda and Port Elizabeth.

MacFarlane joins Kani with a guitar accompaniment to “Qula Kwedini”. MacFarlane accessed this Xhosa reference in the rehearsal process by listening to it being sung by Kani and finding a suitable chordal accompaniment for it. He does the same later in the play when he accompanies the character of Ramabulana’s father as he sings a hymn. The underscoring continues quietly while Kani recites a Xhosa proverb to the effect of: “women raise boys, they grow to become men among other men, but never will they cease to respect their mothers”. MacFarlane explains:

> [T]he relevance of that song is that it is an acknowledgement of his Xhosa roots. It is the juxtaposition of being a Model C student, […] yet having strong ties your African heritage and customs. I think it just sets up the dad’s position because you’ll notice then that he is telling the story from the suburb […]. Whereas in Nat’s story from his father’s standpoint you see the African customs and traditions happening. (Interview 4b, 00:17:40)

This song and proverb are the most distinct reference that Kani makes to his Xhosa heritage and is the only signifier of his Xhosa culture in the play. The rest of his story reveals the more suburban aspects of his life and upbringing. The presentation of the song allows for this contextual content not to be explained via spoken text. The music here explains it all. Director Warren Nebe substantiates the choice to use song instead of spoken word by saying, "I don't believe that words can hold everything". It is his conviction that there are many tools of communication available to practitioners that allow them to step away from the historically entrenched use of words: "I think something like music is able to enhance a completely other world, and construct story in ways that are evocative, atmospheric, challenging, that sometimes can carry tone" (Interview 6, 00:04:04).

Kani begins his story about family trips to Port Elizabeth and the music fades out. After about a minute the guitar gently comes in again with a subtle strummed motif that underscores the tale of the family trip. The laid back underscoring is almost contradictory in character to the action, where Kani recreates his jittery impatience as a child. MacFarlane subtly develops this theme as the story itself develops but it remains very soft. He simply varies it by adding a counter melody and sustaining notes at given points as if to hold the moment. This underscoring to the description of the road-trip eventually became the theme music of the production. Kani mentions driving passed Algoa Park and the music changes. MacFarlane plays a more daring modal theme on the lower guitar strings to capture the danger of the neighbourhood. Modes (other than the major and minor tonalities) tends to sound strange to the ear because the tonal centre shifts and so do the degrees within the scale. The use of modal music can therefore elicit an uncomfortable feeling in the listener. This treatment of the music propels it beyond a merely ambient function. What the music is doing here is providing a sensory backdrop, which elicits an emotion via association. MacFarlane does a similar thing later on in the play when Nat Ramabulana tells his story about travel from Johannesburg to Venda every year:

> So that experience involves going to Joubert Park taxi rank and the process of being at the taxi rank, what's happening around him. Like what he's sensing and seeing. Getting into the taxi, and basically the journey to Venda. The different areas they pass […]. For a taxi rank, I think of taxis as these boisterous, wild untamed things. Then, I'd think of African or South African

> music that I think goes with that. So I would use like something like maskandi music but with a beat […]. Like the Zulu music but like upbeat. (Interview 4a, 00:21:10)

For both Kani and Ramabulana's stories the musician fortifies the description of the geographical locations by creating a sound world that the audience can identify as belonging to that place.

The music helps with scene changes, character changes, character descriptions, objects and descriptions of location. It is used to sustain moments of tenderness or tension, and heighten others. At specific points the music is used to reference popular music that has particular associations and meanings. For example, when the guitar brings in elements of the popular Michael Jackson song, "Billy Jean". The audience is immediately amused as they are familiar with it. This song is an accessible pop culture reference – Michael Jackson is widely popular. MacFarlane's take on the musical reference is, "These themes highlight different eras or different ages of the characters at different points in time. Billie Jean was a reference to the early teenagers where you start learning what's cool" (Interview 4b, 00:15:04). References like these in the play bring the story closer to the audience because they have more than just the action to hold on to.

Hayani was devised by the actors and director in a manner that is similar to that for which directors/playwrights such as Barney Simon and Athol Fugard and actors such as John Kani, Winston Ntshona, Percy Mtwa, and so on have come to be acclaimed. Harvie and Lavender define devising as,

> [A] method of performance development that starts from an idea or concept rather than a play text; is from the start significantly open-minded about what its end-product will be; and uses improvisation […] as a key part of its process. Its composition often happens concurrently in a variety of creative areas, including live performance, mediation, and the development of props/objects, machinery, texts and images. (Harvie and Lavender 2010: 2)

MacFarlane only joined the collaboration after the workshopping was complete and the writing of the piece was in essence cemented. In keeping with this style of

working, the resulting script (even before the musician is introduced) had inherently musical elements. This is evident in that the actors themselves contribute musically by singing, chanting, and creating soundscapes like the train at the beginning of the show. The addition of the guitar as an extra musical element was not in any way invasive since the piece naturally accommodated moments of musicality. In describing his function in *Hayani*, MacFarlane states,

> My function was literally just to put music, or a musical soundscape to the narrative, as well as to complement the narrative and the action that was unfolding on stage. So, you could say it was underpinning by giving a soundtrack to the actual action on stage. (Interview 4a, 00:01:58)

Although he understands that the music enhances the overall product and makes it more interesting (Interview 4a, 00:15:40), he does not describe his musical contribution to the same extent and in the same detail as the director. Nebe expresses that for him, music's function, "is not about filling out silence. For me, it is about accentuating and enhancing the emotional journey, and reinforcing things like dramatic tension, dramatic space, dramatic atmosphere, mood, and place and time" (Interview 6, 00:02:40).

The highly episodic nature of the production was something MacFarlane frequently reveals in interviews to have been a challenge for him in the process:

> "It was a struggle. My hardest challenge was the quick changes […]. We would have to be so in sync. And that's the other thing. I have to know the script so well that I have to know exactly when the change was because we'd have to go from black to white in a second. (Interview 4a, 00:19:20)

He explains how he resisted the sudden sharp changes in favour of smoother transitions, which instinctually made more musical sense to him: "Naturally you would want something like interlude music […]. You know, something with smoother changes, fading in and fading out maybe linked by musical phrase". The director and actors, however, preferred the "jagged immediate changes" (Interview 4b, 00:09:59). The sudden changes did, however, fit with the dramatic montage. The long collaboration allowed MacFarlane to eventually get comfortable with the quick scene changes.

The initial part of the musician's process was familiarising himself with the script and also with the way the actors performed it. Given the pace of the flow of action, MacFarlane had to be aware at all times of where he was and what his next move would be musically – how he went about creating the music or fulfilling this function. Having seen what the actors presented, MacFarlane was able to create the music. The incorporation of the music was a process of constant exchange between the musician and the rest of the company. In so doing the company was able to zero in on the exact musical treatment they desired at all moments. MacFarlane notes that at times the vocabulary to articulate to him what was needed was lacking, "Sometimes I would literally get notes like: 'You know what, it just needs something'. It needs something and then I have to try and use my extra-sensory perceptions and psychic talents to realize what 'something' is" (Interview 4a, 00:09:00). The musician did rise to the occasion, however:

> I enjoyed about it was trying to be intuitive and trying to interpret what works. And I mean a lot of the time they don't know what they want and it's totally up to me to give something. A lot of the time I would just have to put something out there that I feel works and sometimes they are happy with it and other times we work around to reach a compromise. (Interview 4a, 00:10:42)

MacFarlane's experience therefore was that he as a musician had to create material and offer it as a starting point for the exchange. This also helped in that the rest of the cast was able to explain what they were looking for by comparison to what the musician presented where their own vocabularies fell short. For purposes of the performance MacFarlane used a framework as opposed to preparing a score in the traditional sense of the word. This was in order to accommodate the spontaneity of the actors in performance. This way, he was able to keep track of what to play in each scene while leaving room for embellishment (Interview 4a, 00:23:22). Reading between the lines, it became apparent that the actors never really directly addressed MacFarlane in the process. They viewed him as an extra element to enhance moments in the story as it went along as opposed to an integral element that actually makes up part of the story. Nat Ramabulana expresses this view in saying "Matthew came on board and I suppose […] bringing on music it was always going to be to assist the story" (Interview 5, 00:18:11). The director was MacFarlane's main point of contact throughout the rehearsal process.

Being a film and documentary composer, MacFarlane's approach leant towards the cinematic:

> As a musician you approach it with an attitude like a movie soundtrack you know. Things happen gradually and things are kind of set up in a way. Either the music sets up the scene or a piece of drama sets up the scene. My big challenge in the process was trying to match the action. Because the director and the writers were, they were convinced this was the way it has to be done. (Interview 4a, 00:06:26)

Green states, "Though some might argue that music simply reflects the drama on screen, because the audience is listening to the score as they are watching the film, the music automatically affects how viewers interpret what is happening" (Green 2010: 84). The very same could be said of music in theatre. As with many films, MacFarlane's music resulted in a soundtrack. *Hayani* resulted in two recordings (each approximately five minutes in length) based on the underscoring that accompanies the Kani's journey to Port Elizabeth and Ramabulana's journey to Venda. The two recordings are in essence medleys of the different phases of each journey. They still follow the story and changes in scenery described by the performers; just over a shorter period of time. The more familiar of the two tracks is Kani's theme, the theme music for the entire production and is also entitled "Hayani". It was nominated for a *Fleur du Cap Theatre Award*. This track incorporates other instrumentation and omits some of the elements of the journey developed within the scope of the main theme. Given that there is a soundtrack resulting from the years of performance and composition one could almost argue that the production could possibly even go on without the musician now. However, the live element; that is the immediate responsiveness of the musician is what allows the actors room and is largely what makes it so poignant at certain moments.

It is worth noting that the production where the music was not so integrated into the process got an award nomination. The musician created music in solitary space, outside the rehearsal room drawing from what he observed the actors do, later coming back to the director with material and trying to find ways of incorporating the

material, mostly by process of elimination. MacFarlane gives a run-down of this aspect of his personal process:

> What happens is there is something that I might translate from the notes I get. It might not be exactly what the director wanted. But then the thing is we get notes after the first week of running, and then from there the director might get a clearer idea of what he wants. Because then he can describe what he did not want from what I gave. And that helps him get a clearer idea and possibly then helps him describe also in a clearer manner what he *would* like. Perhaps if what I played was too dark he would say, "no, something similar but lighter". Then that helps us all get to the point in a clearer way. (Interview 4a, 00:09:53)

Hayani has musical underscoring throughout most of the performance; there are very few unaccompanied moments. Here the music serves the function of heightening the effect of the actors' performance. The musician himself is not integrated beyond his musical contribution in any dramatic capacity. His story is not included; his face is not on the mural. His function is mainly to support the action. The very play itself is a narrative expression – the actors are recounting stories of their own lives. Nat Ramabulana expresses, "we found a way to tell personal stories […]; there was something that we found, the mode of storytelling, how we told it and what we told, people were responding in a really magical way" (Interview 5, 00:37:08). Critical event experience moves "back and forth between the personal and the social, simultaneously thinking about the past, present, and future, and [does] so in ever-expanding social milieus" (Clandinin and Connelly 2000: 2). The temporality, sociality and place address the continuity, interactivity and situation of the narrative. The continued accumulation of experiences adds and shifts perspectives. This reveals added layers of understanding and meaning to the storyteller around the experience that they are storying. The experiences they speak of mark critical events in their lives which, according to Webster and Mertova, only become critical through a retrospective lens (2007: 74). MacFarlane's part in the larger narrative was to help frame it and in so doing making it accessible to the audience.

MacFarlane presents a seemingly passive or submissive performative presence. This is in strong contrast to the presence that Bernett Mulungo had to the diegesis of the previous case study. He has a significant presence in *The Mother of All Eating*, and

the play warrants this significance, but the verbatim approach of *Hayani* requires a lightness and fluidity that echoes the manifestations of memory. On another level, it is worth noting that Mulungo was the original musician on *Hayani*. It was in fact his strong musical and theatrical presence that resulted in his replacement by MacFarlane. Nat Ramabulana expressed the value of MacFarlane's approach as it fit into their concept of the work:

> We don't really want to hear you, but we want to hear you. […] And actually Matthew was the perfect personality – because […] he has no ego in terms of his art, […] he is able to do that, take the background. (Interview 5, 00:18:49)

MacFarlane's approach is more restrained – looking, listening and coming up with something from the wings, as it were. Even with his restrained approach he did eventually become integrated into the play, as now the production cannot stand without him: "I mean Nat and Atandwa would *never* […] they wouldn't do it without Matt" (Interview 6, 00:29:02).

CHAPTER THREE: AGREED: THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

Agreed is a three-part monologue production that was performed at the Market Theatre from 8 January to 2 February 2014. The production was directed by Sylvaine Strike and performed by actor Lionel Newton and cellist Kutlwano Masote. Masote composed for and performed in all three short plays. *Agreed* looks at the theme of greed, which runs through all three short plays that make up the production: *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, *The Handover*, written by Nick Warren, and *Jasmine's Jewel*, written by Lionel Newton.

> [T]he story is about greed, and about the consequences of our actions, our children pay for what we do […]. The decisions we make today have a bearing on future generations you know […]. I think that kind of brings out the poem […] how we did it, just really drives it home. (Interview 7, 00:20:29)

The Handover is a satirical play that tells of a rich white captain of industry leaving a country that he exploited:

> The Handover tells of a rich, white, drunk captain of industry leaving the country that he and his peers have pillaged. He admits that readily, but the vicious and accurately fired barbs come when he describes the new emerging black elites who have perfected the art of plundering. (http://markettheatre.co.za/index.php/reviews/read/newtons-theatrical-mastery)

It casts light on the post-apartheid mindset, in which corruption is ever the watchword. The piece highlights the rot in the economy, where the captain represents undertones of colonial rhetoric.

Jasmine's Jewel was written by Lionel Newton. He plays Boeta; an elderly, coloured waiter. What drives the plot forward is the imaginary guest the disgruntled Boeta is serving – Queen Elizabeth. The energy of the piece is derived from clashes between anger and gaiety, royalty and the working class.

For purposes of this analysis I shall focus my attention on *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* as it presented the most material for analysis. In the interview with the musician, this

short play was the one to which he most frequently refers. What I worked with for the analysis was Masote's personal footage of *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* when it was performed at the Market Theatre. Referencing the footage made it possible for me to do a very detailed formal analysis of the performance.

The Pied Piper of Hamelin was the opening piece for *Agreed.* The running time of the play is approximately twenty-five minutes. It is based on Robert Browning's 1842 poetic retelling of the German folk tale. Set in the middle ages in Hamelin, Lower Saxony (modern-day Germany), the poem is now a well-known text, three-hundred-and-three lines long (each line in the text is numbered) and laid out in fifteen stanzas. For the purpose of the performance, some lines were omitted, and the play ends at line 268. Each stanza differs in length and is made up of mixed or varying rhyme schemes and meters. At certain points consecutive lines rhyme and at others alternate lines rhyme, and this happens in what appears to be a random manner. The meter fluctuates due to the inconsistent lengths in the lines. The inconsistent meter and rhyme scheme still present as relatively simple – fitting well to speech, allowing for it to be executed fluidly. In this case it further allows Newton to play and place emphasis on different words or phrases, in so doing heightening the humour and meaning of the text. The poem itself is very playful and humorous. Again, the unpredictable rhyme and meter contribute to this. The music parallels the rhythm of the words at certain points. The words are rhythmically punctuated in a way that the music can follow; or deliberately chose to move in contrast to. There are moments of rhythmic imitation between spoken word and music and even audio-visual synchronicity where the sound matches what the body and text are doing. Masote recalls having to stay aware and slightly ahead of the action so that he was able to fall into pace with the actor at those specific moments that they had chosen for the music to parallel the action.

> To say, okay that is a hit point that we must get to, and it can't fall flat […]. But how do I set it up? When do I start to crescendo? Is it going to be a surprise? You know those kinds of things. And that's the drama of it, which in classical music it's written into the music you can almost not worry about it – it will happen on its own. (Interview 7, 00:26:50)

In orchestral music, for example, different parts or different characters are given to different instruments or signified by specific timbral (tone colour) changes. Here,

however, Masote had to create all of that by himself. For the musician this would obviously entail knowing the text very well as a way of being prepared for cues; and also in part an intuitive element, allowing moments like the one described above to work. More than instinct, it is the musician's skill that allows him to move with any changes in the pace or placement any given moment in the production such that they remain stitched into the story at all points. The skill to respond to and then score for the work. The actor is also part of the score with which the musician is working.

The Pied Piper of Hamelin was performed in a farcical physical theatre style, which Newton is famed for. It begins in a blackout. A spotlight gradually blurs into focus on the cellist, Kutlwano Masote. He is seated upstage left. Not so far in the periphery that he becomes an afterthought to the audience, but enough to give the actor room to use most of the stage. Masote, unlike Mulungo in *The Mother of All Eating*, faces the audiences at a slight diagonal such that Newton is well within his sightline. As a result, he is there as a representation of the characters' egos. He plays a long, pianissimo "A" harmonic, creating a somewhat eerie atmosphere. Harmonics present the shadow of a note, where the full tone quality of the note is absent. An eeriness is created by the ethereal sound, which in essence is the absence of the actual note being played. Masote's body is still – nothing moves except his bowing arm. This physical stillness contributes to the theatricality of the piece and coupled with the atmosphere created by the harmonic establish the tension and anticipation of the story that is to follow. The high-pitched harmonic fades into silence as the lights fade to silence, as the spotlight fades to black.

Masote then begins to play an upbeat melody in A-major. The dotted rhythms and short symmetrical phrases give it the stylistic edge of a fiddler's folk tune. Masote intermittently colours the melody with double-stops (two notes played simultaneously where two strings are bowed or plucked). Already this sets a fictional village atmosphere before the action begins. The music's function is preparing the audience by guiding them into the setting of the story. The melody is in 2/4 and runs in an eight bar cycle of two four bar phrases. This short melody will come back later on in the play at certain points where the town of Hamelin is mentioned. Music in the theatrical context has the ability to locate the story by allowing the audience to create

associations. Herein the fiddler's folk tune is reminiscent of a particular time and place, thus the play is set before the dialogue:

> One of music's advantages over other channels of information (image, dialogue, text, sound) is that it has the power of suggestion concerning what character may be thinking about or considering, whether that be a previous action, a person or a place. (Green 2010: 83)

Masote also used well-known musical references to create literal associations (in the other two pieces) so that the audience had something they could identify with in the story – making it more accessible:

> I composed some of the, some of the music or the fragments of music and others I borrowed from existing pieces. Stuff that people would recognise. […] There'd be reference to the queen of England and I'd play "God Save the Queen". Something literal like that. Those literal prompts. (Interview 7, 00:04:03)

Unlike in *The Mother of All Eating* and *Ukutshona Ko Mendi* (to follow), he is not involved as a character. He provides no interpretative commentary, as MacFarlane did in *Hayani.* He is there as a vessel – so to speak – that facilitates the telling of a musical story, or executes a purely musical function.

Lionel Newton enters upstage right and takes very deliberate steps towards the middle of the stage. He glances into the distance for a moment as if to take stock of his surroundings. The Hamelin melody modulates to the relative major key and is played with more ornamentation for one eight bar cycle, announcing the beginning of the action. It then returns to the tonic key. The Hamelin theme (and other musical themes that come in as the play progresses) serves as leitmotif – "an identifiable and recurring musical pattern" (Kalinak 2010: 11). Leitmotifs can be altered or developed throughout the score as they are here with changes in key, or they can be repeated verbatim. In so doing, they reinforce associations (Kalinak 2010: 12). The music, coupled with the drawn out entry of the actor, further heightens the anticipation. Newton – a lean middle-aged man, who moves with ease – then positions himself in the middle of the stage and takes one last glance across the audience. He turns his back slightly towards the audience and assumes a stance almost as if to anchor

himself – knees slightly bent. In one grand, swift movement he opens himself to the audience once more, arms outstretched as he says, “Hamelin Town”. With this the tale begins. Newton does not wait for a specific musical cue upon which to begin his dialogue, in fact he begins mid-phrase. Masote follows Newton’s lead and quietens down once he has begun speaking. Therefore, in as much as the music is feeding the atmosphere, the musician is responding to the action rather than the other way around.

Newton’s costume brings to mind a fictional Hamelin villager, with simple fabric; very working class. He wears a dark blue cotton shirt with long sleeves and a few buttons down the front, washed out charcoal corduroy pants and white suspenders. Masote is dressed in a similar manner and portrays a character of similar standing. The colour palette of Masote’s attire, however, contrasts with that of Newton’s. Beige cotton pants, pale brown cotton t-shirt, much like Newton’s, black suspenders and black shoes.

Once Newton has begun, the cello drops in volume considerably. This type of ensemble work is very similar to what might happen in a chamber music, where each musician allows for all of the voices/parts to be heard. Newton opens as a narrator who describes the setting of the town of Hamelin in a clear, bold voice. As Newton ends his opening verse, Masote also ends the eight bar motif that has been underscoring his narration. Masote indicates his own ending with a *rallentando* (gradual slowing down).

Masote then plays scene change music: an eight bar excerpt in A-major, also in 2/4 (*Agreed* 2014, 00:01:34). It sounds very much like a bugle call, evoking images of ceremonial brass. This further reinforces the time period the play is set in. At a certain point, Masote creates onomatopoeic sounds on his instrument by tapping, knocking and rapping on the wood of the cello, making the scuttling sounds of a plague of rats. Once the scuttling is established, he gently touches his bow to the strings, introducing more overtones. Only this time he does not sustain one clean note. He allows the harmonics to hop up and down untidily, making screeching sounds so as to imitate the, “women’s chats […], With shrieking and squeaking, In fifty different sharps and flats” (Browning 1842). As Newton impersonates the hysterical women, Masote’s

own mayhem builds towards ascending glissandi (melodic glides from one pitch to another), which, are double-stopped in dissonant intervals and played with erratic vibrato. Newton uses a lot of mime and gesticulation throughout his speech. His facial expressions elicit much humour. The sound mimics his actions – following the over-dramatised comical characters, creatures and actions closely and translating the visual into sound.

Masote briefly states the opening Hamelin melody, but this time he plays it much faster. As he does this Newton shifts through a number of characters that represent disgruntled townspeople in protest against the rats. This re-statement of the Hamelin theme with a greater sense of urgency serves as a reminder of the place and it guides the audience emotionally. Newton introduces the character of the Mayor: he bends over slightly, gives a quick whistle and flicks his hand in front of his face and holds it there as a way of characterising the length of the Mayor's nose. At this Masote plays a new melody in F-major (3/4 time). As the play goes on the whistle, the hand flick and the F-major theme in quick succession notify the audience that the Mayor is present.

Supporting the Mayor is the Corporation. Newton strikes a different pose to represent the town's corporation – a twitchy man seated with his elbow on a table. At the mention of the Corporation, the Mayor's motif is cleverly doubled a major third higher. The voices of both the singular (Mayor) and multiple (Corporation) are represented by this one theme. As the Mayor and Corporation, "Quake[d] at the mighty consternation" (Browning 1842) of the townspeople, Masote plays the Mayor's motif and distorts it by playing it with heavy vibrato and bending the pitch of select notes, eventually allowing it to disintegrate into a downward glissando. The Mayor and Corporation's anxiety becomes more palpable with the discomfort created by the dissonances. The Corporation parallels the sound in action, by sinking in his body and facial expression in slow motion in time to the glissando. This melody is therefore played three times, with a variation each time. One melody here has the capacity to represent multiple characters and emotions in its varied treatment.

Sometimes Newton moves in time with the music in a dance-like fashion. An example of this is when he twitches in time to the short metronomic notes Masote

plays marking the passage of each hour the Mayor and Corporation sit in council (*Agreed* 2014, 00:03:35). Again he employs a descending glide to mark their hopelessness. Certain musical conventions have come to be associated with specific emotions. For example high-pitched, bowed tremolo played on violins commonly signifies an ominous event. Kalinak explains,

> One of the best and easiest ways to hear [these] properties is through musical conventions that harness musical affects to specific meaning through the power of association. Musical conventions become ingrained in a culture and function as a kind of musical collective unconscious, affecting listeners whether or not they are consciously aware of such conventions. (Kalinak 2010: 14)

These conventions help create moods and emotions. Conventionally, the slow descending pitch in this instance represents a negative shift in the mood or, negative feelings such as fear, despondence and fatigue.

There are stretches where there is neither a musical accompaniment nor sound effect – often when there is a shift in the storyline, a significant character is being introduced, or in an elaborate descriptive passage by the narrator. For example when the Piper is introduced, we hear a shorter rendition of the "A" harmonic that was played at the beginning of the play, recalling the sense of wonder and curiosity (*Agreed* 2014, 00:05:10). The description of the Piper that follows has neither accompaniment nor musical commentary. Masote then plays an ethereal D-major melody in 4/4. It is lightly bowed such that the tone quality resembles that of a harmonic even though it is not. This sound quality elicits a sense of mystery.

The lighting changes again. The square of light is further upstage now and the rest of the stage is not as dark as when the Piper took his first bow. The Piper stands at the front edge of this square and his shadow is cast backwards into it. The Piper plays three notes on his pipe (*Agreed* 2014, 00:08:23). As Newton enacts three trills on the pipe, the cello plays three ascending trills (D#–G–A). Despite the mismatch between auditory instrumentation (cello) and visual (flute), we somehow suspend disbelief; the fact that the auditory cue is actually from a cello becomes irrelevant. The narrator then describes the plague of rats swarming out of the houses. Masote creates similar scuttling sound effects as at the beginning of the play. As Newton continues, "And

the muttering grew to a grumbling, and the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling, and out of the houses the rats came tumbling" (Browning 1842), the sound grows in volume from quiet taps on the body of the cello to chaotic fast bowed (not quite tremolo), atonal and seemingly random pitches.

Newton goes on to describe the rats. He embodies the descriptions and Masote plays even more sounds to match the adjectives. For example, what he plays to match "great rats" he imitates an octave higher to match "small rats", adding to the effect of the verbal description. The scene is highly animated and both the action and music portray a commotion which *crescendos* (gradually get louder) and *accelerandos* (gradually get faster) to a climax, when all the rats fall into the river Weser. Masote marks the drowning with a long, slow downward glissando. Even though this section sounds somewhat improvised, Masote's concentration on the text and Newton's action is noticeable. His focus remains on Newton's every move. There is a lot of movement, sound and text going on at the same time. This reveals the amount of rehearsal and focus that must have gone into making it a tight performance, such that the chaos of the scene does not result in the undoing of the performance. In reflecting on one of his own collaborative experiences, resident theatre musician Richard Peaslee states,

> I know that feeling because workshop is sort of a bad word in some ways. For musicians it often means sitting around and watching actors work out. It's just not the way musicians work – they come in, they sit down, look at their notes and get on with it. Actors work in a different way […]. The only way it was possible to develop a style for the piece was to hang around rehearsals and see what the actors were up to. (Peaslee and Silverman 1976: 43)

Masote realised that in order to be more involved in the entire production, he had to be more embracing of the practices of the other discipline, "So, I started to realise that I need to treat this a little bit differently, and get myself into the theatre space" (Interview 7, 00:12:30). This meant being more "open-minded" about the process, just "allowing" himself to be immersed in it (00:35:22).

Approximately ten minutes into the performance, the lighting changes again: this time to a red dreamlike state of a fantasy world. One of the rats momentarily survives the river Weser. The rat describes his experience of being led to the river in song. The

Hamelin theme comes back, played pizzicato at a more relaxed tempo in accompaniment to the rat's song. The music here parallels the text as the rat sings and dances along to the music. The swung rhythm, occasional strumming and pizzicato playing give the theme a casual, pub-like feel. The jovial dancing of the rat complements the atmosphere created musically. When the rat talks about how he landed in the river, the cello plays the theme from the film "Jaws" – a repeated G to G# interval that increases in tempo until it is a trill and then abruptly stops. This is humorous, as this film music has now associated with danger in large bodies of water. Once this little scene ends, the lighting returns to its normal state.

The Hamelin theme is played again, bowed at its original tempo as the narrator describes the town's jubilation at the rats' demise. It underscores the merriment up until the point where the Piper enters to claim his reward of a thousand guilders. The "A" harmonic yet again marks his entry. The Mayor's melody is played in the tonic (F) minor and the Corporation is now doubled a sixth below that. The shift in tonality and lowering of the register of the collective voice of the Corporation indicates a negative turn of events. Here as well, a common convention is employed; that of using a shift to a minor tonality to express something negative (whereas a shift to major would indicate something more positive occurring).

At the point in the play where the Piper summons the children of Hamelin with his pipe, as he did the rats, the notes trilled are E–B–A#, and because they are descending they create a sense of sadness and foreboding. When Newton and Masote do the pipe trills they do not look at each other nor do they give one another visual or musical cues: instinctively they anticipate where the other will begin and end each note based on what I can only imagine to be a collaborative intuition honed in rehearsal. "[W]e wouldn't catch each other. Some things we'd timed that it's a sequence and we'd catch each other […]. We're both human you know. Sometimes it worked; most of the time it worked, but other times it wouldn't work" (Interview 7, 00:14:56).

The final stanza begins, "Alas, alas, for Hamelin". An ornamented version of the Hamelin melody plays as the town's name is uttered (*Agreed* 2014, 00:20:15). Here marks another change in tonality. Instead of A-major it is now in A-minor. The theme modulates up a minor third and motif is also distorted to merge into the Mayor's

melody upon mention of his name. Both the Hamelin melody and the Mayor's are played with long smooth strokes, with an air of regret. The play ends at line 268 and Newton repeats the first line of the stanza in closing: "Alas, alas, for Hamelin". As Newton ends the piece and exits stage right, the lights fade and a clock is projected on the floor of the stage. Masote plays a final "A" harmonic – closing the performance as eerily as it began.

Masote does not engage other than with his instrument for the duration of the performance. The two performers do not engage each other directly. It is only through the music and action that they interact. Each artist uses the tools of their own discipline to prepare and present their contribution to the piece. There are some parallels in practice. For example, where the actor has a script, the musician has a score or some kind of musical framework as their text. Where the actor uses physicality, the musician employs various auditory elements. Their individual craft is their medium of expression. As Masote describes in his interview, they worked separately on their individual roles and when they met with the director they found suitable ways of merging the two. They manage to cross over while remaining very much within their own conventions and practices:

> I would also record on my cell phone, […] what we wanted to do, go home, write it out. So in the end […] I have got a score. I composed some […] of the music or the fragments of music and others I borrowed from existing pieces. [S]tuff that people would recognize. (Interview 7, 00:03:50)

For *the Pied Piper of Hamelin*, the interaction is one where the music mainly mimics the action and guides the listener. A few key melodies are used for significant places and characters, which are then played with variations to match the emotion and intent of performance at given junctures. The style of the performance also accommodates the use of the onomatopoeic sound effects typical of incidental music. Therefore at first glance, the treatment of the music in *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* appears quite reminiscent of incidental music:

> Music to be used in connection with a play. It may consist of instrumental music played before an act or between (*overture, **entr'acte*, *interlude); it may be vocal or instrumental music accompanying the action of the play (songs and serenades, marches and dances, background music for monologues or

> dialogues, music for supernatural or transformation scenes); it may underscore the action or be a digression from the action. (Randel 1986: 394)

A more in-depth look at *The Pied* Piper, however, reveals how the collaboration manifests as an equal combination of theatre and music in performance, where each moment is represented by action, text, music, or a combination of these elements. In essence it is a contrapuntal duet. Where each voice operates independently yet merges to create a coherent whole. The two performers may not interact physically or acknowledge each other on stage; still, the collaborative essence remains obvious to the audience. There appears to be an understanding between the performers: an understanding of their individual parts, and understanding of the other's part and an overall collaborative understanding of how to combine the parts effectively. They are equally engaged, although from different disciplinary platforms.

A number of choices contributed to the success of the collaboration – the choice of instrumentation for one. In his interview, Masote said, "I keep going back to the *Pied Piper*; that one was a natural […] fit for me of cello and an actor" (Interview 7, 00:29:20). Looking at it from the viewpoint of instrumentation, the cello is well suited to the piece. It is reminiscent of the Viola da Gamba, which was played by court musicians in the Renaissance period. It allows for the suspension of disbelief on the part of the audience and functions as a tool that creates a believable sound for the story world. The cello also allows for a vast range of sounds and effects to be created with the use of some extended techniques. This also eliminates the need for a larger musical ensemble. Furthermore, the poem "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" is inherently musical in the way it is written (a possible result of Browning's musical upbringing). It therefore lends itself beautifully to being performed to music. Especially music that is more inclined toward the Western Classical idiom, which Masote leans toward.

> [T]he cello really complemented the story line and the music and the soundscapes I was able to come up with. I think really worked well. And just seeing it, you know and seeing how we were able, without too much fuss to put it together and to produce a score at the end of it. (Interview 7, 00:30:06)

The choices the musician made here were very much in view of the collaboration. That is to say, it was not about writing music to the poem, but rather about supporting

the performer. What made Masote's choices successful was his constant awareness of his collaborator, "it's easy for us you know as musicians when you think about it. We're trained to listen, so it was easy for me. I listen. I listened to Lionel – I listened to everything" (Interview 7, 00:35:41). Masote watches Lionel's every move and stays with him for the entire piece – even when he is not playing, he maintains the focus. Newton feeds off the music and his performance shows an awareness of and sensitivity to it. He does not, however, wait on the music for cues; he is the one who drives the action forward. The musician observes verbal and physical cues. He is the one who follows and responds. The intricate and detailed action gave him a lot to work with in the creation of the overall soundscape. Masote noticed that his being there to support Newton afforded him a few moments of subtlety: "you can afford to be a bit more subtle because you've got help, you know of a soundtrack – a running soundtrack – as it were." (Interview 7, 00:09:33). The presence of a co-creator therefore allowed for more room on each collaborator's part.

The music adds another dimension to the performance. It serves multiple functions that support the action. The music serves as a reminder, guide, and commentator on the text and action. It affirms the theatrical elements, making them more emphatic – driving the point home. It is descriptive in the way in which it locates the play in time and place in the opening themes. It responds to the action at certain points, and at others it underscores certain moments and transitions, providing something of an emotional backdrop. Further, it gives the audience cues and reminders of characters and places. Overall the music heightens many moments – draws them out. The cello uses a vast range of timbres and techniques: tapping, strumming, pizzicato, bowing. Changes in register, dynamics and texture. Compositionally, Masote employs variations, inversions, augmentation, diminution, changes in tonality and other means of restating, dismantling or deconstructing motifs that have already been presented as the story unfolds. Masote sums up his function by saying,

> [I]t forced me to think, not just about how to play the cello and make it sound different and interesting and all the sound effects that I've got; but it got me to think about being a soundtrack, accompanying in a different way to accompany a singer. But accompanying the plot. Accompanying the story as it opens up. (Interview 7, 00:26:16)

Masote's revelation was that collaboration actually opened him up to a whole new world of creativity as a musician and instrumentalist.

In his narrative, Kutlwano Masote often refers to the differences in practice between himself and Newton. For Dewey,

> [E]xperience is both personal and social. Both the personal and the social are always present. People are individuals and need to be understood as such, but they cannot be understood only as individuals. They are always in relation, always in social context. (In Clandinin and Conelly 2000: 2)

Masote's individual narrative represents the social narrative of many classical musicians who remain within the discipline's operational practices, and on a broader spectrum, musicians in general. Traversing the boundaries between the disciplines is what presents the main challenge. Stepping into the theatre space pushed Masote to understand the workings of the industry that result in its particular practices and conventions:

> [It] is a different way of doing things because in theatre, Lionel would have to do his warm up exercises. He would go through things for his voice. Because also there is a lot of movement so he would do his stretches. I'd literally show up. We had a half past seven start I'd be there at seven, ten past seven. (Interview 7, 00:11:57)

Masote observed the detail with which Newton worked in rehearsal and performance:

> [E]verything was done to such detail and you know you understood you know the template was there and you knew that this is what needs to happen. So I found that really fascinating. Working with theatre people, how they work. I mean they definitely work much harder than, than musicians. (Interview 7, 00:06:41)

Challenging though it may have been, Masote found satisfaction in the crossing of disciplines: "that's what I enjoyed. It was just that it's dynamic and you are constantly trying to get it better" (Interview 7, 00:15:21). The fluid, spontaneous nature of this type of theatre makes it "an evolving thing" (00:09:22), requiring musicians to stretch themselves beyond their comfort zone in order to keep up.

Similarly, theatre practitioners require the same cross-disciplinary awareness. Having wrapped his head around the practical issues of collaboration, Masote's collaborative experience made him aware of his own capacity for expression as a performer:

> [I]t just gave birth to so much. Just the idea of being an actor, the idea of saying okay, I can do more than just play the cello, I can actually create drama. From that point of view that's why I say I think it's important that all of us must try step out of our comfort zone. (00:30:55)

In his interview, Masote discussed the insular conservatoire education that he received at university, and expressed that broader musical training provides advantages when working on projects such as *Agreed*. As well as the general advantages in the current economic climate of South Africa where a broad skill set opens one up to far more opportunities: "Because the old way kind of produced Neanderthals like myself who have one thing; but now in times of hard economies […] you have to do a little bit of everything" (Interview 7, 00:34:30). Because of his training in this way of working, he was somewhat taken aback by the demands of dramatic theatre as a general practice. For example, the need for all performers to be there ahead of time, unpaid, to warm up and focus; and the need for them to be present when technical aspects such as lighting are being attended to. Furthermore, their willingness to do this. Beyond the production itself, Masote found that there were also social aspects to the theatrical world that differ vastly from that of musicians, such as post-performance meet-and-greets.

Masote reveals that working on *Agreed* was quite a challenge for him. Not necessarily from a musical standpoint (that is, simply playing the music); rather, the act and process of collaboration itself. Even so, it was a challenge he welcomed and enjoyed. To begin with, this type of work is very new to Masote. Coming from a musical family and having been trained exclusively as a classical cellist, his experience has been centred around solo, chamber and orchestral performance. In more recent years he has shifted his focus towards arrangement of scores and conducting. Theatre performance that is non-operatic is therefore a very foreign experience for him. The style of the music in *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, however, reveals Masote's classical background. That is to say that the music of *The Pied Piper* is mostly in keeping with the classical idiom – reminiscent of late nineteenth-/early twentieth-century work

such as “Peter and the Wolf” by Prokofiev, or “Carnival of the Animals” by Saint-Saëns. Indeed, Masote reveals that he came to the process with ideas in mind. Ideas which reflect his range and influences as a performer and allow him to assimilate his own practice into the bigger picture:

> You know sometimes you come into a show with preconceived ideas; I always have the sound of Johann Sebastian Bach – the cello suites – because that would have been something that I was at home doing. So that kind of informed a lot of what we wanted to do. (Interview 7, 00:02:53)

Masote being a first timer in the field is also a contributing factor to his experience. Mulungo and MacFarlane had done work of this nature many times before with other collaborators. Masote was approaching it as if it were a ballet or opera, perhaps – where a musician would be in the pit and not have to engage. Nor would they have to comment or remark about their input, “which is quite interesting, because with us classical musicians, once we have decided this is what we are going to play […] that’s it” (Interview 7, 00:04:51). Classical musicians tend to play or compose by instruction, making their input somewhat transactional.

Dramatic theatre and music both still have creativity at their foundation. Both disciplines also have elements of preparation, practice, and rehearsal in common, which more often than not result in performance. However, the manner in which they are expressed and/or executed often differs. There are specific conventions that govern each medium of expression. Overall, crossing these conventional boundaries appears to have been the biggest hurdle for Masote. In classical music setups, each musician learns their notes individually. The dynamics, articulation and performance indications are written down, such that when everyone comes together the magic almost seems to make itself. Masote indicates that this collaboration was different from what he may have encountered conducting an orchestra or playing in one. In this type of work, the responsibility is on the musician to create every moment. To set these moments up because they are not simply written into the music, as with classical music scores. They are also likely to change with each performance, depending on the choices the actor and the musician make each time and, further, how they interact and respond to one another during the performance. There is something indescribable and unquantifiable about those moments of collaboration.

Even though each collaborator is prepared and will often anticipate moments that will resonate with their audience there is also a spontaneous creativity that always comes into play. Therefore, it is the actual live interaction that creates or allows for this – not just the preparation. Being a conductor probably made Masote more sensitive to the inner workings and intricacies of putting a performance together. He places a lot of emphasis on listening – yet another skill honed by conducting. He notes the importance of knowing one's own role and that of the collaborator. Listening to the actor's words, and the director's instructions. Being aware of yourself and your surroundings as a performer and allowing yourself to be involved, however difficult it may be.

What one sees in the performance is an invested interaction, a great collaboration. Seemingly a very close collaboration. The interviewee was also very articulate about his experience, which also points towards an interdependent engagement. It was clear to me, however, that the musician and actor did not work as collaboratively as the product may lead one to believe. This comment is by no means a remark on the work ethic, rather on the work process. Masote was very organised in his preparation and did what needed to be done. However, he did it in true classical musician style, practicing and preparing in isolation more than in collaboration. Bringing the prepared material to almost superimpose on the existing the theatrical work that had already been performed before, without music. The result was still one of a highly successful merging of the two elements in performance.

CHAPTER FOUR: UKUTSHONA KO MENDI

Ukutshona Ko Mendi… Did We Dance (directed by Mandla Mbothwe) was performed at the Market Theatre from 11 February to 16 March 2014.

Ukutshona Ko Mendi is analysed here using interviews and archived materials. For *Agreed*, and *Hayani* there was recorded material of the performance in the form of video footage or soundtrack, which were used together with the interviews for analysis. The analysis of *The Mother of All Eating* references a recent performance and the interviews. The clarity with which participants in *Ukutshona Ko Mendi* articulated their experience, however, underscores many of my key findings and so I have used it as a concluding analysis in spite of the limited capacity to analyse the work itself in the absence of material traces of it. In this case, the discourse of the artists involved stands alone, in line with this research's focus on narrative.

The play is based on the Xhosa poem by S. E. K. Mqhayi, "Ukuzika Kuka Mendi" [The Sinking of Mendi] (1943). The poem commemorates the events of the sinking of the SS Mendi, which was cut off by the SS Darro and sank on 21 February 1917. The sinking of the SS Mendi is one of the worst tragedies in South African history and has become a national symbol, which crystallises issues of race and the betrayal of black South Africans in the First World War. The ship was carrying members of the South African Native Labour Corps (SANLC) who were enlisted to fight alongside the British in the war. The men had been promised assistance in getting their land back from the Boers in return for their service. Warona Seane (actress) elaborates:

> [S]o it was Africans obviously who were promised that if they went, they would get their land back from the Boers with the help of the British. They went there to help the British so that they could get their land back. When they arrived on the ship, they were disarmed. All the traditional weapons were taken away and they were given buckets, mops and what not, so they were the labour corps. (Interview 9, 00:03:20)

More than six hundred of the SANLC men died; among them were prominent Pondoland chiefs. They died without achieving their own political ends; and from that many evocative memorials to the SS Mendi have emerged (Port Elizabeth memorial,

Avalon cemetery in Soweto, Hollybrook Memorial in Southampton and Delville Wood Museum in France); memorials in tribute of the courage of these war heroes who sacrificed their lives with great dignity.

Legend has it that the survivors watched the men form ranks upon the sinking ship as their chaplain, Reverend Isaac Wauchope Dyobha, addressed them:

> Be quiet and calm, my countrymen, for what is taking place is exactly what you came to do. You are going to die, but that is what you came to do. Brothers, we are drilling the death drill. I, a Xhosa, say you are my brothers. Zulus, Swazis, Pondos, Basothos and all others, let us die like warriors. We are the sons of Africa. Raise your war cries my brothers, for though they made us leave our assegais back in the kraals, our voices are left with our bodies. (http://www.wessexarch.co.uk/book/export/html/730)

Following this it, was reported that the men did a barefooted 'death dance' as the ship went down (http://www.southafrica.info/about/history/mendi/htm#.VtSQy8vRbqB). Hence the title *Did We Dance.*

Writer Lara Foot adapted S. E. K. Mqhayi's poem into a script (http://www.poetryinternationalweb.net/si/site/poem/13291/auto/0/SINKING-OF-THE-MENDI). Much of the text was focused on the story of the court scene where the Captain of the SS Darro, H. W. Stump, was tried for not following the necessary nautical protocols (for example sounding the ship's horn in the fog) that could have spared all those lives. Also for having left the troops of the SS Mendi for dead when he had resources to have saved some of the drowning men. Seane clarifies that,

> The story focused on the court scene so, what Mandla felt was that it still gives the white man the voice as opposed to the issues of the men that left and sank and so he shifted the focus from the court scenes onto the ships; onto this woman who's left behind. How did she deal with the loss, what sort of things does she do in order to deal with her grief? He then introduced another character who was sort of like the spiritual guide to the woman and who was helping to sort of call back the spirits. (Interview 9, 00:07:10)

The play thus became the story of those who lost lives and the loved ones they left behind. Mandla Mbothwe found there was much more to the concept than what was presented in the text. There was a lot yet to be explored in order to capture more holistically the story of the men of the SANLC. The focus of the play was therefore placed on the character of Noria (played by Warona Seane), a bereaved wife who tries to call upon her husband's spirit and finds herself accessing other spirits as well in the process. The director's take on the story of the sinking of the SS Mendi presented metaphysical elements such as ghosts and the spirit world. In so doing the production entered a realm outside that of everyday experience.

Mbothwe's vision engaged the entire cast. They all wanted to know more about the stories that may have existed beyond what had already been captured in text. The unrecorded events that might have occurred. From the beginning, the whole cast was involved in the research and creation of the work. To begin with there were cultural implications to work with dealing with such content. As a result, the team consulted with spiritual advisors in the Eastern Cape and sought permission to do the work so as not to disrespect the spirits whose life stories they were portraying,

> We went to see a spiritual advisor because Mandla was always talking about how the piece itself needed to be a living monument, and we need to ask for permission to tell these stories because there are so many different stories around so we don't know whether we going to be telling the right one or not and so we need to ask them for guidance and that even if we don't tell the story fully, we are aware and we are trying to honour. That by not telling it fully, it's not that we are being disrespectful, it's that we just don't know, and can they open the gates for us to learn. (Interview 9, 00:08:19)

What stood out for Bongile Mantsai (musical director/actor) was the intrinsic presence of song in their visits to consult with spiritual leaders. He refers to the music as traditional. That is to say, these are songs that are present in Xhosa culture, that are sung when approaching the spirits and ancestors. Mantsai remarks,

> There was something amazing about traditional music in it […]. It was very much spiritual music, where I obviously visited – all the cast – we visited a couple of people, spiritual people. And with those people obviously we were singing every time we go to such places […]. And part of this music was

> influenced by that spiritual world. And I remember Mandla saying we are telling a story of the dead, we need permission to do this work. And that stayed with me because I realised I am not going to write any kind of music. This is not score music […]. This is music, this is a sound that needs to take people to another level. (Interview 8, 00:10:19)

From the onset Mantsai was able to ascertain that his was not going to be a role of composing and bringing music to the cast for them to try out. He was able to see that the music would need to speak back to culture and tradition on a somewhat transcendental level. To reclaim the story of the spirits they were commemorating. He expressed how then it took a different form from what has come to be the common functions and expectations of music in theatre, "It was something different, for me it was not [only] music. It was more part of telling the story, part of creating the sounds and creating the voice of those people" (Interview 8, 00:03:52). This immediately shifted the treatment of the music from being about beautiful complementary sound to being an element that transports its audience and tells the story (Interview 8, 00:18:41). Already we see that the manner in which this production was approached differs markedly from the others mentioned. *Ukutshona Ko Mendi* presents itself as more of a cultural and spiritual offering. The spiritual subtext of the play propelled it towards ritualistic practices during rehearsal as a means of processing the content and unifying the cast.

Musically, Mantsai's point of departure in trying to capture this otherworldly realm was the actual 'death dance' that the troops were said to have done: "Firstly there was something about the question in *Mendi*, the heading was 'Did We Dance' […]. And what for me came into my mind, […] what triggers the dance? You cannot move without a certain sound" (Interview 8, 00:02:10). Seane further posed the questions, "what kind of a dance was it? Was it celebratory? Was it prayer? Was it giving in to death? Was it ritual?" (Interview 9, 00:05:03). The dance became the impetus for the music. The cast embarked on a very ritualistic process of research and workshopped rehearsal towards performance as a way of answering some of these questions. The use of certain rituals served as a way for the performers to access the complex layers of meaning in the story.

One such ritualistic anchor was the ocean. Seane recalls early morning visits to the ocean:

> We went to the sea lots of times, very early morning before the sun came out and talked to the sea and each one of us separately did our own prayers and asked for whatever we wanted to ask for and then went back and did research obviously then with the oral historians. (Interview 9, 00:09:14)

For Mantsai the visits to the ocean brought forth some of the material that he and the cast used in the production:

> We went to the sea and we were just chilling, just sitting there for hours. Went early in the morning, listening to the sounds of the sea, listening to the sounds of everything around us. And some of the sounds that came about came from what was experienced […]. Every single thing was a reference of what we had witnessed from that process. (Interview 8, 00:06:50)

This ocean ritual anchored the cast in the process so much that even when the production moved to Johannesburg the company found ways of accessing the ocean:

> When we did it in Joburg because there is no ocean […] the coastal people brought water and so we would sprinkle that water on stage every time we performed, when we were rehearsing, when we wanted to get into the emotions, then we would do something with the water to help us access the sea. (Interview 9, 00:09:45)

The director explains this elemental anchoring, in particular the use of water, as one of the framing aspects of the process:

> Each story in our life is dominated by one life element or the combination of two. *Mendi* has two life elements; which is the sand, the water and the combination of them, which is mud. And *Mendi* is constructed around that.

He also recalls the use of song. Firstly to further the frame, rituals and in turn the production itself, secondly to access culture, and thirdly to access the lost voices of the departed:

> You need to find the song that speaks to those kinds of things, but also the song that speaks to the lost souls. The unburied bodies and the unrecorded names.

> And the misspelled and misrepresented and misappropriation of those kinds of things. (Interview 10, 00:08:28)

The key thing for Mbothwe therefore is the story and honouring the lives – and any other aspects – that are being storied. His own methods stem from African (more specifically Xhosa) storytelling practices. As such, he refers to his own work, *Ukutshona Ko Mendi*, included as a "reclamation of the aesthetic of oral tradition of storytelling in our contemporary theatre" (Interview 10, 00:02:05). Salzman and Desi posit that,

> If you go far enough in any direction, historically or culturally, you eventually arrive at some form of theatre based in music and dance. […] Given the antiquity and ubiquity of these forms, it can be said that singing accompanied by physical movement is at the base of the performing arts family tree. At some unknown point, language – ritualistic or storytelling – is added to the mix. (2008: 5)

The way in which Mbothwe frames his work around storytelling traditions therefore warrants his use of multiple forms of expression. In the case of *Mendi* this manifests as collaboration that flows across multiple disciplines. Mbothwe is of the strong belief that this "total aesthetic of African culture" (Interview 10, 00:04:22) cannot happen without all these elements present.

The collaborators express that *Ukutshona Ko Mendi* being a ritualised and spiritual piece in a South African context inherently calls for a musical component. In the case of this play, the legend of the 'death dance' and resulting title – *Did We Dance* – calls for the incorporation of physical movement as well: "obviously because it's a spiritual journey, African spiritual journeys include music […] and because the question is *did we dance*, so there was a choreographer and that choreographer would need music to choreograph to" (Interview 9, 00:10:21). The manner in which the music (and choreography) was incorporated into the production was a fully integrated process right from the very beginning. Therefore the music was by no means an add-on. It was part of the very framing of the piece from its conceptual stages.

Evidently there was a very close interplay between music/sound, dance/movement and text that drove the story in *Ukutshona Ko Mendi*. The driving force behind this production was the wholly inclusive workshop process. For a six-week period, the cast did research together, performed rituals together, ate meals together (which could be considered a ritual in itself) and rehearsed together as an entire cast: "So rehearsals were structured. In the morning we did physical warm up, then vocal warm up, and then Owen would have a session of choreography. Choose a moment and then choreograph that. As he's choreographing, we play the sounds" (Interview 9, 00:12:15). Most of the material was devised in the rehearsal and it stemmed from the experiences they shared when doing the rituals and research (Interview 9, 00:12:45), but some of the musical content was borrowed from well-known hymns. When working with the cast on the music, Mantsai opened the floor to an exchange of ideas rather than coming with a more prescriptive approach: "It was not just a person coming to the cast with a score and saying, 'guys let's sing this'. It was, 'how do we create this according to what we have witnessed?'" (Interview 8, 00:17:20).

According to Knowles and Cole, "Involvement in music as creators, performers, and listeners requires that we engage in the evanescent aspects of the world, cultivating sensibilities that apply to ways of doing as well as ways of *being*" (2008: 226). Music can therefore be used as a tool to hold stories such as *Ukutshona Ko Mendi* that deal with intangible concepts like the spirit world. So much is questioned about people who cannot speak for themselves, and the music helps not only to create but also to contain this enigmatic content. Mantsai, like Mbothwe, did not view the music as separate from the story. It was not an external driving agent to the action and text, one that was designed to fit around the story. The music in combination with the other elements *was* the story. The process allowed Mantsai to integrate the music totally, as per Mbothwe's vision. Mantsai was invested in creating music that connected with the story world: "The interest was how do we connect with the sounds and make one powerful spirit because the music was influenced by that" (Interview 8, 00:11:3).

For Mbothwe, music has the capacity to serve a number of functions:

> It can determine the rhythm of the story, progress the story, it can slow down the story, it can make the story faster. [It can] expand and deepen the subtext of certain elements or certain points of the story. The emotional. What I call the

> vertical travelling of the story. You've got your horizontal travelling of the story, which is the beginning, middle and end. And then there's the vertical travelling of the story. It helps to progress with the horizontal but also it helps us to deepen and work with the understanding of the vertical travelling of the story. But also the song helps us to emphasise certain things that I want to highlight in a particular space, in a particular time. (Interview 10, 00:13:39)

In this production, the music had the added function of expressing what text cannot capture in addressing aspects of the spiritual realm:

> And the mediator [between Noria and the spirit world] that side starts singing the song when he wants to make sense of their world because the text itself that is ruled by grammars and particular language, fails us to express certain emotions or to express our smallness in this big story. And the song is our survivor to help us. (Interview 10, 00:09:23)

Mbothwe also explains that in his view, when the body experiences extreme emotion it tends to lose the capacity for coherent language and finds other means of expression, which manifest in sound and/or physical movement. (Interview 10, 00:03:39)

The body was used to merge artistic elements. To elaborate, the body was not only used in physical movement. It was also used to create a lot of the sound that made up part of the production. To this Seane adds that,

> There had to be song that is song. But there also had to be lived moments. […] obviously the body, when the body is working, the body is emitting sound […]. So, each scene inherits sounds but there was also song […]. [Mandla] was particular about where you went with your exploration of the sounds that you emitted. (Interview 9, 00:16:56)

For Bicât and Baldwin, the idea translates to movement/action on stage creating a sound, “Any action […] will produce a unique sound that potentially can be controlled, amplified, metamorphosed, minimized or ignored; it may help clarify dramatic meaning and intention or undermine the objective” (2002: 75). Choices therefore need to be made as a way of creating meaning out of these sounds coming

from bodies in action, and the sounds that are created deliberately. It is here that the particularity, or rather specificity Mandla Mbothwe was concerned with comes into play. As a result of this awareness of the movement and the body, percussive sounds such as stomping feet on the ground and clapping were used. The cast also played around with the sound of breath. And *Ukutshona Ko Mendi* used what one might refer to as indigenous instrumentation. There were drums, shakers, whistles, animal horns and bells. The instrumental effects were often not very melodic. They were used to elicit an otherworldly effect.

To expand on Mandla Mbothwe's practices as a director: his focus is on creating a story world and wants multiple elements to come together to create a unified world. To achieve this, he has developed the habit of working with a multi-disciplinary team of a choreographer, musical director, and at times multimedia specialists. He has a methodology of collective creativity. In *Ukutshona Ko Mendi* he posed the same questions to everyone involved, fostering an environment where they unpacked these questions together. As such Mbothwe explains that he created an environment where,

> there was no distinction between a physical movement, a physical metaphor, and the idiomatic expression of the spoken language. The kinds of communicative modes that exist in the community are totally reincorporated in the telling of the story. Poetry, singing, dance, playing from one character to another, interaction with the audience. Allowing audience access to the elements that are so familiar to them. It might be songs, it might be part of dance, it might be ululation, to evoke a special relationship between the audience and the performer. (Interview 10, 00:02:36)

This therefore, is not just a way of familiarising the performer with the content of the work; it also connects the performers to one another and to their audience. By maintaining a close-knit collaborative company, Mbothwe was able to foster a sense of *communitas*; that is, "what you get when a group of people are feeling exactly the same thing and they lose who they are, lose gender, and everything, but they become one" (Interview 10, 00:16:10). This notion of communitas accounts for the cohesive ritualised atmosphere in *Ukutshona Ko Mendi.* Everyone remained fully engaged and there had to be a unified energy at every moment for the success of the process and performance.

In both *The Mother of All Eating* and *Agreed*, the productions were heavily reliant on text and its delivery to tie together the performance. In the case of *Ukutshona Ko Mendi*, the impact of the text is carried by the ritual and symbolism that contain the production. That which lies beyond, beneath and between the words both holds and carries the meaning. The story deals with a spirit world, from where ghosts are channelled, and from both a conceptual and aesthetic standpoint creating such a spectral world on stage can prove to be a challenge. As a result, the music needed to have a transcendental effect on the audience, transporting them between worlds. Along with the text, action and choreography, it had to create a spirit world, which fully incorporated these elements in such a way that they were seamlessly linked.

Ukutshona Ko Mendi proves to be the exception to the rule. The entire company was involved from the very beginning of the production process and this resulted in a fully inclusive collaborative process. The collaborative sense of creativity yielded a very cohesive performance product where everything tied back to the spiritual context from which it emerged. To this, Mantsai remarks,

> You can't really say this is music, this is dance […]. There's something about the world that we were creating that was healing. It was part of healing. It was part of saying […] I'm carrying this story. It's not about the impression, it is about the impact. (Interview 8, 00:22:28)

Much of this is to be attributed to the director's personal work process. Showing once again the impact on a production that the director's role can assert. His process allowed every participant to understand the subtleties of each discipline by actually working with the discipline and not leaving each to their own speciality, so to speak. It fostered a stronger co-relation between the disciplines and inter-relation between the collaborators. Full collaboration favours such an inclusive atmosphere where the result is a productive atmosphere a more successful and enjoyable collaborative environment. This type of performance also relies heavily on having performers who are willing to stretch themselves beyond the boundaries of their disciplines. An obvious benefit would be to have artists that have the capacity to perform multiple artistic roles. The creative process in this case was very instrumental in bridging the gap between the disciplines.

There is a paucity of material, but a richness of discourse that yielded from the things said about this production. Focusing on the analysis of these narratives by emplotting actions, events and happenings enabled me as the researcher to, "produce coherent stories as an outcome […]. We create stories (storying and restorying) by integrating events and happenings into a temporally organised whole with a thematic thread, called the plot" (Kim 2016: 197). The collaborators of *Ukutshona Ko Mendi* were clearly very invested in their collaborative experience. The participants in my research were vocal about their experience and these experiences mostly highlighted their process and the impact it had on the work. Their narrations of their experiences spoke back to one another further, reflecting the effect of the process, presumably on the entire cast. The content came from a spiritual place and also from an unknowing place. For the cast and director it was about discovering the possible perspectives on the story of the SS Mendi.

In the absence of records from the SS Mendi and those last terrible moments, one has to create something out of silence, and this is what the workshopping, and making the body and music central could offer – given that nobody knows for a fact what SANLC troops were thinking or doing. The creative team of *Ukutshona Ko Mendi* have found an event that is defined by a musical moment and created a production around it. They use music and bodies and dance. The process demonstrates the benefits of full collaboration not only in product but also in preparation. Bongile Mantsai's narrative is a record of his experience of a fully integrated workshopping process. His contribution was clearly a focused one, but the interplay with all other elements had an obvious impact on how the sound world worked. His concern from the onset was not in the beauty of the sound, keeping in key or using good singers: "my interest was not how beautifully these people can sing. It was more about how honest you are in telling the story" (Interview 8, 00:18:41). It was about remaining connected as a group and allowing this to translate into performance.

CONCLUSION

Viewing the experiences of theatre musicians at the Market Theatre through the storying lens of narrative inquiry was key to the findings in this study. The musicians' narration of successful collaborative experiences has provided insight into various aspects of theatre/music collaboration: "Narrative, and the stories it records offers research a way to highlight those understandings often not revealed by traditional modes of inquiry" (Webster and Mertova 2007: 14).

The musician's voice in the theatre space is one that works differently and too often musicians do not reflect on their own work. They are not accustomed to articulating their experiences. Knowles and Cole assert,

> In the conversation about the arts in research literature, visual art and drama have taken a leading role. The voice of music has been relatively mute. Can music offer anything to social science research within postmodern research paradigms that are primarily verbal and visual? (2008: 225)

As such the musician's voice is one that needs to be solicited, and such was the aim of this research. Where musicians may not have thought they would ever have to speak about their collaborations, this study gets them used to discussing their experiences, thus disallowing passivity in their collaborative engagements.

Given that the styles and methods employed in the selection of productions varied, the collaborative product and the musicians' experience of them naturally varied as well. In *The Mother of All Eating*, Mulungo was able to integrate, through long collaboration, to such an extent that he is not only on stage but also "mediating" the whole production. He created characters that are not present using long musical themes that served as multiple characters – not as an additional descriptor of the characters but the very characters themselves. This was quite an experimental manner of integration, interweaving both music and musician into the plot of the play. The music belonged within a jazz idiom, as the composer/musician is himself a jazz pianist.

In *Hayani*, the musician showed a close working relationship with the director but does not get involved with the dramatic action on stage. It is still a healthy and fruitful collaboration. The approach in *Hayani* leant toward cinematic treatment, both dramatically and musically, where the focus was predominantly on the development of a running soundtrack throughout the performance rather than on moment-to-moment details like sound effects.

Agreed presented a strong duet between musician and actor. In this case there is a pre-determined notion of creating the music (to a greater extent than even McFarlane) creating from what you know away from the collaborative space and arriving with a score of sorts. The result: two independent artists working separately but in close contact. Masote mimicked Newton's action very closely, creating a tight ensemble. The production displayed Masote's range, as a classical musician. He had the furthest to go in terms of understanding the culture of theatre and the complexity of the work theatre practitioners do. By discussing the differences between disciplines, his narrative highlights a theme of cross-disciplinary awareness.

Lastly, *Ukutshona Ko Mendi* took collaboration to a new level. The collaboration was fully inclusive from the outset of the production. It marks a real departure from the various norms outlined elsewhere, but evinces the value of serious and total collaboration.

In the analyses, I have explored the systems and units of music that are used to create particular effects for purposes of theatrical collaboration;

> Music is a coherent experience, and because it is a system of expression possessing internal logic, it has frequently been compared to language […]. Like language and other systems of communication, music consists of a group of basic units, a vocabulary, if you will, and a set of rules for arranging these units into recognizable and meaningful structures, a grammar. (Kalinak 1992: 4)

These systems include: melody, harmony, tempo, dynamics, rhythm and tonality. This study goes beyond mere structural analysis of music. It considers the music as a part of a larger construct, where it is analysed as part of a whole that is inclusive of action, imagery and text. Each production employed various musical conventions to

varying degrees. Conventions help create a variety of moods and emotions and further help with the associations and meaning of the music. For example, leitmotifs, and the creation of diegetic sound and music (sound which can be heard by both the audience and the characters on stage), like the phone ringing in *The Mother of All Eating.*

The productions analysed herein predominantly used instrumental music. Instrumentation further contributes to the manner in which the music is used and the overall effect of the music. The timbre of the music must fit the mood and intention of the piece. It also contributes to the style and also creates certain effects; for example, booming low range octaves on the piano (*The Mother of All Eating*) or screeching on the cello (*Agreed*). For *The Mother of All Eating, Hayani* and *Agreed* there was use of extended instrumental techniques as a means of accessing an extended sonic palette to colour the performance – that is, an extended range of expressivity. In *Ukutshona Ko Mendi* and *Hayani* the instrumental music met with the vocal work of the cast. Unlike the fictional tales of *Agreed* and *The Mother of All Eating,* both of these productions dealt a lot with the past and memory. The use of vocal music plays a part in evoking a nostalgic effect while recalling actual lives that were lived and (in the case of *Ukutshona Ko Mendi*) lost.

Within the musical discipline are sub-disciplines, for example jazz or classical music. These distinctions become evident in the manner in which the musicians integrate themselves in the collaborative process. The different approaches to the creation of music here depended on the background of the musician. The musicians brought their own processes to the collaboration, expressing their own ranges as musicians. Governed by the influences of their sub-discipline, each musician had preconceived ideas, composers or genres that guided them in creating the work (maskanda, mbaqanga, jazz, Bach).

The musicians that participated in this study appear to have a more transactional approach to their art than the theatre practitioners. They are more involved in the mechanics of the work than the overall meaning. Actors, on the other hand, appear to inhabit the meaning. This in part explains the silence on the part of musicians in talking about their work. All of the musicians that participated in this research are

composers/arrangers as well as performers in their respective fields. As such, they bring their own discourse to the collaborative transaction, allowing them to go beyond the mere act of performing 'just another gig'. They were able to engage with and invest in the work and make art, as it were – extending their range.

The role of the director has proved to be an essential aspect of cross-disciplinary collaboration. As Bicât and Baldwin state, "the stimulus needs to resonate widely" (2002: 16), therefore, it is crucial that the work be facilitated by way of unifying the collective energy into one product that is accessible to its audience. When music is directed, it is experienced differently by both its creators and the audience. Meaning is no longer derived solely from the auditory stimulus, but from its combination with the linguistic and visual as well. Both musicians and actors have their own practices and creative expectations and the director is the overarching umbrella that unifies them by bridging the creative gap between the two disciplines:

> This fusion demands the co-creation of the artistic elements through the close collaboration of composer, writer, designer, singer/actor, and musicians. But someone has to be in charge […]. So it is almost always the director who now has to be in charge. (Salzman and Desi 2008: 266)

The director's choices inform to a great extent the treatment of the music; naturally most directors do not wish for the music to distract from the story or to overshadow the dramatic content. The directors in this study, however, have somehow managed to integrate music in a way that it does not overshadow the theatrical elements and yet does not become in any way subservient to other elements. All the directors are concerned with the emotional journey of their works, to which the music contributes vastly. This along with the style of the performance informs that manner in which the music is treated.

Mandla Mbothwe and Warren Nebe also stand out as directors who favour the integration of music in dramatic theatre. Other participants in the study note their extensive work with musical collaborators. They appear to have similar ideologies where collaborative creativity is concerned. Warren Nebe expressed that,

> [T]he thing that really for me and why I use music is because you capture an emotional subtext; that not only enhances the story. So, not to make it literal,

> but actually precisely the opposite, to deepen it. To deepen the experience, to reach the work in the present because it is a sensory experience of music that really draws one into the present and I'm interested in performance that is present-orientated. (Interview 6, 00:05:44)

In a similar vein, Mandla Mbothwe approaches music and musicians from a stance that most considers the subtext:

> [E]very time I work with a group of musicians I tell them that they are not here to play instruments […]. Each and every instrument has got a character. You need to find an attitude. You need to find a subtext. (Interview 10, 00:20:25)

Makhaola Ndebele, though not as frequent a user of integrated music as Mbothwe and Nebe, also appreciates the value that music adds to what he called the "emotional journey" of a piece. He further expresses an explicit preference for the use of a live musician,

> I mean there's a difference between finding music and having somebody who can compose music. I found that those differences are very stark. So, so having a musician is markedly different than just sourcing the music and then playing it. I find that it is much better having somebody that can actually play and compose (Interview 2, 00:234:28).

Collaboration is a layered process. These productions demonstrate how collaboration tends to privilege close working relations over a longer period of time where they are able to tease out the best in both disciplines allowing the layers to interweave. Musically, the result of a long collaboration for *Hayani* and *The Mother of All Eating* was an elaborate compilation of original music. This does not mean that shorter collaborations are bound to be unsuccessful. *Agreed* was in its own right as successful as the other productions even though it was a short-lived such collaboration. The success of these collaborations validates aural and musical texts as a key component to the overall performance text.

This kind of work challenges the musician not only from a creative standpoint in terms of their musicianship but also in the collaborative sense, in that they have to throw themselves into another realm of creativity altogether and still be productive.

Meaning that they are creating music from a theatrical standpoint, and performing using those conventions. They have to acclimatise not only to the work, but also to the culture, which is a big shift. All of the musicians save for Kutlwano Masote also revealed having worked repeatedly in theatre. Granted, in South Africa there is no culture of theatres employing resident musicians. Even so a community of regular theatre musicians seems to be developing.

A common thread between a number of the interviews noted a lack of vocabulary across the disciplines as a common challenge the musicians faced – where words run out to explain what is required of the musician. Masote gives an example of this:

> Sylvaine is very musical, as is Lionel actually. So they tried to be a bit more direct. I guess they used generic speak where […] they could say something like, "You need to crescendo to this point". But they would say something like, "It needs to be bigger". Bigger can mean slower, it can mean broader, lower in register, louder. And theatre jargon. I think I struggled with things like 'stage left'. […] You know, 'upstage', 'downstage'. Those kinds of things. (Interview 7, 00:10:33)

This is a prime example of specific musical terms getting lost in metaphoric language. MacFarlane expresses a vagueness in the explanation of the director when trying to work on musical ideas. Here, where vocabulary was inaccessible, the process of trial and refinement came into play, "I think that is one of the things I enjoyed about the challenge of the theatre having to be as perceptive as possible. Somebody can tell you total gibberish and you have to make sense of it all" (Interview 4a, 00:09:35). Theatre culture and conventions remain the same. It is the music and musician that have to adapt, given that they are the ones being integrated into a theatrical space.

Narrative meaning is derived from analysis and interpretation and allows for human experience to be rendered meaningful. In order to arrive at the use of the transcripts being inscribed into the formal analyses, the interview material had to undergo various levels of coding, "Note that when we reflect on a passage of data to decipher its core meaning, we are *de*coding; when we determine its appropriate code and label it, we are *en*coding" (Saldana 2009: 4). Having done so, a coherent narrative could be

constructed – from the multiple individual narratives – with a structured plot and thus meaning created. A useful tool in creating narrative meaning is, "*narrative smoothing*", which uses methods of interpretation to co-construct the participant's story as "coherent, engaging and interesting to the readers", and thus mediates effective understanding (Kim 2016: 192). By "*broadening*" the data I was able to come to an understanding of some of the aspects of the broader collaborative framework that housed the narratives, socially and in terms of the values of the collaboration. Whereas "*burrowing*" allowed me to focus on the specific aspects of each personal narrative, from which I derived the challenges, attitudes, feelings and understandings of each individual (Kim 2016: 207).

The intention here was never to tell a unified story or to prove that musicians have any one thing to say. Each musician tells a different story and each production does, too. They fulfilled unique functions. These lived experiences do not speak to one unified issue or tell a unified story. They do, however, speak to one another in a polyphonic exchange between the participants' voices, and that of the researcher. Polyphony being,

> multiple voices, where no voice enjoys an absolute privilege. That is, in polyphony, different voices including the author's are heard without having one voice privileged over the others. Polyphony requires a situation where the author (or the researcher, metaphorically) does not exercise monologic control, as the researcher's consciousness is nothing but one of many of conscious voices (of participants). The author, instead, lets different consciousnesses (conveyed in each voice) encounter each other as equals and engage in a dialogue. This does not mean that the researcher should not have his or her own view. (Kim 2016: 74)

Music naturally evokes something in a listener. Music in and of itself functions in a particular way. With intrinsic qualities that illicit a response. Within the context of creative collaboration these qualities can be exploited in service of the production. Kalinak questions the intrinsic qualities of music that illicit emotional responses in listeners,

> "Expressivity is not intrinsic or essential to music: yet as any listener can attest music may and often does arouse an emotional or intellectual response. What is

> the source of music's expressivity, its ability to produce extramusical meaning in its listeners?" (Kalinak 1992: 8).

The power of musical affect in theatre, however, lies partly in the ability of the musician and music to tap into the theatrical conventions, and in so doing helping to shape the perception of the audience – expanding the creative platform and allowing the actor a broader range of expression. In the case of the productions under study here, the music is an action in itself. The musicians are visible on stage the whole time and seen in action and reaction, contributing to the overall production. That is to say, the act of making music also adds to the visual theatrical aesthetic. There appears to be an assumption that musicians only experience the world in sound. In work of this nature, however, musicians need to have as much visual and linguistic astuteness as the actors need auditory. Peter Murphy posits that,

> In the everyday world, other persons condition each of us. They condition what we can do and how we can do it. In doing so, they limit and modulate the excesses of our own choices. In the world of the artist, the collaborative other is the one who acts as a determination of creative indeterminacy. Collaboration is one of the ways – though it is by no means the only way – in which creation's indeterminacy comes to assume a determinate form. (Murphy 2011:131)

Therefore, visual and the auditory elements redefine one another or recontextualise each other by simultaneously distracting from and contributing to the other. There is a need for all parties involved to treat the collaborative space differently from the spaces in which they operate alone, within their own isolated conventions, because the combination is what actually counts. The combination is therefore greater than the sum of its parts. The collaborative aesthetic appeals far more than the individual elements that make it up.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

ARCHIVES

An implication of my research that stands out is the state of archival records of works at the Market Theatre. Although not directly linked to the aims of this research, this was a notable finding. Having found these productions through the Market Theatre, I looked to their archives to locate the work in the theatre's collaborative history and practice. However, most of the material I used – footage, scores and audio recordings – was solicited privately from the participants themselves. The earlier history of the Market Theatre is very well documented, with an array of material in the Historical Papers archive (University of the Witwatersrand), particularly material from 1976–1996. In its new era, however, the Market Theatre appears to have lost that knack for archiving production material. Their archive is silent post 1996, which incidentally coincides with the death of founder Barney Simon. Given that material is so much easier to capture and store with modern technological advances, one would assume that there would be a wealth of material:

> With the technological aids available to us, we should be doing more to preserve our theatrical heritage. It is no longer necessary to depend on literary records of our productions. We should be preserving our drama and theatrical productions by means of an audio-visual medium, as is the case in most international institutions. (Keuris and Krüger 2014: 91)

Further, given that the Market Theatre is so influential one would expect there to be a better archival trail. What do new directors, writers and producers reference if they need to?

There are of course many possible reasons for the apparent dearth in archival material, which could be explored in further research. This also begs the question of whether or not this is happening at other theatres, and on a national level.

Especially silent in the archive is the voice of the musicians. Therefore, another consideration for archiving in view of such collaborations is that of the availability of scores and other musical records. Just as theatrical records ought to be preserved,

records should be kept of the music that is made in collaboration with theatre. While the productions were being created, many of the musicians found they did not have a need for scored music. However, for archival purposes, some form of musical record of the original productions would be an important reference.

Some key issues around archiving were raised in some of the interviews with the research participants. Mandla Mbothwe suggested that collaboration between creatives and researchers become common practice. Where archivists and researchers become a part of the creative collaborative process as well, so as to record material for archiving, "So I think across the board the collaboration should not only be an artistic collaboration. You always need to identify a scholar to work with" (Interview 10, 00:24:52). That is, that they be involved in the rehearsal process to document works and comment on them from a relevant and knowledgeable standpoint – and not from the 'West views Africa' perspective. He posits that the lack of writing around what Southern Africans are doing in theatre is a self-perpetuating cycle resulting from Southern Africans not documenting their own works. As such, knowledge from the works of Western practitioners (Stanislavsky, Grotowsky, Boal, Artaud, etc.) remains prominent in our archives.

LACK OF FEMALE COLLABORATORS

The theatre music arena appears to be a male dominated space. At least among the set of musical collaborators that participated in this study, it certainly comes across that the female voice is missing. In as much as this may have been coincidental, it may also be indicative of a lack of females in the industry that do this kind of work.

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FOOTAGE

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‘Ukutshona Ko Mendi’. Posted by The Biko Foundation https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2bLknBpCL3M, accessed 23 January 2015.

‘Mendi’. Posted by Sean Higgins https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3YN1XXTabg, accessed 23 January 2015.

INTERVIEWS

MacFarlane, M. *Interview with Bongile Lecoge-Zulu on 26 November 2014.* [Recording in possession of author].

MacFarlane, M. *Interview with Bongile Lecoge-Zulu on 1 June 2015.* [Recording in possession of author].

Mantsai, B. *Interview with Bongile Lecoge-Zulu on 24 October 2015.* [Recording in possession of author].

Masote, K. 2014. *Interview with Bongile Lecoge-Zulu on 17 December 2014.* [Recording in possession of author].

Mbothwe, M. *Interview with Bongile Lecoge-Zulu on 6 July 2015.* [Recording in possession of author].

Mngoma, T. *Interview with Bongile Lecoge-Zulu on 20 March 2014.* [Recording in possession of author].

Moilwa, E. *Interview with Bongile Lecoge-Zulu on 17 December 2014.* [Recording in possession of author].

Mulungo, B. *Interview with Bongile Lecoge-Zulu on 1 June 2015.* [Recording in possession of author].

Ndebele, M. *Interview with Bongile Lecoge-Zulu on 18 May 2015.* [Recording in possession of author].

Nebe, W. *Interview with Bongile Lecoge-Zulu on 6 July 2015.* [Recording in possession of author].

Ngcobo, J. *Interview with Bongile Lecoge-Zulu on 20 February 2015.* [Recording in possession of author].

Osei-Tutu, M. *Interview with Bongile Lecoge-Zulu on 20 August 2015.* [Recording in possession of author].

Ramabulana, R. *Interview with Bongile Lecoge-Zulu on 8 January 2015.* [Recording in possession of author].

Seane, W. *Interview with Bongile Lecoge-Zulu on 11 September 2015.* [Recording in possession of author].

APPENDICES

NOTES ON TRANSCRIPTION

The following transcriptions are of interviews conducted with willing subjects towards this Master's research project. All interviews were transcribed verbatim. In-text referencing of the transcriptions, however, has been edited to read as grammatically or syntactically accurate.

All interviewees granted explicit permission for their interviews to be recorded and later used in either written format (signed consent form) or by verbal consent on the recording. The consent forms and verbal explanation of the project were unambiguous in expressing the nature of the study, data collection methods and intended use of the data. The original recordings are kept in .m4a format and stored on secure Google Drive and Dropbox accounts.

All omissions are indicated where privileged information has been used at the request of the interviewee and/or discretion of the interviewer.

Below is a table of the notation used in the transcripts adapted from Gubrium and Holstein (2001: 639) and Brinkman and Kvale (2015: 209).

NOTES ON TRANSCRIPTION

NOTATION	EXAMPLE OF APPLICATION	MEANING OF NOTATION
Initials	BLZ, KM, MOT	Represents the interviewer and interviewees.
[	[Hideous and [So absurd	A single left square bracket indicates the point of overlap onset.
]	Hideous and honestly to us]	A single right bracket indicates the point at which an utterance part terminates vis-à-vis another.
-	Chara-	A hyphen at the end of an incomplete word indicates an abrupt halt or trailing off where a word is not completed.
…	I was just basically … The music was there	Sudden change in direction of narration.
( )	It's a really like grow up man ( ) selflessness	Empty parenthesis indicates the transcriber's inability to hear what was said.
(( ))	Do you have any questions? ((laughs)) Um, ((noisy)) but, um, Is my, I just thought it was brilliant ((silence)), and obviously I mean	Double parentheses indicate transcriber's description rather than transcriptions.
Italics	So there's kind of *powerful*; almost operatic, OR; *Ndiqibile ngoku*	Italics indicate a form of emphasis via pitch and/or amplitude, Utterances in a language other than English, OR, production title.
{}	{I am done now}	Translation brackets. They follow utterances in languages other than English.
[00:00:00]	Time stamp	[Hours: minutes:seconds]
** **	**Privileged Content**	Indication of omission of privileged information.

INTERVIEW 1 – BERNETT MULUNGO
DATE: 1 JUNE 2015
JOHANNESBURG
DURATION: [00:48:46]

BLZ: Bongile Lecoge-Zulu
BM: Bernett Mulungo

BLZ: Here's the thing right. Right now I'm standing in a position where I didn't watch … My research is based the Market Theatre right.
BM: Mm.
BLZ: So I'm talking about things that happened at the Market Theatre.
BM: Yeah.
BLZ: *Mother of All Eating* being one of them. I didn't watch run at The Market Theatre with Mpho and [Jerry].
BM: [Jerry. Yeah.
BLZ: I watched the Tefo do it.
BM: Yeah.
BLZ: You know it was just one solo man and I watched Mpho and Goose do it. So I need to figure out what the difference is between what's happe- … The one I watched now and the one at the Market Theatre, and there's also no footage available. You don't know if anyone has footage?
BM: Yeah no. They never recorded the stuff. Which is yeah! I mean … Anyway that's the story for some other time.
BLZ: But actually it's not hey, that's where my research is actually going, that's my biggest finding, that we don't archive stuff.
BM: Well I mean the thing is Market used to. I don't know why they stopped.
((Interruption as BLZ speaks to someone else))
BLZ: Um, Yes. Sorry I'm back.
BM: No they, they used to do it, it's just that I don't know what happened. Lately they haven't been recording which is funny.
BLZ: Yeah.
BM: But anyway in terms of the difference, what do you mean?
BLZ: Were the any … Aside from there being a completely different performer, like costume wise, set wise, musically what were the differences?
BM: Okay. In terms of the one that...that Tefo, I mean one man.
BLZ: Mhmm.
BM: So there were just two performers on [stage]
BLZ: [Mhmm.
BM: Er. The one with Mpho and Jerry. It's two men playing the same character.
BLZ: *Ja*.
BM: Now that then, and it requires that in terms of text, it has to be split between the two, and in terms of delivery it also needs to be connected in that um, as much as there's two people saying that the text is still needs to read as one person because essentially that's what the play is all about; it's one man. Um you have a piano there adding on you know uh other characters that you don't get to see on stage, you don't even get to hear what they say, but the piano – rhythmically and texture and all those things things – to convey that.
BLZ: Mm.
BM: And so all this stuff has to be in sync in order for the play to, to read still as one man just telling this story in his house, and all that stuff. Right?
BLZ: Mhmm.
BM: So of course then in terms of costume, I mean as when we do it in the Market with Jerry and Mpho, they had to put on the same costume er costume that looks the same; identical.
BLZ: [Yeah]
BM: [So that it's clearer that this is still one guy [you know]
BLZ: [Yes!
BM: And it was carried through even when we did at the State Theatre.
BLZ: Was it the exact same costume?
BM: It was the same costume.
BLZ: Okay.

BM: Nothing changed. Um. The only thing was then the actor had to jump into the text that was, you know the way it was split before with minor editions there and there. So, so, so that it still takes the story of the play. Now...things that changed a little bit would have been in terms of lighting and set as well, it changed a little bit. Few things had to be adjusted. [00:04:16] Um. And all of these had to be adjusted in relation to the setting of, of, of the play; I mean it's inside this guy's house. He's, he's a not a Business Manager, he's a Government official, so therefore you know, you, you will get quite a lot of expensive furniture in there. So when we did the play the first time with uh, uh, Tefo, we couldn't get a grand piano so we ended up with an upright. [00:04:43] The idea of a grand piano, for me, it completes that idea of how you know rich people would have a grand piano in a house, even if there's no one who can play it but it's there, and it will forever be polished and made sure that it's really clean, and all that stuff, even though no one ever touches it. So it's that whole class thing as well about it. which is uh, um, one of the reasons I chose to use the piano when Makhaola approached me with the script. Uh, the script itself, the original er, production it actually used drums, guitar and accordion.

BLZ: Drums guitar and accordion? [00:05:45]

BM: Ja. and you even get those musical directions in the script.

BLZ: Mhmm.

BM: So you know um, and the one thing that I was hoping that when Zakes came down I'll be able to ask him is, you know about the original score 'cause it doesn't exist in terms of the score or the actual recordings, I wanted to know like the music what was it 'cause like I haven't seen.

BLZ: Is it … It is a play about Lesotho? [00:06:15]

BM: Ja! So the accordion would make sense in terms of the Lesotho settings and then um, then with a substitute to a piano, it will make sense in terms of the setting of the, the, [the]

BLZ: [The affluence.

BM: You know ja. In terms of the lifestyle and those things that has taken place with you know, our middle class and upper [class theme. You know].

BLZ: [Mhmm.

BM: Then in terms of the music itself, it has changed a lot.

BLZ: Mm.

BM: Um, from the first staging. When we did it the, at Wits with Tefo it was parts of the South African Theatre Season which was looking at theatre plays around the eighties and nineties from South Africa.

BLZ: Mm.

BM: So because of that what I did with the initial one was to do arrangements of South African standards.

BLZ: Mhmm.

BM: Jazz standards from that time. So you know um the Hugh Masekela stuff, some of that was in there. Um. A little bit of Brenda Fassie as well, was in there, uh.

BLZ: It was the South African theatre.

BM: Season.

BLZ: Like what was happening now.

BM: Ja, 2010. Ja. It was in 2010 that one, so the music was sort of located in, in, in, in that South African era when this play was written. And then uh, when we went to Lesotho I then changed the music. We used a little bit of Sankomota's music.

BLZ: Did Tefo go to [Lesotho?]

BM: [Yes.

BLZ: Okay.

BM: So I used one of two songs and transcribed them from the Sankomota music, Frank Leepa's music just to you know give it that setting as well of being in Lesotho and stuff. Now, uh. [00:08:30] After that run, that's when the whole thing now changed to original music from beginning till end. So when we went to Botswana twice I did the score, er, it was original compositions, then when we staged at the Joburg Arts alive festival it was still [original music].

BLZ: [Wait, when it was still the Sankomota stuff, [what year was this?]

BM: [It was in Lesotho, same year, 2010.

BLZ: Then Botswana was?

BM: 2011.

BLZ: Mm.

BM: Then it was original music from 2011. Then 2012, it did, I think it did Arts Alive Festival.

BLZ: Yeah.
BM: It was original music as well. And then 20– what was last year? 2014?
BLZ: Yeah.
BM: Then it was also original material. Then this year as well, it's still original material. [00:09:30] Now what I've, I've, I've done is that throughout the stagings where we, we, used original music, I've always modified and changed some of the compositions, by modify as in expand on the, on the composition, change a few things in terms of harmonic uh, uh, settings and all that stuff but all of this was done in view of um, the overall story that we trying to tell. So it wasn't just a showcase of the music, it was still trying to stay within the bounds of the story, so modifying the music but still in view of what the, the story is all about.
BLZ: Mhmm.
BM: Um. That, that, that's about that so … I don't know what do you want to elaborate on?
BLZ: So, here's a question for you out of curiosity, what inspired the, the, this change? This decision to split the character?
BM: Um, I'm not sure. In fact I never asked why the split in character.
BLZ: ((Laughs)) You just went with it.
BM: So, I just, I just liked the idea when it was presented but I would suspect that, I mean having these two actors it opened up the platform in terms of playing out the other characters, and having the two [interact]
BLZ: [Yeah].
BM: In that space and at the same time, I guess in terms, for a performer It just help the Actor, like you know, you no longer have to carry the whole burden of you know this whole script. So I guess for that aspect it, it worked well. But I don't really know why that decision.
BLZ: Dramaturgically speaking, It's a very, it's a very lovely choice.
BM: Yeah, It works out nicely.
BLZ: It just gives that one character so much more you know depth [and].
BM: [Because, 'cause the other thing is, if you think of it in terms of what the overall of the theme of the show is when you talk about corruption and how it multiplies. [00:12:00]
BLZ: Mm! Mm!
BM: So you know that whole idea of having two actors playing one character, sort of feed in into that as well in terms of it multiplying, because of its.
BLZ: Like it really blew my mind.
BM: Yeah, I think that was a, a, a, a, a brilliant choice.
BLZ: And then also literally having the piano feed the other characters, the unseen and literally unheard.
BM: They … No. They not, it's just elipses. So, [00:12:40] so now what happens is when I got the script. Um. We sat down with Makhaola he. We looked at the points where Zakes had said, "here we going to have music", and I went through all of those and find the uh, mm, the, the, sce-, the in between scenes. So typical, typical of theatre scripts where in between scenes you'll have music, so those were the points where Zakes pointed er, out er, where music should be. And um. Then, after we started working on that, then I sat down with Makhaola and said can we do more? And if we doing more then um, where can we now start you know um, fitting in music? So of course then you have to deal with the mood of the scene, the rhythm of the scene, so it took a, a little while working out, in terms of where we want, and what kind of music we want to add on under that and what are we trying to say with that. Of course these are not things that the audience is going to easily pick up, but you hope that they will pick up something out of that. So one thing that then helps in doing that is repetition. So in terms of repetition, in terms of, repetition in terms of when the character comes back you still use the same composition even though you might modify a few things, so that then one can associate a specific character with a specific sound, which is much easier when you expect people to associate the whole piece of music [with all that, ja]
BLZ: [Yes.
BM: [00:14:30] So, you know some of the scenes they had a specific sound for it. Some of the characters have their specific sound er, in terms of maybe just you know block chords or something like that, just to identify them and of course you know, these things are not easy to pick up but you know, I tried by all means to, to separate the characters in terms of keys, at the same time in terms of registers.
BLZ: Yeah, [yeah-yeah]
BM: [And then in terms of rhythm, you find out that in terms of the, the, the Director of the department of Tenders, I mean is just a sustained chord

BLZ: Yes.
BM: In the lower register. But then when you then go to um, the other characters they higher registers of the piano. And then there are times where the conversations between the, the, the, the characters that are not seen and the man on stage, it's a matter of, [00:15:27] it was a matter of trying to get the rhythm of what the other character in terms of what they are saying. So if, if er, for instance when he is talking to the [00:15:37] Chief Engineer, he is very rude hence the, the, the rhythm of everything is so edgy, er, the chords are played loud and the, the, the melodic improv' there is also fast.
BLZ: Yeah.
BM: Whereas the [00:15:51] Director Department of Chambers is a chilled guy.
BLZ: Yes.
BM: So you have those long sustained chords at the bottom of the register, just to, just to make it full. These are two different people; they're having a conversation with this one guy on stage.
BLZ: Yeah.
BM: And then things like the phone, phone um, ring and all that stuff you know.
BLZ: ((Laughing)) I loved it!
BM: That as well, and then change from that into that theme *yaka* {of} Jane and all that stuff, you know.
BLZ: I love Jane's theme man.
BM: So it's, it's all those little things to try and say oh, this relates to this character, I mean the one thing that I picked up when we were at Pretoria, ****Privileged Content**** [00:16:46] So the, the, the one thing that I picked up a lot is that after maybe two or three performances, whenever the phone ring came in, they knew oh, Jane is coming, you know, even, so it's sort of set that marked for them that oh, we are expecting something like this, you know. ((Silence))
BLZ: Um.
BM: What else?
BLZ: So in terms of. What was your personal creative process?
BM: Uh. The process was.
BLZ: For these later runs in the Market theatre and maybe this one as well.
BM: Okay, so … [00:17:50] For both of them because I had done the bulk of the work in terms of dissecting the score and all the stuff and plotting where music will be, it was a matter of how do we now, introduce new material and still maintain the overall structure and theme that we were working on. [00:18:17] So most of the time then I tried material by sitting down with the director playing it for him outside of the scene.
BLZ: Okay.
BM: And then, try it with the actors.
BLZ: [Okay]
BM: [Where now they do their text and I'm busy playing.
BLZ: Okay. [00:18:36]
BM: So it, it, it, it was that constant um, composing and testing it immediately and rehearsing and coming back and expand on it. Um. Then … There's two compositions that are included in this run. I wrote them in this year when Makhaola called to say we are doing the State Theatre. So I said hey, there's two things that I wanted to try out so we sat down, and then we decided that okay, let's not change just for the sake of changing. We changing if it works for, for the play but then the two compositions ended up being part of the play.
BLZ: What are these compositions? Where did they fit in?
BM: Um. They are in between scenes. It's um, the, the other one I titled "Bessie Head", um 'cause I was reading quite a lot of Bessie Head stuff and the themes that were centred around the stuff that I was reading is very closely related to what was going on in this play. So it sort of fitted nicely in terms of the mood that I was trying to capture. The other one is uh. The other one I haven't titled it as yet. [00:20:11]
BLZ: Where did it come? 'Cause I was really listening closely this time round.
BM: It came in, in scene three. Scene three. So between, between when you finish scene two into scene three. It's the, the, there's a new composition in the middle there. The ones that stay the same is the end and the beginning. Those ones are kept as closely as much as they were. Um. The other reason is that I was trying to work on the mbaqanga sound.
BLZ: Okay.
BM: Um. And hence the opening or a composition, it is within that mbaqanga, in the mbaqanga sound.

BLZ: Okay. Talk to me about this sound because, I was speaking to somebody else who was talking about the maskandi and sound, the maskandi, and I obviously have to go and read because I don't remember these things, but then obviously I can identify with them, but like what, what would you say characterises the sound for you, and how did you borrow from it? Or use it? Or?
BM: Um. One, in terms of the harmonic structure.
BLZ: Yeah.
BM: [00:21:34] It's pretty much based on the I, IV, V [chord uh, progression]
BLZ: [Mhmm.
BM: Of course with er, with training that one has received I've added some alteration to the harmonies, but it still stays in the [uh]
BLZ: [Mhmm]
BM: [I, IV, V chord progression and then melodically, I've tried to keep it within the, the, the South African, you know er, call and respond type thing. 'Cause if you listen to the melody and er, the, the chords, there's that call and respond thing going on there.
BLZ: Yes.
BM: Even though you know it might not sound obvious because it's played by the same instrument but it does have that kind of thing. At the same time try to have a little bit of a groove in, in, in the piece. You know um, not to say with umbaqanga we always dancing and all that stuff.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
BM: But I try to, to maintain that.
BLZ: Uh huh.
BM: So then throughout the whole ( ) I moved a bit in between that. [00:22:53] I mean when they do "join the civil service and be a millionaire".
BLZ: Mm, mm.
BM: I mean I just go into the whole modal jazz, um, accompaniment you know, just the minor chords in fourths. But still using that jazz kinda groove you know. So I try by all means to play within this jazz um, sound. The other compositions, the harmonies kind of move a lot.
BLZ: Yeah.
BM: [00:23:34] 'Cause at the same time you don't want everything to sound the like it's the same, so you need to vary the both even though you still have to maintain it within the story line.
BLZ: Because it does sound very cohesive. It almost sounded as if it was … It sounded as if it would have been through composed like from beginning to end.
BM: Mhmm.
BLZ Non-stop cause it sounded like it belongs to the same thing.
BM: Yeah.
BLZ: I don't know if it was the facts that it waltz into the story so well, that even when the music is slow, as it takes this … Like as, as, the dialogue is happening there's still some kind of memory.
BM: Yah! I [think that]
BLZ [Like an oral memory left so that when it came back it didn't feel like there was [an]
BM: [An intrusion you know.
BLZ: Yeah.
BM: Well I think that the only that we struggled a bit about doing music, and, and the … [00:24:26] Sometimes the actors tend to sit on the rhythm of the music.
BLZ: Mm.
BM: And now they feel like they, they singing, and now you accompany the singing.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
BM: Whereas sometime like no, sno, no these things have to go opposite directions so you need to hear the rhythm but you have to move, so it's, it's, it's a bit [of]
BLZ: [Yes!]
BM: [That, that, that pull and drag between music entered as well unfortunately it can be a bit tricky so those are some of the things that we had to work quite hard at them, I mean that, the actors would be the one who could to shed some light in terms of how they overcame that because it … In some rehearsals it did feel like now people want to sing.
BLZ: ((Laughs)) Ah, that's exciting.
BLZ: Actually that may be it for now hey, cause seriously like I feel like, I had like three questions but you answered them.
BM: Oh!
BLZ: You see what I am saying.

BM: So I jumped around?

BLZ: No! Exactly but then it happened quite organically, um. Where the any moments where you worked with the actors without the director there?

BM: Yep. Um. The dialogue between the piano characters, and, and, and, so that um we had to work on it. I mean we worked on that even throughout the run because it's, it's a matter of listening to a text and then when they stop, you know the piano has to carry on the, the dialogue from the previous entry point, so it's a bit tricky because you play and then the actor jumps in, you stop, you come back. So there needs to be a continuation on the piano side of things but at the same time it needs to be coherent with what the actor's doing.

BLZ: Yes! Yes! Yes!

BM: So we had to work quite a lot together on that. Um, we did that throughout until the last day, and like we went back and said okay, let's check this.

BLZ: And what kind of impact did you get when he musicians and the actors get an opportunity to actually be collaborative and work together on material, and like either creating material or refining material without the input of the director, because what I have been finding is … The reason I ask is what I have been finding: say for example you have your director and then you've got your musician and actors, the director is a constant channel between them, there's not much of this ((gesticulates to indicate merging)) With most of the productions that I've sort of … Or been researching, there's not much interaction between the musicians or the actual theatre practitioners, it's always through the director.

BM: Um, I, I, I, I agree with you, it turns to be like that uh, but what I was interested, what was interesting in this case is that … Even in the previous ones is that I guess because with Tefo, I was just the two of us on stage, so it made it, it, it made it easier in that we have to talk, work together like okay "what do you think of this? How do you feel about this?" Dadadada. Most more especially because with that one, I never got to see the play, 'cause the piano was at the centre and I was facing the back side of the stage.

BLZ: Mm.

BM: So I was really relying on, on listening to the actor, and the actor listening to me. I mean he could see me every time he turned around, then when we moved to uh to Lesotho, no, no, no when we did it in Botswana the second time we had a grand piano. It was the first time we had a grand piano in a play, so we put it in such an angle that I could see him and he could see me as well. So both of us we were still on stage but now we could see each other throughout the play. So I could see what he is doing and he could see my facial expressions and all that stuff as we go on along. [00:30:01]

BLZ: Mhmm.

BM: So we, we worked well nicely like that. Now when we added Mpho and Jerry, I knew them from when we were studying, so we got along as, as, as, as people, and because we are all on set, so the guys were like we always want to know what's going on, so they were very inquisitive if I can put it that way, in terms of what, what the music is about and we were always trying things out and all that stuff, and when we did that one, [00:30:36] there were days throughout the rehearsals where now it was time to just listen to the music, so would sit down, and I would play everything that we do in the play and the actors would listen to that and comment that, "oh, that one is the one that we used here", and then we'd try stuff with that. That practice I actually started doing it with Jeff, we did um, *Pseudo Bantu*, that was back in 2008. So we do that, rehearse the play, then have a day where we just sit and go through the music with the actors just sitting and listening to the music. So I've always carried that out and then with the introduction of Goose, well Goose happens to be one of the actors that I work with in Jeff's play, *Pseudo Bantu* and then I was also worked with him as a director where I did music, so it also carried on through the practice that we've done. So the relationship between the musicians and the actors in this case it has always been uh, uh very much open and … So it never feels like the director always has to mediate, and I've even done this in other plays where I was not the musician on stage. I wrote the music, I had musicians and made sure that the actors and the musicians get to communicate 'cause essentially at the end of the day they are the ones that are going to be on stage [00:32:16]. We are going to be off stage as the directors in that case, so I, I feel that once that relationship is established it makes things a bit easier in terms of how it, it, it can go. 'Cause there's nothing as pointless as musicians coming and saying "I've got a gig" and that's it. And then just waiting for their cue and then play their music, and then it's pointless. [00:32:41]

BLZ: Why do you say it's pointless because its, its common?

BM: Yes it is common, but then for me it doesn't feel like it enhance the general or the overall mood and the structure of the whole thing. I mean if, if all we are going to say is "Well I'll just rock up for my gig and you go home", you're not really putting in your, your all into it, you just there for the gig so you might as well have a single play, you know so why have a body there?
BLZ: ((chuckles)) Why have a body?
BM: Yeah!
BLZ: To keep it warm Benzo, [to keep it warm]
BM: [No! No! No! No! I think, I mean, for me I think if you're going to have a body on stage then it needs to do something for that ( ) you now, so it can't just be distant even though you know, its right here with the actors, and by distance I mean it doesn't … You do get some recordings that, that people use them very well, to a point where you even forget that it's a recording that really integrated very well.
BLZ: Yeah.
BM: So, so I think it's a matter of choosing the right people as a team to, to be in the production and that's that. I mean bhut' James, when I interviewed him.
BLZ: Yeah?
BM: He once said something like "sometimes you get good musicians, brilliant musicians but you put them in a play they can't function at all".
BLZ: Yeah.
BM: So it's [a]
BLZ: [It's just that whole thing of a good, a good performer is not necessarily a good collaborator.
BM: Yeah. ****Privileged Content****
BM: [00:35:22] 'Cause the thing is, for me, the one thing that has always been seen to work in musically in theatre is musicals.
BLZ: Ja.
BM: And I mean that by the nature of the, the form the music, it's bound to work cause you sing with a band, stories in the lyrics and that's it.
BLZ: And there is a very definite formula.
BM: So, but then you know, but then when you now have, use music in a dramatic theatre, mainstream theatre, it's a, it's a little bit different, in terms of approach. [00:36:10]
BLZ: Mm.
BM: So, I mean you're going to need musicians who are committed in doing this so that then the second you get into rehearsals everybody knows that we are not just here to waiting for our cues to say, "okay then play", and then you play your twelve bars and then that's it.
BLZ: Yeah.
BM: I mean if, if, if when you on stage, you going to be there for one hour thirty minutes, and it doesn't mean you going to play for the whole one hour thirty minutes, it means you will play for two minutes, have a break of five minutes, play in again next ten minutes or so. So, there's always breaks in between but you are on stage. So it's, it's, it's, it's for the musicians to also know that as much as you are playing the music, you are also a character there whichever way the director you know, chooses to use you.
BLZ: Yes.
BM: If, if you are then confined in an orchestra pit, it's different ball game but still I would say even then you still need to know that there's, you are part of something that going on up, above that. So it, I think it takes, it will take a lot of um, work on both um, sides of the field to actually work and integrate these fields together because sometimes you get people from theatre who don't understand mu-, music and by, by understanding here I'm not referring to, oh they know oh that that's F minor or that's A minor or anything, that kind of stuff. But just you know understanding music beyond just, I'm just listening and I love this song. So you tend to find a lot of those people in theatre who just love this song and that's it and whenever the song plays to dance or something like that. [00:38:20] And then you get to stage, you have musicians who understand music differently, and then now getting these two things to understand what's going on, on stage here, it's a bit tricky. And I, I must say I mean it's unfair to expect that of theatre people but, I mean [00:38:44] if musicians understand that there's a script, surely you know the actors as well can put in a little bit of effort into understanding that, oh there's music it has to be done like this and this [and]
BLZ: [Yeah.

BM: [00:38:55] This music is not trying to upstage me or anything like that, it's just here to enhance what I'm doing and I'm also enhancing what it's doing. So it's a give and take between the two.
BLZ: So, I saw you had a script on, like literally the script was like your sheet music, [did you?]
BM: [I had the script and [sheet music]
BLZ: [And I saw that there are some scores.
BM: Yeah. I had some, some scores and the script. The script I had it mainly for those moments where we interact, now um, the only reason I had to bring in the script was because that tends to be a lot of remixing.
BLZ: ((Chuckles))
BM: From the actors, so it was just a safety measure, 'cause sometimes you know people, it happens. Nerves and all this stuff [and then]
BLZ: [Sometimes it's getting excited]
BM: [And then lines flying around you know. So you always need to be like clear, okay so this is the line. So what happens is that as time went on, I know exactly what's what 'cause I've done the script quite a lot, so I know it very well, so the script just serves as a reminder for *mina* {me} in terms of okay this is where we have the composition. So these are the kind of lines that I'm going to expect just in case this person messes up, I know exactly what I have to do. So the journey of the music is still in my head and the scores are here, and then I'm now, I was now balancing the two.
BLZ: Yeah! [00:40:00]
BM: So it, it's taxing but it was fun do to, er just you're there reading your score, um, looking at the script as well at the same time. It also adds to that uh illusion of a person giving a concert where you have sheet music.
BLZ: Yes! Yes! Yes!
BM: So it works visually in terms of that as well. And at the same time I mean, this guy is very pretentious, the, the, the owner of the house, that you know he now has his butler to play the piano.
BLZ: So that's … I was just about to ask about the costume that it's meant to be a butler? Okay I see.
BM: Yeah. So, so in a way this music as it goes on, I meant it's in between the scenes, the idea is, initially the idea was it's either he asks, it doesn't say in the script but it's as if he's asked the butler, "play my favourite tune"; or it's actually playing on the radio. So it, it works on those levels. So it's either it's the pianist who plays for him, or the piano represents iradio and all that stuff in the house. So, you know as Jane calls and then he started on the conversation and that theme is playing, it's as if you have listened to a radio and this theme is just going on and stuff like that. It was going on quite a lot of things. You can sort of stretch it in whatever way.
BLZ: Like, like along with splitting the characters and stuff, the way it's been re-done, it allows it to be many different possibilities.
BM: Yeah.
BLZ: Depending on who you are and what you know.
BM: Yep.
BLZ: Like my mother's take on it was very different from mine.
BM: Yeah.
BLZ: She was like … She imagined it to be a person, like one of them was the actual Man, and the other was the voice inside his head.
BM: Ja.
BLZ: I imagined it to be like a conversation within the head entirely.
BM: It, it, it reads on many levels.
BLZ: Exactly.
BM: It's like cause, cause one thing that um, it's as if this guy, he's been thinking about these things a lot and then on this day he comes back and his wife is not there and then he's like well I'm just going to entertain myself. So then you know in the middle of him entertaining himself, like making fun of you know u Joe talking about things at work and all this stuff, it's actually in his head, he's just entertaining himself he just gets interruption from the calls and that's it. That's the only, the reality is the call.
BLZ: Yes.
BM: Other than that everything is in his head. So it reads on many levels. [00:44:07]
BLZ: It's amazing, and also I was like mental illness is featuring here. Proper, proper, proper.

BM: I mean … And, and if, if you imagine that whole thing, you saw the one that was done by Tefo, one man doing all that stuff, it's, it's schizophrenic, you, you feel like this guy has lost it!
BLZ: ((Laughs))
BM: He's, he's just gone bonkers now.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
BM: You know and everything is just chaos.
BLZ: It is quite chaotic, but I must tell you I didn't, there's a lot I missed when it was one man. But two men, one character there's a lot that just read so much better.
BM: Well the thing is with the two characters there's a lot of scope in terms of where you can go and what you can do. So it will read much uh better in that way. I think if, if the play didn't have the, the imagined characters, maybe then as one man it will be as one man playing one character, it would be okay, but with those imagined characters it does call for another actor.
BLZ: Yeah.
BM: So when, when Makhaola made the choice it was, it was a good one cause it worked nicely in terms of the multi- multiplicity of, of this greed and all that stuff. I mean even having the piano there, because the play ( ).
BLZ: Mm.
BM: So it's, it's that whole thing of greed and how it multiplies and where does it start? Right where you are. So he's got a butler and all that stuff and just … It was nicely, nicely done.
BLZ: It was fantastic. I enjoyed it. My mom had a good time as well and she got it. Okay but my mom, she's been doing this theatre thing. Now she gets it. You know. She's, she's knowledgeable. You know. She doesn't need someone explaining all the finer details and concepts to her. She was just like, "So *jaanong Bongi o ra hela gore* {now Bongi do you mean that} … You know.
BM: So one thing that I, I, I was always concerned of, not usually concerned, I was wondering if people get it, especially the conversations. Like, are people getting it that the piano actually is representing that person even though the text you going to hear it from the actual actor, "oh, are you saying this and this and this?".
BLZ: Oh, yah, no.
BM: So it's one of those thing when I started joining even during er with Tefo I was, I don't know if this thing reads and it kept on asking Makhaola. Until this Saturday when it closed, uh, this, these friends of Tefo um, of Mpho came and we went for drinks and this lady was telling him like "oh man those conversations you were having with the piano", I was like oh, it does read.
BLZ: No it read my memory is sketchy as far back as Tefo I don't remember, but with this particular run, it was very distinct. Even if they had not reiterated it, it would have read completely ( ) It was so blatant. It was fantastic! I was so happy with it ( ) This was definitely worth every moment.
BM: Thanks. [00:48:46]

END OF AUDIO

INTERVIEW 2 – MAKHAOLA NDEBELE
DATE: 18 MAY 2015
JOHANNESBURG
DURATION: [00:26:26]

BLZ: Bongile Lecoge-Zulu
MN: Makhaola Ndebele

MN: Is the sound okay?
BLZ: Yeah, fantastic. *Ebile* {actually} there is no sound, there is no noise. Usually there is like a lot of noise, outside in general. Um, so; what I came to realise after having spoken to, to Benzo.
MN: Mhmm.
BLZ: Is that you've worked with him quite a bit in your, in your productions, or productions that you [have]
MN: [Yes]
BLZ: [directed]
MN: [Yes]
BLZ: Um, so what I would like to find out is your experience of working with musicians in your productions or in general, like in a theatrical capacity in the theatre. Am I making sense?
MN: Yes, you are making sense. Um, all in all to sum it up I'd say it's a great experience um, on, on many different levels. [00:00:58] It's been great working with Bernett on, on it because of his you know, his understanding of both um theatre and music. Um I found out that I was able to, I was able to; I will give you an example. We first er, worked on the first production Mother together in 2010, er, it, the, the … I'd originally thought of it as um, er …The original production, how it is scripted it's a musical instruments are a guitar, bass guitar I think it is, and um, and drums. And then, and then, um, I, wanted to vary the instruments a bit. I wanted to add an accordion because I thought an accordion was very much located um, in the sort, sort of culture, musical culture. [00:02:00]
BLZ: What was this *Mother of All Eating*?
MN: Yes.
MN: And then he, he, he came up with the suggestion that how about, thought about using the piano. And immediately it kind of made sense and fit in very much 'cause first of all aesthetically a piano um, fitted the, the kind of opulence; the kind of high class depiction we were going for. [00:02:29]
BLZ: Mm.
MN: And, it's the very, very ( ). So what I'm trying to get at is that [00:02:35] immediately he was able to er, capture the concept and even take it step further. So it's been, it's been good on that level. And then um, stylistically as well, he caught on very fast in terms of what I was trying to achieve um directorially and he was able to translate that um into music and then going further on it, the relationship just developed in that sense where um, he's er, where he understands what, what one is going for um, directorially and he's able to um, translate that musically so, and like I said it's been a superb kind of relationship musically, or aesthetically, or artistically. [00:03:34]
BLZ: Artistically ((laughs)). That, that's not the only thing you worked with um, Benzo on ne? There is something else at The … Market?
MN: [00:03:51] No, it is, it's just that the production keeps evolving.
BLZ: Was it Mother of All eating at the Market as well?
MN: Yes.
BLZ: Oh, really!
MN: Yes. So what's happened is that, um … And, and, we'll be working again on, at The State Theatre this year as well.
BLZ: Okay.
MN: So what's happened is that it was a [one-hander]
BLZ: [Yes]
MN: [With a piano and then musically I how it's evolved is that mostly, he … It started off as; he'd cover songs. Is that the right word?
BLZ: Yeah, yes, [yes]
MN: [And then um, in the last production, uh, it, it was all his compositions.
BLZ: Okay. [00:04:37]

MN: Um, so you could see he composed specifically for the show. And then so, so as we've gone along he's put in more and more of his, his music.
BLZ: When was it um, at The Market?
MN: Um, um, May 2014.
BLZ: I don't know why in my head I thought it was something else entirely, maybe it's because of the … [Having it]
MN: [The two]
BLZ: [Yeah, having it as two in this performance]
MN: [The two-hander.
BLZ: That I thought this has got to be something else.
MN: Mm.
BLZ: Um, and how did … what was the interaction like between the actors and the musician. How does that.
MN: Um, [so so]
BLZ: [Happen.
MN: So, er, I'll, I'll run you through both, 'cause it's, it's the first time around and then I'll run you through the second time around. The first time around it was, it was one actor. So it was Tefo Paya; and then, and then, um, ehr what, what, what would happen is that er Ben would be sit in on rehearsals. And then, er, he'd then come back um, and let us know what he was thinking. And then so if the rehearsal was over a four-week period he'd sit in the first two weeks and the on the fourth week, on the third week he'd come in now with keyboard and then start, start playing. And then what would happen then is then he'd would merge the music with er with er, with the actor. And now the music, [00:06:46] the music was on three different levels. It was m, it was as, as special effects.
BLZ: Mhmm.
MN: You know there was knocking, there was uh, knocking and different sounds. And then it was also as character. What would happen is that Tefo would talk and then some of the characters or the piano would talk back.
BLZ: Okay.
MN: And then thirdly it was, it was mood. Uh, so, so it played those different roles, the music. Um, and then, and then, when we worked, um, um, er, last year for the, for The Market production there was two actors who weren't, who weren't familiar with the stuff so it was bonus that Ben was already, um, had already, had already, um, gone a certain distance with the production with him in. He was able to, to come in; uh, um, basically I gave him free, more freedom in terms of, because he already knew, he knew the production so what I wanted out of that was if there's anything he could think of musically that I, that wasn't there was free to, to then um, propose it. Um, so we worked in a similar sense; um, he'd come in early and he'd, he'd be on the keyboards. And actors would kinda listen in to the type of music he's playing. And then during improv as well we would music in improv scenes and then um, we'd also sto-. So he was, he was there during the rehearsal but he was there on a musical kind of, kind of … And we'd allocate time to work with music as well. Um, because a lot of the timing and er, er, these kind of specific aspects needed to be rehearsed in. So again yah, he was there and then he'd go away, then make suggestions, he'd mull it over and then present. And then we'd mash the two together.
BLZ: Um, did you have specific ideas with, or did you have like very specific picture in mind. I suppose more for the first time than … Actually no, both times. Um with the music like this is what you wanted it to do or these were the sounds in particular that you were looking for or was it just like throwing around ideas and trying to figure out what works and for what reasons or what doesn't.
MN: Hmm, no. I knew, the first … First off I knew that um, I think originally in the script it's … Because it's, it's cut into four distinct scenes. So the music comes in the beginning and in between the scenes.
BLZ: Okay.
MN: Right? Um, you know bridging the scenes, from one scene to another. And I knew that if I was to have a piano on stage, it would need to work on a much more intergr-, integrated level than it was. So, so um, it was … I knew that the music had to, had to embody the character of the guy, The Man; the character's name is The Man. It had to, it had to, yeah, reflect his, his character and his, his, his state of, his world, his state of being. Um, so that had to come across. Uh, and then, er, I knew that it had, emotionally, um, um, [00:11:05] my interest as a director is how best to capture or take the audience on an emotional journey and music is very

strong to, it's a very strong tool to do that. So it was how you capture the audience emotionally through music and I also knew um, er, that … Yes … So, so, and then, and then, and then also to honour the integrity of the script. [The]

BLZ: [Mhmm]

MN: [The we kinda original idea that author had intended for the music to play. So I knew that's what the music had to do and then um, so it then became a matter of, of where to slot it in and, and then, and then, the how. Uh, and then so what kinda compositions will come in, that's where somebody like Ben helps a lot.

BLZ: [Mhmm]

MN: [Because, the, his, of his knowledge in music, is, um, as a director you say this is what I want but then the specifics I think it's up to each creative to then find that so that you, you allow their creativity to blossom as well. So you don't wanna come in … Well my way of doing it is that I don't wanna come too specific.

BLZ: Okay.

MN: So to you have an overall frame and then, and then you allow each artist to, to fill in with his wash. [00:12:54]

BLZ: Okay, so you, you mentioned like um, the function of, or one of the functions of music in, in the production of this nature or a theatrical production being like the, carrying the emotional journey; or, or, [or]

MN: [Yeah]

BLZ: [Carrying people on that emotional journey, and I suppose that pretty much what I am trying to figure out, well not figure out but trying to um; ((silence)) I'm, I'm trying to get to know more of why people want to use music in their productions or what use is it in a production? What's its function? And I know it depe-, it's specific to each person or each director, um, and possibly with specific to productions; but in your view nje, why? Just why, I suppose. Why would one choose to use music?

MN: It's a, it's a question I've been really interested in as well. Um, um, some of my research work at the moment is around that. But what I've, what I've, what I've and I'm … And I've kind of looked at traditional performance er genres, er indigenous works … Um, and whether, there is always music involved and, and whether it's, it's miners in Marikana going to confront the police, they're singing. Whether it's liberation movements they're singing. Whether it's, it's Sangoma healing his patient there's ki- some kind of musicality involved.

BLZ: Mm.

MN: Whether it's a praise poem, the king is coming or we are praising him, it's rhythmical and it's, it's, it has a lot of musical elements in it. Um, er, whether its story telling even. So, so, so there might … Then [00:15:15] what I'm realising and it's not necessarily, I haven't proved it yet, it's there's something about music that transcends, um, the, the, the, the, cognitive or the thinking [mind]

BLZ: [Mhmm]

MN: [And, and allows the spirit some freedom to go another place. So, so I would like to think that's, that's, that's why and I think, I think essentially, um, ((silence)) We … Ancient or, or indigenous cultures have realised that. So, so it's very much engrained in all types of, all types of [performance]

BLZ: [Mm]

MN: [Forms. And that it repeats and repeats and somehow it lifts, it heals; it, it … There's also different levels to it but it heals, it makes one euphoric. It takes people in a space where they can transcend their [everyday]

BLZ: [Mm]

MN: [Mundaneness, or, every day um, levels of life. So, um, so for me, a theatrical, theatrical experience tries to, to tap into, into as many different uh modes of engagement as possible. So I like to use um, um visual material, um, just to create a world that surrounds what one is about to see, so look, um, … I like still images. I like the er performer, and then there's also the music. So a much as possible to, to, to stimulate as many senses as possible.

BLZ: Mhmm.

MN: To make, [00:17:33] to make the journey more er, engaging, is what I always try to do and I think music for me is that. I mean, ehh, ((silence)) I see, I have a little girl; I see, I see how, how when music plays she responds. I remember when I was a teenager; music, you listen to some songs and they take you to places where you feel longing, you feel so many different emotions connected to a different type of music. Even though in your life you haven't experienced [those er]

BLZ: [Mm]
MN: [Those feelings but it's able to engage with you in that way. So later in life when one became a theatre practitioner or, or, or drama more broadly, is to say here is a form that kind of is able to, to connect with [the]
BLZ: [Mm]
MN: [The human senses. How, how do you bring it into your work? Um, you know to, to complete, to support the experience; the theatrical experience. So it's really to support. [00:19:00]
BLZ: And then, ((coughs)) just jumping back to, actually working on Mother of All Eating, working with the musician did, were there any difficulties in communication in terms of you communicating what you would like and vice versa, or … The reason I ask is because um, in other interviews, I, I've picked up that one of the main difficulties in this cross-pollination is actually just each party ability to communicate what it is they are trying to do or put across. Like to verbalise it, like there is a gap in the vocabulary because I suppose each, um, each discipline has its own jargon [and]
MN: [Mm]
BLZ: [It's own conventions and practices; but when you bring them together there can be difficulty in just trying to figure each other out. [00:20:10] So it's has become an area of possible interest.
MN: Mm! Um, I haven't felt, I haven't, I haven't come, come across any major difficulties. Um, I rely on a lot of intuition. It's, it's, if something works, it feels right; and if it's not, it doesn't. And, and intuitively I've learnt to trust that er, you … I don't, I don't get hung up in necessarily trying to um; on the language of things I mean. And as I say, for me what's important is that the musician must bring each … Oh let me put it differently to say: each er, whether it's the performer, whether it's the musician, each, each person, uh, should be able to create within their, uh, given expertise. So, it's to say, is to say, this is the overall direction that we are going and we'll find the specifics together. Um, I don't know if, if that, if that, that [helps]
BLZ: [Mm]
MN: [Eliminate the, the potential conflict because [it]
BLZ: [Mm, mm]
MN: [It's like, it's kinda like a funnel. We start as broad as, so we find each other along the way rather than, um … 'Cause I think conflict comes when you, when you, you know the end before the process. So then you try to force sometimes.
BLZ: Mm.
MN: Rather than, rather than um, to know the general direction and finding the specifics along [the]
BLZ: [As we go along]
MN: [Yeah, as we go along.
BLZ: Um, do you, do you have any footage of Mother the virgin *ya ko* {of the} Market? 'Cause I never actually saw it. I have, I have some recollection of Tefo doing it but *ja*.
MN: No, funny enough I have Tefo's got footage I don't have … I don't have The Market's footage.
BLZ; Is it?
MN: Mm.
BLZ: Do you think they do have?
MN: I know somebody taped it. I know somebody came in with a camera but I just don't remember. If you, I know who you can ask.
BLZ; Mhmm…
MN: Um, Luyanda.
BLZ: Luyanda?
MN: 'Cause she was organising the press and all of that.
BLZ: She is at The Market?
MN: Yes, she's PR I think, PR or Marketing.
BLZ: I'm sure I have spoken to her at some point in this madness
MN: Yeah, 'cause she's very, she's very, she's the one that organised it.
BLZ: Okay. Well, technically and honestly speaking, I don't think I have any, any other questions.
MN: Mm.
BLZ: Is there anything that you, anything else you want to share in terms of your experience working in, working in that fashion then feel free to mention anything and everything.

MN: Mm, no, I guess, er ((silence)) [00:24:28] I mean there's a difference between finding, finding music and having somebody who can compose music. I found that those differences are very stark. So, so having a musician is markedly different than just sourcing the music and then playing it. I find that it's much better having somebody that can actually play and compose.

BLZ: Mm.

MN: So that's the difference, there's nothing else.
((Laughter))

BLZ: There is really nothing else.

MN: Hmm?

BLZ: *Ka re* {I said} there is nothing else. [00:25:26]

END OF AUDIO

INTERVIEW 3 – MPHO OSEI-TUTU
DATE: 20 AUGUST 2015
JOHANNESBURG
DURATION: [00:36:21]

BLZ: Bongile Lecoge-Zulu
MOT: Mpho Osei-Tutu

BLZ: Fantastic.
MOT: [Great]
BLZ: [Okay. So I'm not gonna ask you structured questions or anything.
MOT: Okay.
BLZ: I would just like you to tell me about.
MOT: Yeah.
BLZ: About the whole like journey.
MOT: Okay, right, I, I first saw the production in, I think 2013 where it was er kind of a festival in Newtown, forget the name of the festival now but [I]
BLZ: [Arts alive.
MOT: Arts alive, yes, um and er, that was, I was blown by just how; first of all, um, being from Lesotho, I was drawn to a proper connection to it as well, just, just the size of it. It's a sheer like, it's a [monster you know]
BLZ: [Mm, mm. [00:00:57]
MOT: Um, and to see one man do it was you know, quite um a spectacle, um, you know, and the music obviously was quite moving and it moved the story along. They did it and this is the first time I had seen it, so, and it was the first time I'd met these, all of these people. I knew Makhaola obviously, and he was probably the reason I went to go see the show.
BLZ: Mhmm.
MOT: Um, but, man, what a piece of work! What, [00:01:20] you know the words Zakes Mda writes with such, there's such a musicality in the words alone you know, um, on the page and there's very little that the actor has to do and that, I think that's what Makhaola stressed, every time we did it, that we don't need to push so hard, we don't need to try so hard, it's all there. Um and we just really need to connect with the audience, yeah, remove that fourth wall and just speak to the people really so, I, I had no idea that I'd have this opportunity, it's me after that ((laughs)) seeing it, but I was quite blown away so when the opportunity came I jumped on board and um, I auditioned and uh; at the time, look, the musician wasn't in the room, Benzo wasn't in the room, um, so he just told me about it because I'd seen it, I kinda had an idea of what he was trying to do with it; um, then he mentioned that it's gonna be two be two actors. And then I was like well.
BLZ: Mm.
MOT: That is awesome. ((Laughs))
BLZ: ((Laughs))
MOT Because I just felt like it's a monster you know. [00:02:47]
BLZ: Yeah.
MOT: I want the audience to see, be clearly visible that way. Um, its, I don't know what it must have been like in the 90s, early 90s when it was first performed but it felt right you know that you know this team, team going with this, I'd no idea where, what that thing meant, um. I then, auditioned with various actors and you know call back conditions … Actors cast … And at the end of the day we met Benzo and ja, it was, uh, it was work man, it was work because first of all you've got to get this thing into your head.
BLZ: Yes, yes, yes.
MOT: And um its um, but I feel like it was a process that was quite organic. Um Makhaola didn't want to impose anything on the process. He was quite free, which was quite scary at [sometimes]
BLZ: [Mm.
MOT: Because you kind of as an actor need that campus; um, but I felt it was necessary for the process because one, you are dealing with, jissus.
BLZ: Thank you.
MOT: Um, we dealing with another energy, um, as in you know, the duality of having someone playing you or quickly is playing The Man and you are The Man, and, and, so a lot of

consequences [00:04:15] would to get around and Makhaola was very clear that he wanted us to play ourselves.

BLZ: Mhmm.

MOT: Or at least our versions of the man, of the man, and um, mm; but every now and again show that mirroring, um that, to remind the audience that we are the same [person]

BLZ: [Mhmm].

MOT: Um, [00:04:30]and also a big theme was obviously the multiplicity of, of corruption.

BLZ: Mhmm.

MOT [Er]

BLZ: [Mhmm]

MOT: [But yeah, so those were the sort of the major sort of overarching themes we were dealing with, uh, duality, multiplicity, mirroring, and we physically had mirrors on stage.

BLZ: Yeah.

MOT: Um, you know, and pieces of the stage were covered in mirrors so we got, the idea was to play with all that, and, and it what it means is that when the other actor clocks the other actor gazes at the other actor, was like what does that mean? And so, yah, these were all elements that we used; um and then, um, for whatever reason I think you know, obviously Benzo, another job ((laughs)), so we had to, [00:05:24] we didn't always have him in the room so when he did come into the room it was interesting because we, we kind of had to almost forget everything that is done in the room and embrace this new energy and, and work with it and I, I feel that it was, for me it was quite a growing you know, curve; we er, um I felt I grew as a performer because I'd never actually performed, I don't think I've ever, I'd ever performed a live audience eh, with a live music. [00:06:00] You know, so when we [00:06:02]call this a one-man, and he called it a two-hander, the character of the piano and the pianist was um, you know there is no mother without it, you know, there is no *Mother of all Eating* without that element. Um, obviously he came, you know literally he watched all the other characters that came into the room um, but [00:06:26] just the accompanying of the music and what it does to you emotionally as an actor um, is interesting because what happens is you can, and this happened a few times in rehearsal and also in performance where we would not be listening to him at all and we, and er, and we'd change the entire complexion of the performance and sometimes we would listen to him but we would, we would lose ourselves in the motion of the music and we wouldn't necessarily be skating on it and, um, and, and you know, so that was, that was interesting. And then [00:07:05] there were times obviously when he wasn't there, where, and we had rehearsed with him, er, was a comp. Not in performance obviously rehearsal where it literally was like, there's something missing here.

BLZ: ((Laughs)).

MOT You know what I mean, so um, um, yah it was a great, great, I mean hell of a learning curve for me um and yah, we often think that a performance is just about the actor and the space and you know even if there is no music involve, there are other elements around you that drive a performance and shape a performance. Um, yah, um, yeah.

MOT: Do you have any questions. ((Laughs))

BLZ: Um, I do have one question.

MOT: Yes.

BLZ: What text that was embossed on the mirrors.

MOT: Um, the text on the mirrors was, sho, what are we saying.

BLZ: ((Laughs)).

MOT: we, we, yah, I'm sure you know the story; yah. Well anyway let's start just like it's that but basically the text on the mirror, I think the idea about the text on the mirror was the bill, one of the bills, the protection of, um… Silence … What is that new bill? Protection of, of Rights or something like that. Essentially, and maybe this was my dropping the ball as an actor but I don't think so, I think it really was a case of with all due respect to the designer, umm; but the process was such that, ah, there was a disconnect thing with the designer, the actors and director so when we for instance, we eventually got the set it was not necessarily we kind of envisioned, it was er, er, we had to now incorporate it as opposed to a designer who maybe works closely with the actors and watches the actors in rehearsals and sees 'cause it quite physical; so sees the physicality of it all then designs around that. We were kind of boxed with it, with what, what he had his vision and the director has his vision and there was a bit of disconnect. [00:09:47]

BLZ: Yeah.

MOT: So, things like the phases, the phase at the beginning of the show. The slide show, things like the images, the road, was kind of never really, for us as performers on the floor rehearsing with Benzo and, it was never really, and I don't know if this was done intentionally by the director, but it was never really, it was almost like paste on, a pasted on thing such if, if it didn't work one night, we would carry on you know. And I think, I think actually, was done with this. Makhaola kept saying, this is a performance stage please and that is inherited, and you know. Not to say other things were not imported but it really was about us and our ca-, our engagement with the audience and ourselves and our awareness of, and ja, ja. [00:10:52].
MOT: The performance, ((laughs)), the performance really.
BLZ: Just really, it was so elaborate though that I would have imagined that it was deliberate.
MOT: Ja.
BLZ: Because of.
MOT: Ja.
BLZ: How detailed it was?
MOT: Yah, yah I wouldn't say it was not deliberate. I think it was deliberate, I just think that perhaps, there was er, you know if you said, for instance I want a chair um, or a table, perhaps the designer then went and, and wasn't; if he'd watched the performance then he'd go oh okay this is the kind of table we need to enhance this performance. So, for instance, I mean I don't, you know; the, the, the images there he was quite clear about what he wanted and actually took some of those pictures himself. Um, er, so in terms of him wanting them there, and you know, the, the, the, he wanted them there, you know, he wanted every single one. It was not an accident that stuff was. [there] [00:11:55].
BLZ: [Mhmm]
MOT: [It was all very clear. I think it was just perhaps in, maybe for instance, the durability of things. Um, because we, we, I think because he didn't wanna restrict the actors in any way, er and that I suppose that the difficulty when a designer comes in … You don't want to hold us back but you still wanna tell the story with the design.
BLZ: Yes, yes, yes.
MOT: Um, er, ja, and I strongly believe, it would have, it would have been a completely different show if, if the designer was in the process.
BLZ: Yes.
MOT: But the that's not always possible, so, for whatever reason, um ((laughs)) controversially, ((laughs))
BLZ: ((laughs)) Who was, but I think, I think that was the core of his research.
MOT: Ja.
BLZ: Was the fact that how, how productive can you say something is if you are not all in from the get go.
MOT: Ja, ja.
BLZ: You know, and aren't sharing the same sort of vision and aren't evolving with the process as it goes [along]
MOT: [Ja, ja]
BLZ: [Coming in haphazardly or at different point. Yes of course you do need the time at certain points you know.
MOT: [Ja, ja].
BLZ: [But] it just, it does throw things, my view.
MOT: It does throw things. I mean, with our costumes, um. ((Laughs))
BLZ: ((Laughs))
MOT: One of the actors said at some point.
BLZ: Mm.
MOT: In one of the versions one of actors said it's like, these costumes looked like clown costumes because he didn't' feel comfortable in it.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
MOT: And, and you know the director in some many ways sort of shared the same sentiments that this is not actually, wasn't my vision, you know what I mean and in the end that was our costume, you know.
BLZ: Ja, ja.
MOT: And we just had to make it work and it was performance first in many, many respects and er, yeah, yeah ((Laughs))
BLZ: ((laughs)). My mother watched it; she's like "*ke gore hempe ena ya go tlhatswiwa kemang?"* {who washes this shirt?]. ((Laughs)) [00:14:10]

MOT: Oh, wow. ((Laughs))
BLZ: She's like no, look, they are rolling around, who is going to wash that shirt?
MOT: Yeah, yeah, yeah; no, it was, yho, ((laughs)). I mean the drama we had was a lot of this stuff was just hectic. Like things breaking and the designer is off somewhere else, at some other show, so it's like er, and now?
BLZ: ((Laughs)) So what you gonna do?
MOT: We have to make a plan ourselves kind of, yah, not the most ideal way to, you know, do a show. And most certainly like, the first time I'd done a show with a designer so, we sort of, you know, invested in it.
BLZ: Yeah, that veers into all sorts of other.
Mot: Yeah.
BLZ: Um.
MOT: I mean things like, elements like the grand, you know, having the piano there.
BLZ: Ja.
MOT: I think, the director was very clear about that stuff and also Benzo motivated why it had to be a grand. Um, you know, the lavishness of er, The Man's house was quite important. I suppose the colour, the black and white, um; he was dressed in black, we were dressed in gold and white so we got the sense there was, he could have been the sort of servant character.
BLZ: Yes, yes, yes.
MOT: Now, um, in the piece.
BLZ: He wasn't dressed in black. He was dressed in.
MOT: And like er.
BLZ: He was dressed in green and brown.
MOT: Uh, yeah, yeah, yah, it was green and dark brown.
BLZ: Yes, hideous.
MOT: Hideous and honestly to us.
BLZ: So absurd.
MOT: Quite absurd and quite, you know, random in a way.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
MOT: You know what I mean because, if you asked me right now what these gold costumes meant I would not be able to, to tell you. ((Laughs)) You know what I mean? What that was about. That was the nature of the process. We went with it; that was the design, there was no time, we had to open and that was it you know! Um, and I think it speaks also to Makhaola's way of working. I think, he is quite open to the possibilities when one allows, um, you know, people to express themselves. You know, um, he's quite open in that way. He's not; you know. Obviously there are things he's very, give that way, that he's willing to compromise on, but for the most part it's like, okay now I'm gonna, you know, I'm gonna, you know, I'm gonna use a cigar, okay, let's see how the cigar works, so let's do that; not we don't have that, handkerchiefs [and that's all] [00:17:10]
BLZ: [Yes, yes, yes]
MOT: You get, you know what I mean? So yah. ((Silence))
BLZ: Er. Um, so, this is my, like I, I, I realise how it happened to me that what was obviously happening within the company itself but I was there as an, as an audience.
MOT: ((Laughs))
BLZ: ((Laughs)) Researcher, er.
MOT: Yes, which is obviously two very different.
BLZ: But I read absolute obscenity. It was very.
MOT: Ja.
BLZ: Ja, for me it was.
MOT: Yeah, I think it was, there was an absurdist, if it was there let me say that, and I agree it was there. It wasn't something that was necessarily a style, a performance, a choice of performance style, do you know what I mean?
BLZ: Yeah.
MOT: I think, umm, perhaps he wanted to, I mean um, it was quite clear that he obviously wanted to keep it timeless er, um, even though we kept it, I mean we didn't adapt any of the dialogue; we were still very much.
BLZ: Yeah.
MOT: In Lesotho.
BLZ: Yeah.

MOT: He wanted us to, even express you know; if something wasn't on the page like, he didn't want to remove it from Lesotho. Ehmm, he still wanted to keep it in the space that it could be anywhere. You know, ehmm, he, perhaps hat what might explain a lot the choices because ehmm, design wise, there is no way you could say this is 1986 Lesotho whatever, you know what I mean? Um, or Germany, or whatever it was, but yah, quite absurd. ((laughs) Yeah. [00:19:17]
BLZ: Yeah, so, like, on that, on that, [on that]
MOT: [Yeah]
BLZ: [Ja gore it's like, um, it was ridiculous.
((Laughter))
MOT: Yes, you can say that now.
BLZ: I am by [no]
MOT: ((Laughs))
BLZ: [Means saying um, big ups to you and Goose. You guys worked!
MOT: Ja.
BLZ: It was clear that you had to have worked to get to that point in just…
MOT: Yes.
BLZ: I was tired afterwards. Not tired, not exhausted, but oh my God, oh [my God]
MOT: [Yes, yeah, yeah]
BLZ: [It was like]
MOT: [Yeah you can see the work.
BLZ: You can see the work.
MOT: Yeah, yeah, yeah.
BLZ: Um, if you want me to share it's like people get down to.
MOT: Correct, yeah.
BLZ: Um, Benzo also worked. Having watched it play back like in 2010 in Botswana.
MOT: Ja.
BLZ: To this point; I, I know that musically its grown a lot.
MOT: Yeah.
BLZ: Taking somebody else's music and simply arranging it.
MOT: Yeah.
BLZ: Cannot simply be arranging it too loud finding its own voice and bringing its own voice into it.
MOT: Yeah, er.
BLZ: Finding creative agency and finding creative steak in it.
MOT: Yes.
BLZ: Um, ((noise)) but, um, in terms of how it read, it was like what the hell is going on. [00:20:36]
MOT: Yeah.
BLZ: Okay, why different shirts.
MOT: ((Laughs))
BLZ: Okay, and he looked like, he looked like the only one.
MOT: Yeah, yeah, yeah.
BLZ: That why I say it looked ridiculous from that point.
MOT: Yeah.
BLZ: What I would have said, ( ).
MOT: Yes.
BLZ: Um, which led me as a music researcher to try and figure out how that reads musically.
MOT: Absolutely.
BLZ: If it does think it does ( ). [00:21:01]
MOT: Yeah.
BLZ: I suppose that is what we suggest ( ). [00:21:05]
MOT: Yes, yes.
BLZ: And then people say you are an outstanding ( ).
MOT: Right, laughs.
BLZ: Is like Ben, um.
MOT: Yeah, yeah, yeah.
BLZ: So, was there anything evident musically that was a direct, directly linked to certain like performance choices that you made, that Goose made.
MOT: Yeah, yeah, yeah.
BLZ: Director makes? [00:21:36]

MOT: Um, it's difficult to say because I think a lot of the choices were kind of already made from the previous version, so the music, in terms of music it was already written, it was um; performance choices, well, definitely in, in the duality, uh, you know obviously the scenes where we have a conversation with the piano.
BLZ: Mhmm.
MOT: Um, [00:22:02] we, the quality of the music, and the notes he was playing and the chords, and all of that informed who we were talking to. Um, is this person, how big, are they um, you know obnoxious, is he she's a shy, the, um, the Chief Engineer, is he um; you know, all of those decisions were kind of, were not created in a vacuum. We had to hear, you know what was coming at us and what he was offering and play with that and, and, and imagine that so as to create a picture for the audience. So that it wouldn't just, you know, we're listening to someone playing and can't see the person but we're responding. You know that would have been the death of those scenes.
BLZ: Mm, mm, mm. [00:22:59]
MOT: If we had done that, um, so in the rehearsal process, I mean with Gausi as well, that whole um working with them Gausi did a lot of character work on those. Um, but that was, you know, in isolation of Benzo but not necessarily thinking of hey, what are these notes this guy you know is playing. It wasn't always in isolation of him.
BLZ: Mhmm.
MOT: But initially when we, when we did have those characters who was Chief Engineer, what was the relationship with them. All of that, all of that was informed by what Benzo was playing; for me, anyway.
BLZ: So did he design the characters musically first or.
MOT: [I believe he did because]
BLZ: [After]
MOT: [You know, whether it was a case of there was no time to play around, it just seemed like that was something there had already been quite um clearly, it was, it was, it was there. It was like he arrived with it and it was packaged and, it was, it felt right and we went with it for the most part. Um, you know there were moments in rehearsals for instance, uh, there's a scene where, um, The Man, ah oh sorry, the Joe scene. So Joe goes and meets with um, his boss um, at the Power Supply Corporation.
BLZ: Mhmm.
MOT: And there were, there was a choice where we, we decided that okay, are we going to; what do we do differently, what's the game here because what sort of, um, manifested was that each scene had its own sort of game that we were playing with each other, so for instance in Scene 1, the phone, swapping the phones you know in the Jerry version. [00:25:04]
MOT: Where he'd throw the phone to me and I catch it.
BLZ: Mhmm.
MOT: Which is something that changed slightly in that scene when we acted. Then scene 2 would be at the piano, just talking to the piano and the light quite clearly showing the doorway. Scene 3 was now, uh, we become Joe and, and we talking to someone so who are we talking to? We can't be playing the Scene 2 game because er that's kind of in dance because all these conversations were happening in rehearsal and in the end um, I think.
BLZ: Mhmm.
MOT: What happened was, that particular scene, the scene three came out. The choice was does he use a percussion or piano to, um, emulate the steps of the guy and to, sort of, so that we use, we use the piano differently or, or does he play the notes of the guy responding; and it became, I think, the choice in the end became a case of, I think he designed a piece of music.
BLZ: Mhmm.
MOT: So that.
BLZ: It was underscored. [00:26:26]
MOT: It was all underscored, um, in the end, yah! That was, that was kind of what was going on okay.
BLZ: So clever.
MOT: It was very clever.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
MOT: Very clever. And to be honest when I walked in into the process and said you have four weeks to do this, I was literally like, are you serious, like it's not.
BLZ: ((Laughs))

MOT: Because of what I had seen you know, and it worked. And then second time around with Goose he said you have three weeks.
BLZ: Three weeks.
MOT: I was literally like really! ((Laughs))
BLZ: So how long did you have?
MOT: [We set there]
BLZ: [To learn everything].
MOT: Three weeks, from.
BLZ; Three weeks from like.
MOT: From day one to opening.
BLZ: Three weeks.
MOT: Three weeks.
MOT: Yeah, script to.
BLZ: Nothing to everything else.
MOT: Working to everything.
BLZ: Getting a script on to your head, um.
MOT: Yeah.
BLZ: It's, it's er, that one thing.
MOT: Yeah, yeah, yeah.
BLZ: And then um, the change in performers from Jerry to Goose?
MOT: Ja.
BLZ: Was Jerry available to [do it or]
MOT: ((Laughs))
BLZ: [Or I'm stepping toes?
MOT: Um.
BLZ: Getting married. People do things like getting married; life changing things.
MOT: I think Jerry had been done in terms of what he wanted to do.
BLZ: Mm.
MOT: Or at least his imagination of how, how he wanted to work so he, yah, um, we had to recast ((laughs)) Makhaola had to recast, so I came in came in where a couple of actors, and I think I came in at a point where he had two actors in question um, and he I think he wanted a contrast between actors so, the actor that went opposite to the other actor.
BLZ: Mhmm.
MOT: I read with, I think he felt he had a similar energy to me so.
BLZ: Okay.
MOT: So with Goose there was a lot more kind of speed, like quality about him.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
MOT: Lot more physical, a lot more kind of, just like.
BLZ: Yeah.
MOT: He's a ball of energy. ((Laughs)) [00:28:48]
BLZ: That, that ( ) like Goose is.
MOT: Like he's not okay.
BLZ: Is something wrong?
MOT: ((Laughs))
BLZ: Like.
MOT: Yes.
BLZ: I see where we do like check-ins, in, in play back, the things that he ( ).
MOT: Yeah.
BLZ: What is going on inside him, like what's.
MOT: Yeah, yeah, yeah.
BLZ: Love him to bits.
MOT: Yah, yah, yah; laugh; it's those screws.
BLZ: ( ).
MOT: Yeah, yeah, yeah. But yah it was a hell of a, an experience because what happens I suppose is that you a straight play with no music is there's none of that, there's no, you just have the, I suppose voices of the people and the sounds that people make to inform your choices and your; now you have this extra element and, and what happens when that element is not there, the spaces in between those bricks you know, it's just, I think it just lifts the performance for other level. I mean obviously um, you would know that I mean from ( ) [00:29:58], that Zakes kind of, I think he had the drums a set in it [00:30:01]

BLZ: Oh, yes, yes originally.
MOT: From all of that.
BLZ: It was like drums, guitar, no not.
MOT: Oh, er.
BLZ: Accordion.
MOT: Koriana, ((laughs)) accordion, yes. So yeah, it, I think having the piano there just made it like it really just said this guy is loaded, first of all fact that it was a grand. I mean and, and you know there are people that have grand pianos in their houses they never play them. It's that kind of, that level of wealth and think a guitar, a piano and an accordion doesn't quite, usually say that and also the quality of the sound alone. We rehearsed with a keyboard and it's like a totally you know ((laughs)) so, so you know moving into the space was just striking. Everything just goes, you know the lights were there, you know set is there and then sah! Just takes it to another level, another level like you really start to believe that actioning it; this Man. ((Laughs)) [00:31:07]
BLZ: ((Laughs))
MOT: You know, with that instrument and yah, a stroke of genius for me was the choice. I just thought it was brilliant ((silence)). And obviously I mean the different characters and the, because of the umm, obviously he plays the jazz sort of thing in the beginning; but musically plays in the beginning. You just heard Philip Tabane's, uh, as a pre-set. That just kind of takes you into this world, this, of an African state that is er, and for me it just felt like sitting back stage and listening to Philip Tabane play. I'd just feel like yeah, we are in Africa 1, we're, but we're; we're in place where jissus, there's history in this place, they are proud of their history and, but all is not well. [00:32:32]
BLZ: ((Laughs))
MOT: All is not well in this place. Um, all is not well, yah, and then Benzo would just start playing and … The image I had in my head was a guy on a horse, Mosotho, mad and just riding his horse in like, in town kind of thing as the chief of the, the rich kind of thing arriving, coming home. You know, and that's the sort of the, you know just to speak about the music the little bit more in the intro; arriving home into his palace; umm, yeah! Funnily enough we were never kind of, we never interrogated why this piece of this music, why? It just felt right because of feel, feeling things as opposed to cerebral let's unpack it kind of thing.
BLZ: Which, like what, the pre-set.
MOT: No I'm saying the, after the pre-set, yah I mean all the music.
BLZ: Oh, okay.
MOT: All music really.
BLZ: Okay.
MOT: And as I say uh lot of it did come in package so it was like this is the music. He was right you know, he's playing those notes as Chief Engineer; Chief Engineer must be arrogant, must be obnoxious, must be younger than him but have a chip on his shoulder kind of thing. Uh, I see him! You know what I mean? When Jerry and I went away to do character work and come back, our visions or, or sort of thing, of the characters were very similar.
BLZ: Mhmm.
MOT: Um, with Jane as well, umm; calls in its just like you know, you could see her. It was just like, without it, it's another, it's another show, because the actors have literally to pull things out of yah, out of the air to.
BLZ: I-yeah. [00:34:42]
MOT: You know.
BLZ: I thought it was very clever to, yah the division of labour was very clever and then it kept the energy up. Um.
MOT: Yeah.
BLZ: When it's one, one performer, keeping that energy if it's one performing.
MOT: Ja.
BLZ: And keeping the focus its all the more challenging.
MOT: Yeah, yeah.
BLZ: I'm not saying that it's not challenging like, now having to like er, work for two people obviously.
MOT: Yes.
BLZ: Has its own challenge.
MOT: Absolutely.
BLZ: But in terms of energy it was never lacking.

MOT: Yeah.
BLZ: Um.
MOT: Yeah.
BLZ: And also keeping the instrumentals engaged.
MOT: Yes.
BLZ: It was also.
MOT: Yes.
BLZ: Like have him play dramatic roles.
MOT: Yes, yes, yes.
BLZ: Kept him very engaged because.
MOT: Correct.
BLZ: Musicians don't.
MOT: Yeah.
BLZ: They decide okay, where, why.
MOT: What's my cue.
BLZ: What's my next cue, do it for ( ) [00:35:31] and you can almost feel like the energy is sort of like it all just there, there is the drain ( ). [00:35:35]
MOT: Yes.
BLZ: [00:35:35] ( ).
MOT: Yes, yeah.
BLZ: But I felt, I felt none of that, for me ( ). [00:35:41]
MOT: Yeah, yeah.
BLZ: It's almost like voting? [00:35:42] Some kind of.
MOT: Yeah, yeah.
BLZ: 'Cause it was, it was flying around and had to keep your eye.
MOT: Yeah, yeah.
BLZ: And usually.
MOT: Yeah, yeah.
BLZ: It was exciting, very exciting. Um, there really no questions or anything on that side like nothing I need.
MOT: Okay.
BLZ: I need to cover.
MOT: Okay.
BLZ: Making leverage on.
MOT: Alright.
BLZ: At this point.
MOT: Okay, let's see you ( ) leave you ( ). [00:36:07], Please give me a shout. ((Laughs))
BLZ: Thank you for doing.
MOT: Welcome.
BLZ: Um, I didn't like the people that just been like; ((Laughs)), uh sure.
MOT: ((Laughs))
BLZ: What you need? Sure. [00:36:21]

END OF AUDIO

INTERVIEW 4a – MATTHEW MACFARLANE (FIRST INTERVIEW)
DATE: 26 NOVEMBER 2014
JOHANNESBURG
DURATION: [00:35:53]

BLZ: Bongile Lecoge-Zulu
MM: Matthew MacFarlane

BLZ: Awesome, um … Alright, Matthew, what can you tell me about your experience doing *Hayani* however many years back at the Market Theatre. Particularly the Market Theatre run.
MM: Alright, the first thing, and this question comes up often is, or it's one of the first things I like to tell people when they ask me about er, doing the music for *Hayani* is that it is sort of, it was um … It is a work in theatre and it is sort of very sort of different and unique in a way to anything else I have done before. Because I usually work as er, just an instrumentalist or in, in the context of … Ja in the context of just playing an instrument in a band or, or writing music in that, in that instance. So, in another um … What I like to say is that it is different and unique but at the same time it's similar. Because as opposed to working and gelling with other musicians, now I am working and gelling with physical, with physical theatre and the literature of the, of the story as well. So ja, that, that's always what I like to say is that what I enjoy about theatre music is that it's uh … Yeah it's a unique experience. Did that answer some of.
BLZ: Ja. Um, so like when you were ... When you got on board with *Hayani*, what was the core … Okay what was your function basically?
MM: Alright, so I came on board, er, and my function was literally just to put, put music, or a musical soundscape to the, to the narrative, as well as … Ja to put a musical soundscape and to sort of complement, complement the narrative and the action on stage, that was unfolding on stage. So ja, you could say it was underpinning by giving a soundtrack to, to the actual action on stage. And of course I mean, um, doing that … Having said that, that involves working with the story. So I mean at the most basic level if something sad is happening in the story you have to underpin that with suitable music that people sort of will feel and relate to that works in that setting. You can't exactly play like carnival music when somebody's just died or … Unless they died in the carnival. ((Laughter)) But … Ja at … At the most basic, essential level that was my role as I have just explained it.
BLZ: Ah yeah … This is something that I am interested in: the rehearsal process.
MM: Okay, for this particular play … ((man walks by dragging a metal trolley –it is too loud to speak over)). Shall we wait? ((Laughs))
BLZ: Yeah, let's let him do his thing.
MM: I might use something like that in my next play.
BLZ: Yeah you know.
MM: Thunder or something.
BLZ: Yeah. I mean it does sound quite ominous.
MM: The process was, was really actually quite a long-term process. The actual play began in … I … The writers of the play or the actors who are the writers as well, started the play in 2008. I only … I came on board in 2009 because they felt that um … Ja well they just weren't happy with the, the musician that was working with them currently. So as soon as I came on board, it was kind of into the deep end.
BLZ: Okay.
MM: Er, because it was literally like maybe … It was supposed to be two weeks before it's first run at the Wits Downstairs Theatre, but um realistically speaking they were finishing things on the … From the play side of things. So only I literally only worked with them maybe like, we only had three four rehearsals or something like that. But the cool thing about it was that the play has run consecutively from 2009.
BLZ: Mhmm.
MM: On and off. I think 2010 was the only year we, we hadn't had a run of the play. And then from 2011 all the way up until this year 2014, the play has run. And, and [00:04:59] I'm actually happy about that because it gave us all a chance to sort of consolidate things. Okay, so that was just kind of a long intro as to my, my sort of being involved in the play. And then the reason why I happy we could do that was because [00:05:18] the play is very fragmented. It's literally snipped two characters.

BLZ: Mm. [00:05:30]

MM: And what's happening it that the way it unfolds it that it is literally snippets from their lives growing up. Like little short, short um, short portions of like significant events that unfolded. But the thing is from one scene to the next, the changes are so rapid and sometimes … Rapid and also very contrasting in a way. 'Cause I mean one moment you will have like a terrible thing like a traumatic event happening to one character and immediately in the next thing you will have like this sweet … Er, how can I say … Ja like warm, loving experience happening in the next. And things like that. But I mean it happens at the, the … What's the saying … Like the flick of a wrist or whatever. Really abrupt changes. And I, I needed to get used to that because I approached it coming from … As a musician you approach it with an attitude from maybe like a movie soundtrack you know. Things happen gradually and things are kind of set up in a way. Either the music sets up the scene or a piece of drama sets up the scene. So that my big challenge there was in the process, was trying to match the action. Because the director and the writers were, they were convinced this was the way it has to be done. Even though at times I'd be like, 'okay but don't you want like a little musical interlude there just to change scenes?'

BLZ: Mm.

MM: And they were like, 'no this is the way'. So I basically just had to make that work. And um I must say um it wasn't only a challenge for myself it was a challenge for them as well. So between the time we, we debuted at the, the National Arts Festival in 2009, and … And I'd say we sort of reached a … We reached point in the play where we all kind of realized that, okay now we've realized what we have wanted to do since 2009. And that was probably with last year's run. We did it at the Baxter in August and the Market in September. So I'd say ja, between two … It was a process from 2009 all the way to 2013. And I think we … [00:07:55] I personally feel and I am sure the other guys will agree with me that we, we, we reached a point that we were happy with in 2013. So that's like four years later. [00:08:10]

BLZ: Do you… Or rather have you found that like theatre practitioners struggle to um, relay their desires or what they want from you as a musician? Like in terms of … I'm sounding a bit inarticulate right now [like]

MM: [I know exactly what you mean. I know ja]

BLZ: [What they want from you … Can, can they actually say what they want? In a way that you get it?

MM: Yes … I know exactly what you mean. Um, I have found, yes … At times the director particularly. Um. Sometimes I would literally get notes like, I am pretty heard this one, it's like: "You know what, it just needs something" ((laughter)). It needs something and then I have to try and use my extra-sensory perceptions and psychic talents to realize what "something" is. But then at the same time I think everyone dealing in the creative field has come across this at some point whether it's in theatre or you know, strictly musical setting. Because I think that's one of the things I enjoyed about the challenge of the theatre was you have to be really as perceptive as possible. Somebody can tell you total gibberish and you have to make sense of it all. And then the thing is you'll know … And then I must say, speaking about the process … What happens is there is something that I might sort of, I might translate from the notes I get. [00:10:00] It might not be exactly what the director wanted. But then the thing is we get notes after the first week of running or whatever, and then from, from there the director might get a clearer idea of what he wants. Because then he can describe what he did not want from what I gave. And that helps him get a clearer idea and possibly then helps him describe also in a clearer manner what he would like. Perhaps if what I played was too dark; and then he'd say, "no, something similar but lighter". Then that helps us all get to the point in a clearer way.

BLZ: Okay.

MM: But I think this also highlights … Like I said it's what I enjoyed about it is trying to be intuitive and trying to interpret sort of what works. And I mean a lot of the time they don't know what they want and it's totally up to me to give something. A lot of the time I would just have to put something out there that I feel works and sometimes they are happy with it and other times we work around to reach a compromise.

BLZ: Ja, ja. ****Privileged Content****

MM: [00:12:54] I think now that I am hearing from you, I have definitely had similar … Because I mean, as musicians I think we are used to getting scores or outlines or something. And then I, so judging from you because I haven't heard from too many other musicians that have worked in theatre. So, I think sometimes it sounds, it seems like the director just, they don't want to

say it outright but basically they want you to give them something and from there then they'll, they probably will work from that point onwards. Because I wouldn't be surprised if they don't know exactly what they want to tell you the truth.

BLZ: That is true. I mean I did get that sense.

MM: They want [you to]

BLZ: [Yeah. I don't know if it was so much the issue. I can do a lot of stuff. I can pick at stuff, I can make noise, I can rattle things, I can play melodies, I can go think about stuff, I can sing... Like whatever, but at some point you are going to need to decide what to do with all this stuff that I am giving you. ****Privileged Content****

MM: [00:14:22] And I must say, one thing that surprised me was I expected um, more sort of … I expected to come into something a little more solid [before the actual run]

BLZ: [Yeah. Yeah.

MM: But then I guess maybe it's just the … in a way maybe that is just how it happens. Once the creative forces are there everybody mixes and mashes together.

BLZ: I'd like to find out why directors feel they need music. I actually want to know.

MM: Well I hope more directors use music actually. ((Chuckles)) [00:15:00]

BLZ: Look, I really appreciate it. I just want to know why. Is it just a thing of like ... Like, "I want music". And you are like okay fantastic you want music; but then for what?

MM: Why? ((Chuckles))

BLZ: I want lots of things you know, I really do. I want to drive a Ferrari. We all want things, but just tell me why.

MM: [Yeah exactly]

BLZ: [Help me understand why I am going to do this for you. But yeah.

MM: But you see Bongi, it is up to us then when we are in that space to show people why they need the music.

BLZ: That's a very true thing, that's a very true point.

MM: And what we can … How we actually, how we contribute to the final production. And yeah, I mean we definitely, it definitely enhances it in a way I believe. And I mean if it is live that is even more interesting you know. Because I mean I have seen, I have seen shows that have had live music like live percussionists and stuff, but I, I think then in that sense it could just as well have been a recorded track in some situations. So ja, I think then, ja, you have to look at that aspect of live versus recorded as well.

BLZ: That's true. I am thoroughly opposed to pre-recorded sounds. It really just, it offends my sensibilities, for the most part. I mean, in some situations yes I get it, but I feel when I walk into a theatre and I see the set, and you see instruments on the stage; it already changes the way you are engaging with it.

MM: Yeah.

BLZ: Because for me, if I walk in and pre-set is a track by whoever, lets say, ag man whoever.

MM: Like some atmospheric or world music or something. ((Chuckles))

BLZ: Yeah, it tells me to tune out because I suppose that's just how I have been trained to behave because generally atmospheric nonsense, ambient music in my world says turn off and engage with something else.

MM: And wait for the main thing.

BLZ: Yeah, wait for something to happen, but that is just a personal thing. But if I see instruments or instrumentalists or whatever then I'm just like "oh okay! Something is happening". [00:17:30]

MM: They're serious. [This is getting real]
((Laughter))

BLZ: [Yeah like people are engaging here. There are some creative forces like really like.

MM: But mind you at least you have the etiquette and the decency to have that mindset. A lot of people just like … I mean in *Hayani* I have been the pre-set music basically on stage.

BLZ: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

MM: And I've been … Some of the reactions are positive for the most part when kind people like yourself are there. But sometimes people just tune out. And the chatting starts and it just gets noisy. But then the funny thing is, the funniest is there'd be points where the chatter is like ridiculously loud and you stop playing and people applaud. And then you are like - oh wow someone was listening. And then there'd be times when you are playing and it's all quiet, and I have literally had at one point have heard, when I stopped someone went "thank you". ((Chuckles))

BLZ: Are you for real?!

MM: But I mean you know these things happen.
BLZ: Ja, they do. I mean you can't take it personally. It's just I suppose it's just a reflection of whatever is going on in their lives and in their headspace.
MM: And the thing is in the *Hayani* context people aren't sure because they're not sure if I'm there for … I'm literally just there while they're walking in and I'll maybe disappear . . .
BLZ: Mm.
MM: They don't realise I'm part of the show.
BLZ: [Ja]
MM: [And when they see me become part of the show it's like "Ding!". They're like "Ah cool, that guy is actually staying for the whole thing".
BLZ: ((Laughs)) Ja … Sho! … Um. Sorry, I've got so many thoughts running through my head right now.
MM: Well what did you … The last thing you asked me about was the process right?
BLZ: Ja.
MM: Which I said took like four years just to get used to the speed.
BLZ: Yeah.
MM: And doing it in a way that's kind of seamless.
BLZ: Mhmm.
MM: And ja. because it was a struggle. That was my hardest challenge was the quick changes. Literally moving from one … And sometimes … 'Cause I'm sure you are used to like music leading things [or]
BLZ: [Yeah–yeah.
MM: That wouldn't happen. It would have to be … We'd have to be so in sync. And that's the other thing. I have to know the script so well that I have to know exactly when the change because we'd have to go from black to white in like a second. But yeah so … I think I could be a deputy director for that show because that's how well I know the script. I even like joke with the actors if they make mistakes and stuff I jump in, "hey you were supposed to say that but you said that".
BLZ: Mm, mm yeah. So there's actually a lot that the musicians need to consider, think about and worry about. [00:20:00]
MM: Yeah.
BLZ: Um, again I've lost the thought. Um … Oh yes! In terms of your own–your own process … Did you? … Was it like a sort of work-shopping of ideas, musical ideas? Did you end up with a score?
MM: Well, yes, yes. So what I did was um, um, I've also explained this to many people. It's like I've got a framework. A framework for every scene, and it literally started out with me um, doing it on manuscript. My earliest, ja, my earliest days of *Hayani* started with me writing like any ideas I had on manuscript and like recording little voice recordings and um, short video clips. So ja, I laid out the framework and then … So for example let me use an example. Er, Nat, the one characters … [00:21:10] One of the scenes is basically as a kid, his mother and himself used to travel from Jo'burg to Venda er, once a year I think. So that experience involves going to Joubert Park taxi rank and the process of being at the taxi rank, what's happening around him. Like what he's sensing and seeing. Getting into the taxi, and basically the journey to Venda. So the different areas they pass. So then what I would do is, um once I had an idea of the script and I, I watched their actions on stage like how they … Then I'd go home and have time to myself and er, then I'd ja … I'd work on music. And the way I do that is, of course thinking of music that's suitable. So like for a taxi rank, er, I'd think of, I think of taxis as these boisterous, boisterous kind of wild untamed things. And then I'd think of like, like African or South African music that I think goes with that. So I'd use like something like maybe … I don't know if you … It's like Maskandi music but like with a beat or something.
BLZ: Ja, ja, ja.
MM: Not like the traditional… [It's like]
BLZ: [Ja, ja, I get what you are saying.
MM: Like the Zulu music but [like]
BLZ: [Taxi rank sounds. I feel you.
MM: ((Laughs)) Yeah. So yeah. And then I'd compose music keeping in mind the script all the time. 'Cause then he's describing "ja Joubert Park taxi rank, it's so busy and bustling". And then to, to underpin that or to reinforce that image, I'd play this bustling hard-hitting music sort of thing. And then changing. So he goes from the taxi rank to a moment where he notices

that his mom … That he's all dressed up in new clothes and the mom's sort of just wearing her ordinary clothes. And then that would be like a little shift you know.

BLZ: Yes, yes.

MM: Because you don't want the boisterousness to carry on because people will just tune out if the same thing just keeps going.

BLZ: Ja.

MM: You've gotta move with the, with the … Move with the flow of the narrative. That's it. So yeah. I'd lay a, so I'd lay a framework for the taxi rank. And because, I mean at any given point on stage, the reason I use frameworks and not a set score, is because they might elaborate on things. And things never end exactly the same time or on exactly the same word. So, I'd have a framework … Okay I'm playing this music during this scene. As soon as it changes I move to the next framework. So people always ask me, "Is there a score for this?" And I'm like yes I've scored a framework. But a lot of what, what's happening live is improvising on a framework. And I have literally um, I've scored bits and pieces. And I've actually made audio recordings of each and every scene. Just the framework. But like I said, you elaborate for as long as the action happens on stage. And, and, and that's what made this really interesting as well because you, you can never just know the score so well that you just sit [back and]

BLZ: [Mm]

MM: [I mean to a certain extent you do, but you have to remain engaged. Because otherwise you know it … The audience can sense if you're not engaging with the, if things are not in sync, it's easy to, to tell. So then the thing is even though I know it really well I am constantly listening and watching and working with them. So ja, to answer you question in short there's a framework for each scene and I work within that framework.

BLZ: You answered more than one question. That's fantastic.

MM: Yay! ((Chuckles))

BLZ: Um. Is there … Are there any other productions that you've been involved in? [00:25:00]

MM: Er, not, not … In the past like, this was like long ago. I've worked quite a bit with Warren Nebe. You've worked with him as well ((chuckles)). Yeah so, like … My first production with Warren–I think we were supposed to work on it together, *Crocodile Tears*. This was like 2007.

BLZ: Um, *Crocodile …* There's a story with *Crocodile Tears* and I'm not sure. Maybe.
****Privileged Content****

MM: [00:26:00] Great, great guy, I mean he he's the reason that I had the opportunity to work in theatre.

BLZ: Yeah.

MM: And I'm really appreciative for that. And I really want to do a lot more work in theatre. 'Cause it's cool. I enjoy composing just as much as performing. So … But ja, er, what were you saying?

BLZ: *Crocodile Tears*.

MM: Oh yes *Crocodile Tears,* which was my sort of first thing for theatre.

BLZ: Mhmm.

MM: But then you know in, in being a music student at Wits we had those projects like play making and things.

BLZ: Yes.

MM: But my first full on production was *Crocodile Tears.* And then I think a year later, I did *Closer.*

BLZ: *Ja*.

MM: Also with Warren. And then I did, ja, I think it was *Hayani*. And another show which we actually ran at, at various schools in Cape Town last year called *ID-Pending*.

BLZ: Oh yes.

MM: Both *Hayani* and *ID-Pending* is done by the exact same company. And performers. Have you seen *ID-Pending*?

BLZ: Ja.

MM: Comedy show is a lot of fun. And then there was a time when we actually ran those back to back. It was pretty intense. Because I mean you'd run one [show]

BLZ: [*Jaaa*]

MM: [A little break. Run the next one. But *ID-Pending* is similar with a lot of changing characters.

BLZ: Yes.

MM: But of course it's more based on light-hearted ((man dragging the metal trolley comes past again – Matthew pauses)).
BLZ: He doesn't like me very much.
MM: Our special effects guy ... Yeah and *ID-Pending* was the other one as well. Which we did at the Wits Theatre in 2010. Which is a zaney comedy fun show.
BLZ: I remember it was fun.
MM: It's nice to do something light-hearted for a change.
BLZ: *Ne* {right}! All so serious.
MM: Yeah.
BLZ: So, so serious.
MM: Yeah.
BLZ: Um and then other stuff that you do? I mean like?
MM: Um yeah, on a side note I did um … 'Cause I really, I want to … I'm actively trying to pursue more work in theatre as well as film. I did one student, the sound track for one student film so far. A documentary. Oh yeah, yeah and um Drama for Life week I also worked on a production for the top seventeen environmental international conference. That was in 2011. I did music for that and they did a documentary on our process of like putting the … It was like also drama, physical theatre and music. And they shot a documentary on it so I did the soundtrack for the documentary film. And I mean … Yeah, um. And I've done, pretty much yoh! I do backing tracks for people ((chuckles)). But that's kind of, I don't consider that the same sort of work as like theatre work.
BLZ: Yeah I'm just … Another thing that … I really think that this is like er, as a musician working in theatre. Being a musician; it's a possible career path but I don't know how feasible it is in terms of sustenance [you know because]
MM: [That's the thing yeah. I think to tell you the truth it could work. 'Cause I mean if a show like *Hayani* was in huge demand. It's a type of show that uses live music. Then it would be feasible because you're touring with the company and in that sense. And I mean like, I'm not opposed to having my music recorded either because that becomes feasible in the sense that you get your royalties and that sort of thing.
BLZ: Yes, yes.
MM: I haven't worked in that um capacity yet, but I see how that could work like if a theatre uses your soundtrack.
BLZ: Yes.
MM: And then ja you're getting your royalties and the show's doing well, you're benefitting from that so it could work.
BLZ: Mm. [00:30:00]
MM: But like I say, I'm using the word "could" so I don't know if it actually is happening in reality.
BLZ: So I don't know if it's just like the economic state of being of the country where generally I feel in South Africa you do have to be a jack of all trades.
MM: Definitely.
BLZ: Um, like actors can't afford to be like very specific or rigid in what they do.
MM: Yeah.
BLZ: Um, and musicians as well.
MM: For sure. 'Cause [I mean]
BLZ: [As much as I enjoy gigging and stuff I have to teach and I have to do all sorts of other things.
MM: That's the thing. Yeah 'cause, same. I enjoy performing so I work as a freelance musician as well um performing with different artists, recording uh, ja being part of hired orchestras or whatever. And I mean I enjoy that as well. My two passions are playing music –performing music– and composing music as well. But ja I'm always on the lookout for more work.
BLZ: Yoh! Tell me about it!
MM: ((Laughs)) As you mentioned.
BLZ: I haven't performed in a year.
MM: Wow.
BLZ: I actually haven't performed in a year.
MM: Sheesh.
BLZ: It makes me sick inside.
MM: I know 'cause … And I mean … And the weird thing is maybe you'll say you haven't performed and you'll rock up somewhere and you'll perhaps see a band or group together that

obviously somebody was supposed to have put thought into it and it's really like [sub-standard or]

BLZ: [Ja, ja.

MM: And you're thinking like how is it um, people with the expertise aren't being given the platform or the opportunities or . . . Have I hit a nerve?

BLZ: Yes you have ((both laugh)) I'm just like, you all have my number and I am generally quite available or I can make the time. Why don't you just call me instead of putting on this stuff.

MM: *Ja*.

BLZ: But then I suppose I can't hold other people accountable for my career or my opportunities. I have to also sort of put my ego aside and [be like]

MM: [It's tough. It's tough.

****Privileged Content****

MM: [00:34:24] Do you teach music?

BLZ: *Ja*, I teach flute.

MM: Okay.

BLZ: Umm, I feel … And I remember in varsity I was like I'm not going to teach because you start and like that's it. Like you get stuck in there. I've seen it happen to so many people. But then at the same time there's thing of like but then you have it and you have to share it at some point because otherwise it ends with you.

MM: Oh yeah, yeah.

BLZ: So I was like okay. It's a social responsibility – let me do it and stuff. But I did find that … Like this year I got so stuck in the life of being a teacher.

MM: And that's the thing. I experienced the same thing. Especially teaching at ... I was teaching at two schools last year. And your day, it's like teaching morning 'til evening and you don't touch your instrument sometimes. Except [when you're] [00:35:00]

BLZ: [When you're demonstrating]

MM: [Demonstrating ja.

****Privileged Content****

[00:35:53]

END OF AUDIO

INTERVIEW 4b – MATTHEW MACFARLANE (SECOND INTERVIEW)
DATE: 1 JUNE 2015
JOHANNESBURG
DURATION: [00:41:04]

BLZ: Bongile Lecoge-Zulu
MM: Matthew MacFarlane

MM: It does stand pain for a few minutes.
BLZ: I was, my class this morning 'cause I started working at the Academy of Sound Engineering.
MM: Oh yeah.
BLZ: So they doing some like touch up and they re-carpeted it so they glued the carpets down. I think they did this early this morning so I had to teach in a class that had glue in it. It was ridiculous, I was like [I'm gonna die]
MM: [( ), I can believe you]
BLZ: I was like really lively. I don't know if it's actually toxic or um, or intoxicating but like it got to my eyes and everything.
MM: Yeah no, not cool.
BLZ: Yeah, re-, yah. But you know, tis the season apparently. Rosebank is showing us that it time for renovation guys.
MM: I mean the, the problem is when you can't even escape at you own house like my house is full of dust and, and painters and you know, ((laughs)).
BLZ: How's it like when you sleeping I mean you are inhaling all sorts of things.
MM: You know it's not bad, I was, I was worried because the bathroom right next to my room painted, but luckily enough we just leave all the windows open and somehow the, my room is fine.
BLZ: Okay, that's a relief, not inhaling it all day every day. How long, how much longer do you have to go?
MM: Either, either tomorrow or Wednesday. I'm hoping so much tomorrow.
BLZ: How long have you been there?
MM: Since, since Friday.
BLZ: Oh that's not long though so.
MM: [It's like]
BLZ: [Mean it's, it's long but and it not one of those big projects where you've got people in your space and messing your life up for about a month.
MM: Yeah, no, yah I've been through as well.
BLZ: That's painful.
MM: It's horrible.
BLZ: Yeah, that's just. And you actually wanna leave your space and leave them in there just like.
MM: Yeah.
BLZ: You just like you do what need to do and I'm.
MM: And I'm out of it but sometimes it's not always practical.
BLZ: Yeah, true.
MM: ((Laughs, inhales sharply))
BLZ: ((Coughs)) Okay um, so I got a recording from, from Nat of your first run like at the Nunnery.
MM: Okay. That should be interesting because I [I don't even know what happened there. [00:02:10]
BLZ: It's, it was really sweet shame man it was really, really cute ['cause I
MM: [Really doesn't ( ). ((Laughs))
BLZ: ((Clears throat))
MM: Is it because you doubted at that point.
BLZ: You know another that frustrated me about that was um, was that in the footage there is not a single shot of you.
MM: Okay.
BLZ: I think the camera, if you were, were, the camera is probably right here.
MM: Yeah, but I'm mostly out of focus anywhere, it's more about [the]
BLZ: [Yeah, yeah I get that it was just like interesting, I mean I could always use it as an end, there was a way in like.
MM: Oh yeah, yeah.
BLZ: Musicians are always left out, is this just sucks.

MM: Hey man after a few years you get used to it.
BLZ: Yeah no, definitely but I mean um
MM: Sitting in the corners. That, you see that's how The Phantom of The Opera came about.
BLZ: Yeah.
MM: They developed a complex from [being in the background]
BLZ: [From being, Jesus I'm gonna ((laughs)) I'm gonna quote you there.
MM: ((Laughs))
BLZ: ((Laughs)) They just like screw this I'm over it.
MM: ((Laughs))
BLZ: You all must suffer.
MM: Because you want me in the shadows, I'm going to go all the way into the shadows.
BLZ: I'll bring you into the damn shadows.
MM: ((Laughs))
BLZ: Um, so thing, because there is no footage of your run *ya ko* {at the} Market Theatre and my research is located at Market Theatre.
MM: Okay.
BLZ: I will be using references from the 2009 run, however I need to say it more the ways in which it is different or as many ways as I can find that The Market Theatre run which was 2013?
MM: Yes, 2013.
BLZ: The ways in which The Market run developed from the 2009 run. [00:04:00]
MM: Okay so, well from a ( ) stand [point]
BLZ: [Mhmm]
MM: [Um, literally one could, one part had been added to each characters [story]
BLZ: [Okay. So [like when]
MM: [like two additional parts altogether, yeah]. One part added to Nat's story and one part was added to Atandwa's story and it was the part Nat's story it basically um, uh, monologue from the point of his father so it is his father's monologue. From Atandwa's story it is his mother's monologue. So that yah, that was the biggest addition to the script. Anything else script wise that I can remember! No, not really but that was sort of the most significant addition. And then music was a lot changed because I don't if you recall that in our previous interview, I had only worked with them literally not even a full [week before the Nunnery] [00:05:06]
BLZ: [Okay. Yes, yes you did say so.
MM: It was, I promise you like I'd probably worked at it, worked with them between three to four days and, and that was not even doing the play from beginning to [end kind of thing].
BLZ: [Mm so you were literally [winging it]
MM: [I was composing on the on the ear.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
MM: [00:05:23] One thing that has sta-, stayed the same that's kind of the theme song of the play and I actually wrote like a full song based on it and I just called it Hayani. It's on my sound [account]
BLZ: [I heard it a lot of times, yeah.
MM: And that was like considered the theme song but basically comes from the music I use in Atandwa's journey from Jo'burg to PE.
BLZ: Mhmm.
MM: That's the music I came up with for that and it kind of became like thematic material for the whole play as a whole. And I also play that that sort [of um as the exit music].
BLZ: [Mhmm.
MM: I feel like a loud hyped up version of it. Well as loud and hyped up as you can be with one guitar.
BLZ: You know what I am thinking. I think, will it be okay if we move over there 'cause the sounds [the kitchen sound, yeah the coffee sounds]
MM: [A bit more quiet. Cool.
BLZ: I think that that's fine, yeah. ((Silence)) Put that next to you. So much stuff man!!
MM: It's you Bongi, you came with like so much ((laughs))
BLZ: [Eish ( ). Okay, yes. If you want pizza.
MM: The tramezzini is almost the size of that?
BLZ: Are you serious?
MM: Like four slices [four slices that big]
BLZ: Yeah, okay yeah, that's, that's substantial.
MM: And salad.

BLZ: Wow okay.
MM: ((Laughs))
BLZ: You are a growing boy, you must eat. So the 2009 version which ((sighs)) you surely probably don't remember very clearly, had like a general sort of theme that would come and go like it was, and maybe I don't if it really is, I can't remember if it's derived from ((clears throat)) Joburg PE thing quite possibly, um, but yeah it's not elaborated on very much, like it's pretty much the same guy comes maybe you had met one or two notes from the chords in different sections but it's pretty much like coming back and whatever.
MM: Was this during Atandwa's story line or?
BLZ: And also the sections in between and stuff so basically what I'm saying is that it was like generally the same theme carrying through the entire performance [there were changes though]
MM: [Okay, oh, yeah]
BLZ: If you listen carefully enough you'd hear changes and there was a big; the music wasn't so integrated.
MM: Okay.
BLZ: It was not as integrated as I remember it to be like in later versions.
MM: Yes.
BLZ: And possibly because it was the very first run.
MM: Yeah no true. Honest, honestly [00;09:00] the only time I felt, I felt the music was working from my perspective was in uh, 2013. And in 2013 we did the schools fest, Grahamstown, then Baxter Theatre then Market Theatre. So at that point yeah, we, we, so like rehearsing towards schools fest and doing schools fest was kind of I think where the music was nicely consolidated and integrated into, into the play because at that point I was comfortable with the script thing. [00:09:33]
BLZ: So they was more … Are you saying like this is because there was more contact time between yourself and the performers in rehearsal and in like in performance obviously.
MM: Yeah. And I think also mainly because something in me like my instincts when working on the play initially was like naturally, [00:09:59] naturally you'd want kind of um, like interlude music. You know like [something like smoother changes]
BLZ: [Mhmm, mhmm]
MM: [Like something fading and in and fading out maybe linked by musical phrase. But the thing is what, I think Warren going for and the, the actors were like these very jagged, immediate changes. And I think up until that point I was always, what my instinct tell me would work, what sort of, no one else wanted to go in that direction.
BLZ: Mm.
MM: So when I finally got to a point where I was like okay this is how it is, this is how they want it, I kind of yeah I just went with, went with the flow so to speak.
BLZ: Uh, okay.
MM: And when I did that, I accepted that and just sort of accepted that okay, this is what it is, it's not going to change, surrendering in ((laughs)), in a manner of speaking ((laughs)). Yeah, just accept, accepted the, the script for what it was; went with the flow.
BLZ: Um, ((silence)), I'm finding that productions that have like both, like the theatrical element and the music it comes across as very collaborative yes, but then in reality the process is not necessarily so. The process seems problem. In the interviews and stuff, the process seems to actually be very segregated, very separate. So the actors do their thing with the director and then the musician does their thing in their own time and space; they come together to see if they actually stitch it together. Juxtapose one on to the other with the director again saying yes, no, maybe was that maybe your experience or was there like, I don't know. I feel a lot of it it's all the director's what sort of binds everything else. This, if you've got two musicians and your actor, there's not much of course interaction happening all [through the director you get what I'm saying] [00:12:26]
MM: [Oh I see, yeah, yeah. No there, I think different, different scenes and different moments call for different approaches like for instances, uh, I think we touched on this the last time as well where, [00:12:39] the director kind of doesn't know exactly what he wants but he knows he wants music. But then what you do is, you have to, your starting point is your own interpretation without any influence without any influence from anyone else. No director's influence. Basically the influence is, they obviously have a scene done, so you watching the scene and then offering [something, according to what you see]
BLZ: [Mhmm]

MM: [And then, and then from there the director will be like no, something more, with a more solemn mood or something with a lighter mood or if its too loud there be more sort of in the background more subdued, or come, come out more; that sort of thing. So, and then in the challenging scenes perhaps where I couldn't really come with something on the [spot just by looking at the scene.

BLZ: Mm.

MM: Then it would be a matter of going home, working in my own time; coming up with a new idea, presenting it at the next rehearsal and working from there. ((Silence)). And then of course there are like the direct things like um, Nat's the ( ) scene, the theme that his father was eh, he, 'cause his [younger]

BLZ: [Mm, mm, mm]

MM: [He said that's the reason why they asked me to play because I could play that the first, the first like [rehearsal, he was like you know this hymn. ( ).

BLZ: Yes, yes, yeah

MM: It's like that Savannah advert but if you hum it I can play. ((Laughs))

BLZ: ((Laughs))

MM: So he hummed it and I figured it out. And then yeah, so that instance piece where he wants a specific song and then of course you do what you can.

BLZ: Okay, on that same subject of very specific themes or songs, there is the Michael Jackson reference.

MM: Yes. [Billie Jean]

BLZ: [I think Billie Jean, yeah. Why?

MM: When we were doing it in 2009?

BLZ: Yes. ((Sings))

MM: [00:15:04] The reason is these themes kind of highlight different eras or different ages of the characters, the characters at different points in time. So the Billie, Billie Jean was kind of like early teen, teenage years and I mean I guess, yeah.

BLZ: Yeah.

MM: It was a reference to the early teenagers where you start learning what's cool, and who you wanna be like and obviously, I wanted to be like Michael Jackson so that why I try and dance like him.

BLZ: ((Laughs))

MM: ((Chuckles)) So that's the un, unstated [significance]

BLZ: [Yes, yes, yes.

MM: It represents the early teenagers if I'm not mistaken.

BLZ: Because I mean myself as, or Donato said to, I wrote about it. He was like as a researcher I need eh, then state the significance of it generally, socially, culturally, but then also what is it then, sig, what's the significance then in the [production]

MM: [In, in the actual prod]

BLZ: [Yeah. No I mean he just said. So I am explaining why I'm asking such a specific question.

MM: Okay.

BLZ: I know what it represents to me or to pop culture [but]

MM: [Yeah]

BLZ: [I don't necessarily know what it meant [to]

MM: ['Cause they have chosen any song like this.

BLZ: Yeah, no, yeah.

MM: But I thing also 'cause Michael Jackson was such a huge influence in, in, so I guess by using such like one of the most popular influences people would then [relate to it]

BLZ: [Mm]

MM: ['Cause it was such a far reaching, he was such a far reaching influence on many people growing up. I mean every kid tough he was ( ).

BLZ: Of course, yeah.

MM: ((Laughs)).

BLZ: I'm so sad that my kids will never know Michael Jackson and Luther van Ross and my kids are gonna miss out on a lot man.

MM: Yeah.

BLZ: It breaks my heart.

MM: They will hear him like the hist-, [historic radio person]

BLZ: [Yeah, but they didn't live in those times. We got know, like we saw the internet coming into use. We saw mobile phones coming into use you know, remote controls like gates and stuff

coming into use .
MM: For sure.
BLZ: We lived in a time with Michael Jackson and Mandela and yeah. [Anyway and then]
MM: [Interesting time]
BLZ: [Times of parking lots not being functional]
MM: ((Laughs))
BLZ: Um, there's this song that Atandwa signs as well.
MM: Yeah. Ka … [Khanyizi Nazo]
BLZ: [Yes. It's very familiar to me, I haven't a clue what it means. I should probably ask a Xhosa person.
MM: Yeah because as far I know it's, the, [00:17:40] the relevance of that song is that's full on acknowledgement to his Xhosa roots now. [Be, being a]
BLZ: [Mhmm]
MM: [It's the juxtaposition of being a Model C sort of student, private, blah-blah-blah].
BLZ: Yes.
MM: And it represents still having strong ties your African heritage and your African customs and sort of thing. So, yeah, I thinks it just creates the dad's position because immediately after you'll notice then he starts telling story from being in the suburb.
BLZ: Yes.
MM: He sings this songs then it's like growing up as a young kid, I remember.
BLZ: Mm.
MM: May be it's almost like a … This would be my interpretation, I mean, it's just like an acknowledgement to his African heritage 'cause there's not much of that happening in during the rest of the plot. Whereas in Nat's story from his father's stand point you see the tradi-, you see the African customs and traditions happening by his mum in Venda serving the men in a traditional [Venda way where they get on the floor]
BLZ: [Yes Nat's story is very, okay you're right. Uh, ((silence)). Yeah I see.
MM: Er, one thing also regarding the music from the first run to what it, as it, as it stands now, which is pretty much the same as 2013, is instrumentation. I was still in an experimental phase. so I think I was using two different guitars. I had a triangle,
BLZ: Yes and shakers, and [a harmonica]
MM: [Yes I used to do Nat's theme on a harmonica. And I used to play the entrance music on a, like a tin whistle.
BLZ: Mhmm.
MM: ((Giggles)) So that, [00:19:50] everything became super uh, simplified in a sense. Now it's strictly only the guitar an, an electronic effects, like [echo, pretty much only echo, yeah that it.
BLZ: Oh okay.
MM: Also the thing is in it's, the thing I like about the play and the challenges I see it like, for lack of a better word; like raw.
BLZ: Yeah.
MM: Its, it's like maybe everything is down to its essence you know. The actors don't wear, there was a very nice review from the Durban run, where the writer wrote that like the actors are just like, they are just in T's and denim throughout the play and there's just myself and the guitar instead so on, and interestingly, we don't even notice the lack of … Oh yeah and we don't even use, we haven't used the flats since Market Theatre. We haven't them with Mac's Art.
BLZ: Did you use them at the Market Theatre though.
MM: Yes we did.
BLZ: Okay.
MM: Yeah, so may yeah that maybe won't be a huge reference but the review said like you don't even notice the lack of elaborate props or costume changes because [00:21:04] the performances basically draw you into visualising. So I try doing the same thing, like you limit yourself and then you see what you can do within those.
BLZ: Within the limitations, okay. That's deep. [00:21:15]
MM: Also the, the drastic changes kind of ((laughs)), make [many instruments imagine] ((laughs))
BLZ: [Yah, it did, makes it quite, mm ((laughs)).
MM: And it took, took me a while to get to that point.
BLZ: We think we are super heroes we musicians.
MM: ((Giggles))
BLZ: Just because we can count and move our fingers and do [like]

MM: [and tap our feet at the same time.
BLZ: At the same but different times in each limb and each extremity, you are like okay I can do four here, and three here and sixteen [here]
MM: [And they like wow!
BLZ: ((Laughs)) So we think we can do everything all at once. Um.
MM: Tin Bucket is turning into something where I might have to somehow be, grow more limbs. ((Laughs)) [00:22:03]
BLZ: Really, yeah, yeah.
MM: The cool thing about speaking of integration this, as a side note.
BLZ: Mhmm.
MM: Whatever may be its still useful to you is this play was originally written with music kind of being [integral]
BLZ: [Mhmm.
MM: With the performance.
BLZ: Which one, um?
MM: Tin Bucket Drum, so from the get go it's, everything has been very, it's not like the actor does their thing and I do my thing. We literally just get together with the director as well and create from that space. It's a lot more integrated from the get go.
BLZ: Really? It's exciting.
MM: When are you going to be in Grahamstown? We there in the second week.
BLZ: I'm there the *whole time.*
MM: Oh, cool.
BLZ: I'm there from the 29th June to the thing, 12th of July.
MM: Okay [so it's two weeks.
BLZ: So it's like forever]. I'll be like over it by the time you come.
MM: We only there from the 8th to the 12th.
BLZ: Um, cool. Which venue?
MM: St Andrews, St Andrews Hall. So it's the school hall. You guys?
BLZ: St Andrews Studio 1.
MM: Also the school must be.
BLZ: Yeah, I … Somewhere there.
MM: I definitely come and check it out.
BLZ: ((Laughs)). Please do. I'm all about watching shows.
MM: There's nothing else to do anyway.
BLZ: I suppose so. Watch show and drink right.
MM: Yeah.
****Privileged Content****
MM: [00:24:20] Yeah, yeah.
MB You know.
MM: No but I mean things ((coughs)), sorry. Um, yeah but I think we spoke about this like where you coming to a situation where you expecting a some sort of idea, do this do that but I had to learn that … And that's one of the good things about *Hayani*. The fact that had covered some longevity to it, it was a great learning experience.
BLZ: Mm. I think came maybe with very high expectations for a new director as well. I didn't.
MM: Okay.
BLZ: 'cause she's only recently started like *directing*.
MM: Yeah, yeah.
BLZ: And directing with music. So coming from working with people who know what they want with music [for]
MM: [Yeah, that's the division between music and theatre ((laughs)).
BLZ: And there are certain directors, Warren even though he's wishy-washy about he can still sort of tell you which way to go or.
MM: Yeah, and yeah and I think that's experience.
BLZ: Yeah, it's experience. I was expecting more.
MM: He has an idea of what he wants and he trusts you to find it and he'll put in [the]
BLZ: [Yes]
MM: [His input when he sees it's necessary ( ). But for the most part if he's quiet you know. [Okay its fine]
BLZ: [It's okay.
MM: And if he needs something well.

BLZ: Mm. Yeah, yeah, so.

****Privileged Content****

MM: [00:30:10] And I mean I appreciate a lot for, I mean its thanks to him that I have experience in the theatre world because he's the guy that got me in touch with all these guys and I worked on three show within four shows. So I'm, I can't take that away from him ((laughs))

****Privileged Content****

MM: [00:33:00] I guess we digressed way off.

BLZ: ((Giggles)) No these things are … Oh yes, in terms of the awards and stuff, for, for what theatre was out there aside from the Naledi's.

MM: Steers, Fleur de Cap.

BLZ: Yes.

MM: Which I was nominated.

BLZ: Yes I do know that.

MM: ((Laughs))

BLZ: I'm aware of that.

MM: I shouldn't brag too much because this is nomination. I didn't win anything ((laughs))

BLZ: Nomination is as good as winning man, [as far as I'm concerned.

MM: ((Laughs)) I was like what? Is this for real? Really? ((chuckle))

BLZ: Um.

MM: Oh yeah that the. There are, there are Durban based as well.

BLZ: Mhmm.

MM: I think I was speaking to Jade about this but apparently they are very small scale, not many people know about them.

BLZ: Okay.

MM: Oh yeah, with regards to archive, maybe you might be able to archive material of the the Playhouse run which is pretty much exactly the same as the Market minus

BLZ: The Flats.

MM: Because they have a videographer coming and she was like Playhouse does this for legal reasons. They legally need the archive as a Government organisation. In case the auditors come and say you made records of this, [where is the proof?]

BLZ: [Where's the proof, yeah.

MM: So, they have to do it for legal reasons. And then, a funny thing is her name is Karen Logan.

BLZ: Mhmm.

MM: And she was actually the first director of Tin Bucket Drum.] So we were talking and it came out that I was working on Tin Bucket Drum. And she's like oh no way. I did that blah blah blah. So the thing, but then again I know the theatres are quite iffy about maybe passing on that material.

BLZ: Mm.

MM: But they made an archive.

BLZ: Mm, I'll see what I can do.

MM: Doesn't Warren have any archival material. Zero.

BLZ: Nobody, just like nobody. Um, oh yes, the, the recordings that you sent me.

MM: Yes.

BLZ: Which were fantastic to just listen to them. I think it was fun. It was just cool.

MM: Thanks.

BLZ: I could listen to this.

MM: I sent you those because they are the longest ones. Because I literally just recorded.

BLZ: [Little snippets]

MM: [Every snippet that happens in the scene.] And they most happen in those scene because the other scenes. There are little things that happened but it's much more haphazard compared to the journeys. [00:35:22]

BLZ: Mm, mm, mm, do those, those, those short recordings that you gave me now, they sort of like move through smaller thematic like you get what I'm saying?

MM: You mean like er, they make appearances again later on?

BLZ: [No, no, no, within itself like]

MM: [Oh yes definitely]

BLZ: [So it's like the tracing of the journey because.

MM: Yes.

BLZ: [I just trying to think of the recording or the footage that I saw]

MM: [Yeah.

BLZ: Like the journey is like okay.
MM: [Like, like]
BLZ: [*Hewe*, *hewe* {blah blah} Orange River moving for this point to that point.
MM: [Yeah, it's that]
BLZ: [Is it, was it as and when it moves with the thing.
MM: So what y were hearing is literally from the point in, in Joburg to PE, is, is from Atandwa describing himself as a boy waking up at home.
BLZ: Okay.
MM: Ah, then the theme music develops, then when they reach the half way for it, which is Bloemfontein I think.
BLZ: [Mhmm]
MM: [Music changes, then when they're back on the road again music changes. Then they finally see the Orange River.
BLZ: [Yes]
MM: [Yeah, so that's what you were hearing in that. It was all those snippets.
BLZ: Yes, yes.
MM: But then that's why I put those together because all that happens within one scene.
BLZ: One scene, yah. [00:36:35]
MM: Yeah. So it could have been, it could have been split into many little bits but it would just have been too much.
BLZ: Ja.
MM: And in Nat's scene you're hearing him getting on the taxi with his mum.
BLZ: Mhmm.
MM: To passing the Tropic of Capricorn, to, to ( ) taxi rank that's actually ( ) to, to um, Vendah, the heat of Venda.
BLZ: Yes.
MM: Yeah, and the fruit markets. So yah, there are many little things happening. So now you can see that the challenging thing about this cause I'm sitting there.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
MM: And they are describing all these different things and I'm like should keep one theme or should I make it different.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
MM: An then you experiment and you see sometimes it works just doing one theme but it's kind of, it's kind of glaring when, when you hear something doesn't go with what happening on stage, so that when I adjust.
BLZ: Um, uh, why though, why do we creative stuff. It's just.
MM: ((Laughs))
BLZ: It's actually really complicated. It's like so thought intensive and labour, practice intensive like.
MM: That's, that's why; I think we'd be so bored otherwise.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
MM: You basically like, I think, I was thinking the other day. It's like great because composition, um, fulfils like a mental, fulfils you mentally.
BLZ: Mhmm.
MM: And performing kinda fulfils you mentally and physically
BLZ: [Mm, mm]
MM: [Because you physically doing something. And I don't know about for flute, a flautist but the guitar is full because when you playing what you wanna play of you feel, it feels good, actually [feels good]
BLZ: [Mhmm, mhmm]
MM: [Everything feels physically in sync.
BLZ: Mhm, mhm, it's like er, an extension.
MM: Exactly yah. And it's probably similar to it because then at the same time you relating it to what's happening in your fingers and your mouth and your breathing [and]
BLZ: [Yeah, yeah]
MM: [Everything.
BLZ: Especially I suppose for, for flute like the catharsis of it is actually the breathing action, [the]
MM: [Oh yeah]
BLZ: For me that's, a lot of it is in the breath and in the phrasing because [it's just]
MM: I probably like faint if I tried to play it. I'd go blue like

((Laughter))

BLZ: You know obviously it comes with practice and stuff, um, and yah actually I had not thought about it that way. It's the feeling of, it's a great feeling because you are literally putting something from the inside somewhere else. [00:39:17]

MM: Yes. I was thinking about it the other day. It's physically and mentally stimulating and I don't know it feels like you, you using it to ... It's not like how people serving when you do a nine to five.

BLZ: Mhmm, mhmm,

MM: It's like it doesn't feel stimulating or satisfactory.

BLZ: Yes, yes, yes.

MM: It's just like a grind you terribly not connected to, but music I feel very connected to it.

BLZ: Yah, you can't disconnect.

MM: Yeah.

BLZ: You can't plug out.

MM: Exactly.

BLZ: I think those are the only questions I had having written stuff, and read stuff and thought of stuff.

MM: And have I answered all of them.

BLZ: Yeah, and then some.

MM: It's how I roll man.

BLZ: How you do.

MM: ((Laughs))

****Privileged Content**** [00:41:01]

END OF AUDIO

INTERVIEW 5 – NAT RAMABULANA
DATE: 08 JANUARY 2015
JOHANNESBURG
DURATION: [00:50:51]

NR: Nat Ramabulana
BLZ: Bongile Lecoge-Zulu

BLZ: Basically, tell me about *Hayani*.
NR: Yeah.
BLZ: And, and basically tell me whatever comes to mind and then we'll see what comes out from then and [we]
NR: [Where do you want me to go 'cause I may just … where, how, musically?
BLZ: No, not necessarily, your, your, your bit, your part and then somewhere along the line when it makes sense, I'll ask you questions.
NR: Mm.
BLZ: I'm actually interested in your experience not so much in anything specific. Who knows I will find Nat.
NR: Mm, mm. Interesting journey, Um, so *Hayani* um, well to me, was uh, a way to, to, to speak out, to um, how I felt you know, cate- like society especially South Africa along the lines of race and um, and also just within our racism me being Black, I felt like I was very uh, misunderstood, um largely because I speak like a white person, um, and then I'm told I'm told I'm a when in fact it's like my was a domestic worker and I was poor and I lived in a squatter camp, and you know what I mean.
BLZ: Yeah.
NR: And I didn't understand my upbringing was quite tough, sss, so you know, you know, people were thinking I am privileged and all that stuff simply because of the way I talk. [00:01:30] Um, so you know, a lot of misconception what if you know, whatever happened along the way and I'm jus.., it was, it was I got frustrated and um, also at the same time my felt like I was watching all the theatre that I wasn't seeing myself in? It … That wasn't speaking top me or [my situation, so I was like]
BLZ: [Mhmm]
NR: [Okay, let me get people together that I know, who I trust and um, you know, I'd written a long essay right, about my story my journey to becoming an actor.
BLZ: Mmhm.
NR: Going from like birth but there's really pressure from my childhood, high school, my life, my parents, what happened and how that informed who I am or I was as an actor and then from that Warren was my supervisor was like turn this into a play and the I was yah; anyway I, I put it away and I then I was unemployed for eight months and then I was like okay!
BLZ: Let's do this!
NR: Let's do this, yeah, yeah, I think I've got nothing better to do. Um, so yah there' n there was the beginnings of it. I called Atandwa on board, he read, he got it, and you know I think at the beginning we didn't really know what we were doing, you know, we knew we just wanted to … I don't know what we thoguht we were doing, we had these, we did want to do something that spoke to people. That just spoke a different situation, and was honest, and was real and people could feel while watching and the only way we could it was be honest ourselves; you know, blatantly so. [00:03:00] Um, and yeah, we managed you know. It was a good thingThe one clever thing sort of … The device, we came up of, with rather; was not tell the stories ourselves but have the characters in our lives tell the stories. So I think that brought on a new twist as actors, as sto- you know, as mode the story telling 'cause you know, lot of one man show two-man shows is I, I, I.
BLZ: Yes.
NR: And it gets boring you know what I mean and was like okay, I get the point but then as an acting strategy it was like we see how my mother felt in this situation, let's see how my father felt. Let's see how my father about meeting my mother; what you know, how do I you know, whatever. How can I portray from what I, from what they told me and so forth. And it became like a wonderful journey down memory lane and along like you know, rehearsal lines the people we spoke to, the people that were involved, like stage managers, like every rehearsal became this sharing experience you know. At some point now someone would just want to share where they from, what their name means to them you know, what happened when they

were five, and the significant moments in their life and I think thats what sort of *Hayani* became. It's this like wonderful sharing experience because we shared you know, from deep deep inside ourselves, so people watching us are, yah, obviously they felt that. They also wanted to share and yah it's been six years.

BLZ: Six years running?

NR: It's been six years actually. Our … So yeah, so it's been great.

BLZ: ((Laughs))

NR: Of course.

BLZ: For you to run for six years it has to be good.

NR: Yeah, yeah, no I mean yah; it's been awesome, we haven't achieved like six years something, I don't know what it is you know.

BLZ: ((Laughs))

NR: I mean, financially or whatever, what do they say? Critically, it's been wonderful, we've gotten, I mean we won an award.

BLZ: Mhmm.

NR: You know and all that stuff so critically it's been great. Um, yeah financially it's been taxing it's actually cost us a lot.

BLZ: Oh really?

NR: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

BLZ: From the outside you think otherwise. You think, shit its running, so things are fine.

NR: ((Laughs))

BLZ: You know. You think you just like hey, be careful what you wish for Bongs.

NR: No we always more broke at the end of a round than we are at the beginning.

BLZ: Ah man.

NR: Um, so you know, it mean, its taught a lot of you know, about that, marketing, money and.

BLZ: ((Laughs))

NR: It, you know … Um, don't do it yourself; don't fund a project through your own pocket.

BLZ: No, don't.

NR: Even if it is, it says, you know what I mean, it's just, it's not worth it; find sponsors you know, into the journey that's what we tryna, yeah latch on to; yah.

BLZ: Um, so tell me about the, the, you guys, you guys worked on this for a long time though.

NR: Mhmm. [00:05:51]

BLZ: But I suppose initially or, and going forward, what the process like, rehearsal process and all that?

NR: A lot of it um, has been talking you know. Um, we spoke for a year basically for we wrote anything, before we put anything down. We were just meeting and talking, uh, because it's incredibly hard to take your personal story and put it on stage you know, and make yourself vulnerable and then be able to pull it off in a performance as well, you know. Um, it's hard to perform your life especially when it's really raw and really close to you so a lot of it for a year was talking about what it is we are doing so that we can understand what it is we trying to achieve, become comfortable with it. Um, the script essentially was put together in two days. ((Laughter))

BLZ: Aaaah!

NR: Which is always the best part of trying to tell the story. Wer so clever, we put it together in two days.
((Lauhgter))

BLZ: Never mind the entire [year before that]

NR: [You know what I mean, between that.

BLZ: Two days.

NR: Two days. How long does it take to write that script? Er, two days!

BLZ: ((Laughs))

NR: Yeah, so that the fun part. And ah, a lot of it was talking man! A lot of it was talking, and just trusting, each other, even to a point where we could just, let me share you know. When you want to hear this idea, the great idea, but then behind show putting it together and doing it and seeing crushing of the idea is very difficult. I saw a guy who said he did ehh, same, you know, same thing. White guy, telling stories of himself and he's old, he's married and all of that stuff, and he really struggled with performing it. It's like he became ehh, it made me
just realize how, how hard we actually had to work in order to to give who we are in terms of performing your own life is not as easy as it sounds or appears to be. [00:16:41]

BLZ: Yeah.

NR: Because the thing is at what point I, it is you and at what point is it the character, and you know what mean, like you always have to, those lines always have to be clear and sometimes it's not, when you've you've just had a fight your wife or your girlfriend, things aren't going really well in your life but you must go into this space now where you vulnerable and you know, you know as a performer it's all about being vulnerable.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
NR: You know what I mean [and]
BLZ: [Getting the nuances.
NR: Yes, and letting people in.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
NR: You know what I mean like that's ((laughs)). Thats what people applaud us for, for, for doing you know, what I mean? Is ((laughs)) of bringing ourselves up and just feeling us, you know.
BLZ: ((Chuckles))
NR: Um, I just ??
BLZ: ((Laughs)) A friend of mine, sorry this is a random story that just popped into my mind. She was, she studied directing or something like that at AFDA. And I think it was in the first or second year, they were like, you know, doing animal exercises like you know physical stuff and eventually they were told that they lie down and roll around on the floor and she was like surely my father is not paying this much money for me [to]
NR: ((Laughs))
BLZ: [You know, feel it, feel this; it was. no you just remind of that. Like yah, actually when you try to describe its actually nonsense.
NR: ((Laughs))
BLZ: It's a pile of poop.
NR: It is, it is.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
NR: It is. it is, a lot of it.
BLZ: But it is intense though, like it's
NR: I mean, at the same time, isn't it.
BLZ: Its very real.
NR: At the same time you on stage and you crying; I'm so moved. You know what I mean.
BLZ: What did you do? I don't know.
((Laughter))
NR: Did you see? You know, yah, frustrating! Um.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
NR: So yah, so that's what to do you know, like, 'cause normally if it's another character, there's always that dam.
BLZ: Yah.
NR: There's always that space, there's always that you know.
BLZ: The safe space actually.
NR: Yeah, you know you [didn't do this]
BLZ: [Yeah]
NR: [Be there, but now here you're not really leaving. [00:09:56] You going back to memories that some of them were even painful and you to ((chuckles)) you have to be vulnerable from painful memories. You know, can't you, can't you see that you hurt me enough ((laughs))
BLZ: ((Laughs)) I think I will sit down and I will tell you.
NR: ((Laughs)) What do I have to show you as well.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
NR: That sounds ridiculous, why are you even here? You freaking sadomasochist.
BLZ: ((Laughs)) [00:10:20]
NR: Putting yourselves through pain and mean, what is actually all this about? Um, but yeah, but yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Really, that's most of it, the journey was that trusting each other, getting to know each other, speaking and just getting to a comfortable place where we tight with each other and we can then allow other people in on a regular basis, you know performing every night and, and so on.
BLZ: Oh nice!
NR: Yeah.
BLZ: Alright, so, now like zoning into what I suppose what most relevant for me is incorporating the music.
NR: Mhmm.

BLZ: Um, was, the thing is, I need to be careful how I ask this question. Because I'm not trying to, to lead your answer but like what did that shift for you … What effect have, what did it dampen or elevate or move, or what did it, or was it just convenient, was it necessary like yah.
NR: Uh, I saw, I was, do do you remember; I don't know if you watched Jeff's thing. Tshabalala.
BLZ: Which one?
NR: *Pseudo Quasi Laaities*, the whole five-day epic which was so brilliant.
BLZ: As he does, yes...
NR: With food and I'm surprised he didn't have cows and stuff. I'm sure he could have, that part I leave out.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
NR: Um, it was here and it was the first time I'd seen it. I can't remember, but the first time made, it stood out to was in his play, and he pia- … He had Be, [Be]
BLZ: [Ben.
NR: Bernett on piano and I was like this is amazing! Um; these guys are on the stage. And the piano, these people are acting, they are talking to each other. This is phenomenal, me too; I need to do this as well. [00:12:18] And then actually asked Bernett to come on board and agree? with his piano; um, that we found for him. But then uh, it worked, it didn't work so well with him. Um, we just, I mean we'd been talking, he'd be playing, can't hear and then we asked him er, okay. And nothing has happened you know what I mean. So, just like, I don't know, there was a block. There was something that [was block]
BLZ: [Something didn't work, yeah
NR: Something wasn't working so we cut out the piano. I think our first in two performances, what? Did we even perform with the piano?
BLZ: I never watched it, with piano [yeah]
NR: [Yeah, even in rehearsals, we, we, we are still, yeah, we, we fired him. Um, and the we asked Matthew on board ****Privileged Content****
BLZ: [00:14:07] But he is vital in our lives, those of us who know him.
NR: He's, he's, he's, hes I don't know; to me he's introduced me to whole thing that I could, I wasn't thinking, I always struggle to find.
BLZ: Yeah, I had a talk with him and I said to him, you know what, you actually have to take some responsibility because I wouldn't have gone into this line of work if you hadn't shown that this is what I can do.
NR: Exactly, exactly.
BLZ: I hold you entirely responsible, I would have been an actuary, it is your fault. However many, when did I meet Warren, 2001, 2000, 2001, somewhere there.
NR: Gee.
BLZ: So thats fifteen years now and I'm like yho man, it's your fault so can you please just like take some responsibility and stop acting like you don't know me.
NR: I think what he's good fire starter.
BLZ: *Ne.*
NR: And then he just shu!
BLZ: And when the fire is dying out now and it's time for him to come like fill the fire, he's gone.
NR: Gone!
((Laughter))
NR: Nowhere and he is so surprised when you want him back [or]
BLZ: [When you like where have, where are you?
NR: Dude you have led me this down the path that I would never been [and then]
BLZ: [And then you left me]
NR: [You left] [00:24:06]
****Priveleged Content****
BLZ: [00:18:12] Um, okay yes, you were saying Matthew.
NR: Yes. [00:18:11] Matthew came on board and I suppose in any sort of you know, where, for us inviting, bringing on music it was always going to be to assist the story.
BLZ: Okay.
NR: Um, thats, that what. And I think maybe what the problem was with, with Bernett. It's there was no um, he didn't understand his purpose. you know, on some level maybe he as used to being in the forefront.
BLZ: Okay.
NR: And him and the music being the dri- you knoe what I mean, so he couldn't understand when we like no, no dog [00:18:49] we don't really wanna hear you but we wanna hear you, you

know what I mean type of thing which required someone and actually Matthew was the perfect personality [because]
BLZ: [Yeah because he is very much a chilled guy.
NR: And he has no ego.
BLZ: Yeah.
NR: he has no ego in terms of his art, 'cause, which is a little bit of his downfall in some aspects but um, he is able to do that, he knows what he, take the background.
BLZ: Mhmm.
NR: So much so that ((chuckles)) it was … He's a very weird guy. Like he'd just disappear.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
NR: in a rehearsal you like, "Matt, where's, Matt where's, Matt"; then he will come back.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
NR: ((Whistles))
BLZ: ((Laughs))
NR: Matt, where were you? "No bru, I just went to go get some coffee. But we in the middle of a tech.
((Laughter))
NR: You don't just, you don't leave dude like you … "No, no, I thought you guys weren't using me"... Ah no, no Matt.
((Laugther))
NR: Okay fine, you don't just, you don't leave bud, you tell us.
BLZ: But I'll tell you this, out the musicians that I have interviewed for this whole process of mine; the, like theatrical protocol is *very* foreign to them and I took for granted all of [these things]
NR: Yeah, yeah.
BLZ: Like I understand what call [time is]
NR: [Yes...
BLZ: I understand the necessity of like plotting [lights and]
NR: [Yeah]
BLZ: This that and the other and for musicians.
NR: I act, mhmm.
BLZ: Musicians will never start a concert late just musicians?? Musicians will never start off ?? late but they are doing it for now, you know. The idea of coming in, wardrobe, like uh [warm up].
NR: [Warming up.
BLZ: Nananana, no.
NR: Use me when.
BLZ: So I will come in at quarter to seven for a seven pm show.
NR: [Completely. And that a lot of, I think, the journey for him, has been that because it had been, and it went from a point where we'd only call him like you know, when we needed him.
BLZ: Mhmm.
NR: But then because now the show was drawing you know.
BLZ: Mhmm.
NR: And I suppose all of these frustrations also come from, we'd have meetings we'd have rehearsals where we don't use him but we needed him there to work with us.
BLZ: A part of the entire.
NR: Those roles you [know what I mean]
BLZ: [Yeah.
NR: That he needed to see. I don't know, I suppose musicians don't need that, do they, they can meet today and perform tomorrow *ne*, like.
BLZ: Yes, it's a very solitary process, like musicians are very insular.
NR: Mm.
BLZ: So you can come together and collaborate but it's like, everybody is their own pillar you know.
NR: Yeah, yes.
BLZ: And you can just like bring the pieces together but then they dismantle into their individual paths again. None of this happens.
NR: Really.
BLZ: No, it's none of this like interlocking.
NR: Mhmm.
BLZ: [I feed off you]
NR: [Growing organically]

BLZ: [You fed off me. None of that.
NR: That’s amazing.
BLZ: You either get your music or your chart or whatever, or you get a briefing of like this is, we are jamming this, that, and the other, sharp! And then if need be then you will go practice on your own.
NR: Right!
BLZ: Your part, like.
NR: Right.
BLZ: You'll, you.
NR: Yes.
BLZ: You understand the context.
NR: Yes.
BLZ: You know like you've worked together.
NR: Yes.
BLZ: You understand.
NR: [Yes]
BLZ: [And then you bring those individual parts that you have worked so friggin [hard on]
NR: [Yeah]
BLZ: [Together and it’s an enjoyable experience you know, for the most part. It’s an enjoyable experience to come together and to bind your individual effort.
NR: Mhmm
BLZ: And the you know after that you disband.
NR: Sure
BLZ: And go back to your individual worlds
NR: There’s not gonna be like some great bond [created]
BLZ: [Not necessarily. [00:22:42]
NR: I mean thats where yah, and the thing that I doing I heard the guy go, “I brought my music”. And I was like don't you see the other people’s as well like, like you can sit there, with your, only [your]
BLZ: [Yeah]
NR: [Music. I mean I suppose you now like composers, you tell you to come in.
BLZ: Yeah.
NR: And you playing.
BLZ: And I mean there are certain coding like you have bars and numbers.
NR: Yes.
BLZ: So you all know that bar; bar fifteen yours, we not doing the same thing at bar fifteen but that’s where we all gonna start.
NR: I don't need to know the other people's.
BLZ: Not necessarily.
NR: That’s like, and, I mean during work we, suppose musicians, we've been there, we've been meeting for like its two of us for four, five, six weeks with us and the director. And the musicians came in the last week, you know, the last two days or two days before the show and um, I suppose that was an experience for all of us and it was actually very stressful because you know, they came with their own thing and whereas we, because the director was directing all shows, theatre director, you could see he is coming from a place of you guys need to feel them, and thats a whole like, “Feel? Why don't we just play?”
BLZ: Yeah, yeah.
NR: And then they act type of thing and it’s like no, the, the two kind of need to, you need to know where they are and at the end of the process we hadn't even.
BLZ: Oh yes, yes.
NR: On display and he was like, it helps me, you know what I mean because he now because he now that he knew that the devil was coming he could prepare for it.
BLZ: Mhmm, mhmm.
NR: And sort of jump on that moment you know type of thing or so this is a very strange concept for the whole thing of.
BLZ: It was very peculiar, and that thing of, and also the language part of it is difficult. Certain words like, like “feel” and [this]
NR: [Yes]

BLZ: [But you are like what is my cue? What, what beat of the bar do you want me to fill in on. What does that person say for me to come on. How do they move their leg, like you want something [concrete]
NR: [Concrete.
BLZ: You know, because in as much as it's a very emotive thing to play music, to make music, do you know how to explain it.
NR: Its very technical isn't it?
BLZ: A lot of it is technical but then … Oh wow, ahh!; it's not highly inter-dependent. So I do rely on you to give me certain things and I will give them, give back.
NR: yeah, yeah, yeah.
BLZ: I'm not solely dependent on you to do that and the energy does, you know, you do feel that energy and it does grow and you learn to anticipate things and feel them but then you don't speak of feeling them so I suppose, um, if you were to liken it to maybe people, like the musician is that, is that person who feels, like they are capable of [feeling]
NR: [Yeah]
BLZ: [But nor necessarily articulating it.
NR: Yes, yes, yes, yes.
BLZ: Whereas theatre practitioners are all about like you know, and then, you know...
NR: Expressing it
BLZ: You know.
NR: Detail.
BLZ: Expressing like you know.
NR: Yeah.
BLZ: So you know, like, and then, and then,
NR: Breakthrough.
BLZ: Come here me, touch me.
NR: Yeah.
BLZ: Hold me you know.
NR: [At the point of]
BLZ: [You know]
NR: [When do you come in.
BLZ: Exactly.
NR: You understand that.
BLZ: You know.
NR: Yeah.
BLZ: The one has to express everything.
NR: Yes, yes, yes.
BLZ: And, you need yah, so it's just two sides of the same coin maybe.
NR: So it, can you feel in music, in the music, like in, in playing, if someone goes longer than they should, it kills. [00: 26:28]
BLZ: When, uh, wait, in terms of the playing together.
NR: Yeah, the playing together and maybe someone just like goes in a tangent because they pulling it do you understand.
BLZ: I'm trying to figure out the best way to answer your question
NR: And also yah I mean, do you understand, or else.
BLZ: Gently with, with classical musicians they will crap you out. They will be like screw you, um, you held that note far too long, you threw us off, or they will carry on without you and it's your business to catch up and find them but then with other musicians, like experimental musicians like jazz, you'll go with the feeling, you'll go with flow, you'll go with that.
NR: Okay.
BLZ: Like it's going somewhere so you gonna go with it.
NR: Okay.
BLZ: Um, but then again it's on you to bring your individual thing its its not; you'll follow... But then at some point it becomes about you.
NR: But it, but it, at the same time it is very like, we can't just come in everywhere and we, it has [to be]
BLZ: [Oh yeah, no there's certain conventions.
NR: There has to be a bar, there has to be a note.
BLZ: You know, I think you have to circle back at some back at some point.

NR: Yes.
BLZ: Unless you really going like back-wild like we are doing some experimental shit here, like we are gonna let it go.
NR: where it doesn't matter
BLZ: Yeah.
NR: Bars, notes.
BLZ: No. no.
NR: [Whatever]
BLZ: [But there's certain conventions that keep it together.
NR: Yes, yes.
BLZ: Somebody may go in certain, in different direction, but at some point they have to circle back.
NR: But where someone like forgets their lines, I can pick it up where.
BLZ: Exactly.
NR: It doesn't matter, you know, it's a feeling. If I feel it's a timing factor.
BLZ: Yeah, yeah.
NR: There is no beat. There is no the right way to specifically four beats then its gonna make sense that type of thing.
BLZ: Yeah, so yeah exactly. If somebody makes a decision they gonna change something, you have to figure out what it is they've change it to so that you can be with them there.
NR: Mm, mm, mm.
BLZ: So, its like okay, I'm painting a picture its red and green and now it changed to pink, then everybody else has to find their shade of pink.
NR: Yes.
BLZ: The rest don't remain in green because then it creates a bit of chaos I suppose.
NR: Okay. Yeah, I mean there, both, both experiences have always been interesting. I get this, and how hard it to have actually bring the two together. [00:28:45]
BLZ: Mm.
NR: Um, like I said, yah, because we want Matt there or like, we've had to, like we want Matt there all the time and he doesn't want to be there all the time.
BLZ: No, he won't get it. ((Laughs))
NR: Because in his mind he's doing nothing because he's learnt his music. He's composed the music. Like, yeah. ((Laughs))
NR: But we want him there to feel the progression of whatever thing that we are feeling.
BLZ: Mhmm.
NR: To talk with him you know what I mean like in the um; if we gonna change, so I suppose for him may be he thinks if there is a change he will adjust there and there.
BLZ: Yeah, yeah.
NR: like he didn't need to see it before or to know it gonna.
BLZ: Yeah, the active witnessing [and experiencing]
NR: [Yeah, yeah, yeah. 'Cause it looked like a lot of also, these guys, they'll come off when, "ah I got that part wrong part wrong" type of thing and in fact to me it sounds like quite a big part they got it wrong but I didn't like, I didn't so.
BLZ: Yeah, you were.
NR: Note it, but until I find come off like I will say I forgot the music, the piece of music kind of thing. Or did you remember, or did you see me not coming in when I was going to come in type of thing and then I think I was being, that's to dialogue, if I had to not come in on a piece of dialogue like that's huge!
BLZ: Yeah.
NR: You know what I mean like people would be, director would be coming from the freaking lighting box.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
NR: Type of thing but for him things would be like, yeah, yeah, I will get it tomorrow
BLZ: [Yeah, yeah]
NR: [Type of thing. I suppose that's another interesting aspect. I don't think it's easier but you can hide music.
BLZ: And a big part of that is that there are desensitised sound. [00:30:39]
NR: Really.
BLZ: Think about it there is so much going on in there unless it is like a short sharp noise or like uh, something really in your space like [when]
NR: [Mm]

BLZ: [That thing was going off whatever.
NR: [Yes, yes, yes]
BLZ: [But like there is always sound especially now we are living in a time that is just like there's sound all the damn time.
NR: Time.
BLZ: So we are desensitised to sound, and um, and when you take away the visual element of sound.
NR: Yes, yes.
BLZ: People stop paying attention eventually. So yeah, if you were to miss a chunk of dialogue, it would be like, shit!
NR: ((Laughs))
BLZ: Dialogue and all sorts of other things like you know gesticulations and things that we as humans anchor ourselves to in life.
NR: Yes, yes.
BLZ: Take away a couple of bars of music and whatever, if there is something visual happening, that part of your brain, is like I hear there is something or that's helping me anticipate something, or helping me find those moments but then beyond that you like.
NR: You won't miss a couple of bars of music.
BLZ: It's tragic for us but you know, us musicians.
NR: Why? ((Chuckles))
BLZ: 'Cause you wanna be felt and heard and noticed.
NR: ((Laughs))
BLZ: You want people to be like, something didn't go right like people to acknowledge your existence.
NR: I would gladly take people not noticing my cock-ups on stage it, it takes away a lot of pressure, I know a lot of pressure.
BLZ: But not noticing your cock-ups is one way of looking at it, but sometimes they don't appreciate your glory and everything and that every and that you are brainy as well.
NR: Yes, yes, yes; or how hard it actually is to to maintain that standard throughout.
BLZ: And actually what you are bringing to this, the skill, the time, the effort.
NR: Yeah.
BLZ: So.
NR: Even artists, yeah, I mean I've, I don't know what we doing.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
NR: Honestly, I'm like, because it's like. Tha- that's what it is for me you know, like you come on to this plane, um, whaa, I men some of the people that have watched like they say the most, try and say like the phenomenal like you know, what I mean.
BLZ: Yeah, yeah, yeah.
NR: Like a woman was like I, I, I, I'd left my child back home with my parent what, what after watching the play she was like I need to be living with my child she could relate to Atandwa's story of them you know, of them leaving him behind.
BLZ: Mm, mm.
NR: you know what I mean. And how that affected him and you think, yes I was able to that? That's freaking cool, thank you, you know. It's like really hard to be running stuff but then, like, you go to like people, sponsor, give us money you know, how, um, can we go on a show to talk about this thing.
BLZ: Like that cathartic release that you bring like.
NR: We can't quantify it,
BLZ: No you can't.
NR: It's hard to quantify it. It's like for me I mean you know, thats I don't know; all I do, you, you invite people. You invite like, you head, you invite some police station someone commander, someone come to watch. So we think yay, work to us or the police to help them clear! What is it that you supposed to do? you know, you give four / five-star review, you have people like, who are worth something. I mean this play got us into many circles in terms … Of it got us speaking to, you know what I mean, like; well [established]
BLZ: [Yes, yes]
NR: [Really legendary people started taking note of who we were because of what we were doing, but at the same time, we can't get an interview on Metro. Like you know what I mean? Like where's the … What the hell is this art thing about?
BLZ: Yeah.

NR: How can I be sitting on something really magical and that life changing but no one wants to push it or do anything about it.
BLZ: Or share it nogal.
NR: Or share it. Or support it. You know what I mean? You know, no one wants to support this thing. No one wants, no one wants … Can see that you've just gone through this amazing experience and you in a position where you could … And you don't wanna do anything?
BLZ: I suppose it's a sign of the times, it's a sign of the world we living in. I don't like to think about it because it really depresses me because you are saying basically okay so we're the hired help.We guide you morally and ethically on your way um, give you those real, the real life ingredients, the feeling, the social commentary and all that but you are selfish with that basically it's for you, it's all about you.
NR: Yes, yes.
BLZ: Once you are done with it and [then]
NR: [Yes, yes]
BLZ: [That' a reflection of what it is in life, everybody selfish all [about]
NR: [Yes, yes]
BLZ: [What, like I'm gonna get there. It's all mine.
NR: What's it gonna do for me?
BLZ: What's it, exactly, what's it doing for me?
NR: And if it doesn't do anything for me in the immediate sense or [in a]
BLZ: [Then you frown upon, hen if it does do something for you, instead of sharing the love.
NR: Yeah.
BLZ: You sit on it, yho. Yah, it doesn't make sense. If at all its a reflection of the times we are living in, society in generally, the I'm very sad.
NR: I mean, the only, like for me at the, at this point I mean, it was like I told you, *Hayani*, we hadn't gotten to where we wanna get to in terms of the ways we though we were creating this play you know, because we thought it was revolutionary and it was the first time. I know if it was the first time, [00:37:08] but it felt like we found a way to tell personal stories in a way that, I don't know; somehow there was something that we found.
BLZ: Yeah.
NR: The mode of storytelling, how we told it and what we told and people were responding in a really magical way.
BLZ: Mhmm.
NR: And you know, from there we just thought we gonna be sold out houses yho, like national tour, people can't get enough of it.
BLZ: Yeah.
NR: And its been anything but that, you know, we were struggling at The Market for audiences. We've been struggling, we struggling for audiences.
BLZ: Mm.
NR: Um, we performed to like, we performed to six homeless guys at one time, which a, very ironic, you know, the play *Hayani* and then there's six homeless guys. ((Laughs))
BLZ: I'm not laughing.
NR: ((Laughs))
BLZ: I'm not gonna laugh. It's not like I'm enjoying what you are saying.
((Laughter))
BLZ: Yeah, I mean
NR: *Hayani* is quite, it stands out.
BLZ: Yeah, for real.
NR: Which is like. Chalk it up to experience.
BLZ: Yeah.
NR: This is how it goes, we've performed to three people. I mean I suppose all across the world, we've heard about stories of guys who would, they've always been talented but it took.
BLZ: And then there is a thing of like a drug addict DJ, it will be sold out. ****Privileged Content****
BLZ: ((Laughs))
NR: These guys arrived yesterday.
BLZ: Who are you?
NR: I've done auditions with guys that are presenting, they getting the gigs; people that have won competitions and I'm like you guys you know. I don't wanna be a hater, I don't wanna shine.
BLZ: Yeah.

NR: I don't wanna take away someone's shine ‘cause I believe I don't know whatever. They obviously doing something right that I"m not doing, you know what I mean? But at the same time I'm like, where's the space for me? Where 's the space for my kind of brilliance to shine.
BLZ: I think that the thing, it’s the brilliance, the caring, the investment of it. It’s not about, in as much as it yes, it is very much about making the money, but not about making the quick buck.
NR: Dude, if this was about the money.
BLZ: [You know]
NR: [I would have]
BLZ: [What I mean, yeah, exactly, it’s about the, it’s about you being a creative person.
NR: A creative, like where you.
BLZ: And it’s a project, it’s not a, it’s not a choice actually.
NR: No, no, no.
BLZ: You think if I had a choice I would be doing this? No sensible person would do this?
NR: No, why?
BLZ: *Ne.*
BLZ: Once the bug bites, it’s late for you.
NR: You gonna take everything, you gonna give everything, you going to convince everybody in your life that this is the thing that you wanna do, they gonna support you on this journey, they gonna; you know what I mean? You gonna have to be like; it’s bad for everybody. It’s really, laughs, it’s bad for everybody involved.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
****Privileged Content****
BLZ: I don't believe I have any other questions though. Um.
NR: Yeah, eish, it’s, it’s, it’s. Yeah, I think, I think for; that’s why I'm in a, so that I'm, I'm in a bit of ehh, I don't know what to call it. Up until three years things were going fine. Things were making sense, then they just stopped making sense for me. I mean there's been growth in other areas. I, you know, ‘cause I married, two kids; so I got that to thank God and to feel good about.
BLZ: But as an artist, if there is not growth in your career, you don't feel like there's growth anywhere else.
NR: no, it’s not that, it’s being relevant, you know what I mean?
BLZ: Mhmm.
NR: I think as an artist, that’s another, that’s another, one of our one of our, um; I wanna say um, something like a crutch.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
NR: You know what I mean?
BLZ: Yeah.
NR: Thats something that you, that you; you want to show show, you want to know like people are noticing me?
BLZ: Yeah.s
NR: People notice what I have to contribute and that I can contribute, you know
****Privileged Content**** [00:50:51]

END OF AUDIO

INTERVIEW 6 – WARREN NEBE
DATE: 6 JULY 2015
GRAHAMSTOWN
DURATION: [00:41:07]

BLZ: Bongile Lecoge-Zulu
WN: Warren Nebe

BLZ: So here are the questions I'd like to ask you. I don't have questions, questions, things may come up or not, but you know, it's your ((sighs)) I wanna know about Hayani, that's what I wanna know from you when you are done with your celluphonic device. Silence. ((sings)). [00:00:46]. Okay, so, you didn't know what my thingy is right, my MA?
WN: Mm.
BLZ: It's all about like.
WN: ( ), [00:01:15] like framework.
BLZ: Collaboration.
WN: Yes, yes.
BLZ: And stuff, you know, so the time period is 2010 to 2014, location Market Theatre and then Dramatic Theatre pieces which have a live music element and my, my interest is the very nature of collaboration between like art, like actors, musicians, director that whole. And then I mean it's like very hard to quantify what makes it work, what doesn't and what the theme is, and I like, I've been referring to it as the thing or the magic; there's no real, but I'm gonna try to the best of my ability to describe and possibly even, quantify is the wrong word. But just to get like, the bottom of what it is that makes it work, make it doesn't work, but the very nature of it. So I just wanna know what your experience of directing Hayani and working with a musician because you do that a lot. You like the, the live music vibes or working with ( ) [00:02:16] like, you know, and some people are better at integrating than others as I come to learn.
WN: You know I was thinking about the performance that we saw last night, Miracles of Rwanda? the Wonder. [00:02:28]
BLZ: Mm.
WN: And how much I would love to be able to work with her and bring a violinist.
BLZ: Mm.
WN: Because [00:02:40] I feel like, it's not about filling out silence, for me, it's about accentuating and talking to, accentuating and enhancing emotional journey, ah, and reinforcing things like dramatic tension, dramatic space, dramatic atmosphere, mood, um, and place and time, the specifics sometimes can also lead to that, Um Yeah, I think. [00:03:24]. What do you wanna know from me.
BLZ: Sorry I'm thinking now about last night's.
WN: Mhmm.
BLZ: You always want music, why do you want music in your, in your work like I'm obviously talking about your work specifically and to be more precise, Hayani. Yeah, on a general level, you work a lot with music and musicians.
WN: I say it was because [00:04:04] I don't believe that words can hold everything that, that the, um; I suppose I think we have a history of theatre that it is, in the old traditional um, form, text driven.
BLZ: Mhmm.
WN: Meaning, and I mean text in the old conceptualisation. It was all about the spoken word, the written word, um, and that ultimately is the way words were constructed and, and placed and then enhanced through the spoken word. That would essentially hold the drama or the story so to speak. I think that eh, not just because we live in the 21st century and there are so many different forms of communication now, that are so prevalent; but I think something like music, is um, is able to enhance a completely other world, um, and construct story in ways that are um, um, evocative, atmospheric, challenging, that sometimes can carry tone and I suppose we also what, what really makes [00:05:44] the thing that, that really eh, engages me and why use music it's because you teach, you capture an emotional subtext that, that can *just,* not only enhance the story, to enhance the emotional subtext of the piece. So not to make it literal, but actually precisely the opposite, to deepen it. To deepen the experience, to reach the work in a present because it is a sensory experience of music; that is, that really draws one into the present and I'm interested in performance that is present orientated. What do I mean

by that? I mean that the performance of conscious awake and, and embodying every present moment as opposed to an actor who represents something that has been rehearsed; that has been carefully planned. For me, yes there are technical aspects, yes there is structure, yes there is the rehearsed form, but ultimately the performer needs to step into a world, and create a world and invite people into that world that is present orientated. That is the power of story, and I use story in the broader sense.

BLZ: [Yes]

WN: [Mhmm. And so for me the musician is a performer too and, adds, and enters the space as performer, collaborative performer who is, you know, about creating the very present world, um, and for me what I discovered working with the performance that I love doing, and I do it, I don't it explicitly for, for the very reason that I think actors sometimes become too self-conscious, actors like controlling, um. [00:08:22]

BLZ: ((Clears throat))

WN: A great deal, um, and what I'm interested in doing is working with musicians who can listen, who, um, and listen with the sense of understanding rhythm, tone, dramatic effects and are able to, to, understand the emotional subtext, and translate them to form and shape; er, you know, and, and understand what it means, how, how performance you know, sometimes sound can contradict. Some, it doesn't, it not always been congruent; sometimes often working against creating massive contrast, tensions.

BLZ: Mhmm.

WN: Actually is what enhances dramatic and that's what I listen to and I work with as a director so what may seem something very seamless and all just came together kinda stuff. I am consciously going what, what I can do so, so for instance if I can use the example, I'm not going to use Hayani example. Morwa.

BLZ: Mm.

WN: For instance at the end, we beginning to get where I want to go but, um, but when Tefo, Morwa in that epilogue where he redresses and it's like it's hard, it's difficult, but it's slow and all over. So Voli used play it.

BLZ: Mm.

WN: Play it back, and I didn't like, me it was not speaking to the emotional sub-text and what we've gone into now is the wailing and the grieving. The other day he went into a space that just was just the open the heavens, um, you know, so there's kind of *powerful*; almost operatic [00:10:34] kind of wailing that's taking place while this man just slowly kind of [00:10:40] ( ) putting his clothes on, so it captures.

BLZ: Mm, mm, mm.

WN: The gut, um, anyway [00:10:48] er, er, um, I suppose the landscape.

BLZ: Mhmm.

WN: And there's a musical metaphor there that he sits in the mu, in the sound as opposed to the sound um, sitting inside the actor. Where actually it's both, it's kind of a mirror of internal grief. But for me it's also by holding and its inviting the audience in as well. For me that's something else that interested in, how can you use music in such a way that it invites the audience in. It's just a little bit more, so that we not sitting out, that the audience not, I'm not interested in the audience sitting there fairly objectively. [00:11:32]

BLZ: Mhmm.

WN: You are coming to experience, you coming to um, undergo a journey that is um, mx, mhm, multi-modem, multi-sensorial.

BLZ: Okay.

WN: And the more that can be stimulated the more interested I am in the experience. [00:11:58]

BLZ: Mhmm, okay.

WN: So the text is not just the spoken language. The text is music, the text is um, Yeah, everything about the music you know, and the senses, and the, and the, and the. And so for me what really interesting is actors because when it's their own work, they think that it's *my work* because it's their own words.

BLZ: Mhmm.

WN: Those words are actually the, you know. So whoever, okay I'm going to use Morwa is example but is speaks to Hayani as well. Morwa, the ritual movement is the text. Er, the space forms power [00:12:57] text and that ritual movement, the sound that goes with that ins.., like core part of the text. The words are just like a small piece that help the audience locate themselves. And for me in Hayani [sic] the same kind of experience where the actors religiously felt that the text was the, was their words.

BLZ: Mhmm.
WN: Um, and I, and I've, and I suppose still struggle with that to some extent. ****Privileged Content****
BLZ: ((Laughs))
WN: And absolutely not.
BLZ: Mhmm.
WN: And I, I'm very sensitive them, I work with them and I reinforce Nat's place and I'll do it in a way that doesn't cause conflict. I've learnt that their work. What happened now is that the actors now can't live without the music. The music has become such an instrumental part of their text and, and um, sets the tone, helps with the rhythm, contributes, guides, drives sometimes, sometime mirrors, sometimes shadows. So there's different, also different ways; it's not always like I'm just shadowing. [00:14:38]
BLZ: Mhmm.
WN: You know. Music is just, yeah, I'm playing and I shadow you as you go along. Sometimes yes, sometimes it's a play back, I mirror, sometimes its I drive. And so the performer in music; performers really got have a sense of that, um. What I love about both, particularly Nat. Nat is sophisticated in his ability.
BLZ: Mm.
WN: I don't know if he [00:15:06] ( ) around that and I think Voli is extremely talented with that and he is a [00:15:18] when you talk through, go and kind of, and create the world so that enter it.
BLZ: Mm.
WN: Nat to some extent, but, but it's the power of listening. It's the power of listening at all kinds of levels. It's not just listening to the word. Its listening to the body, listening to the rhythm, listening to however, the reading of space, and bodies in space.
BLZ: Mhmm.
WN: And how that ( ) [00:15:42] and, and, and, and understanding the moments that build crescendo, the moments? [00:15:52] that come in, coming under or above; all of that stuff. It's for me critical. That's why in MAP? (in a mat) [00:16:12], I worked together, first on *Crocodile Tears*.
BLZ: Mm.
WN: Even before that.
BLZ: Really.
WN: Yeah, not in a production but in a, a, I had this class, sorry; I had this class, ((silence)) project. I had a class project, they used to run this course called Transformations. ( ). [00:16:47]
BLZ: ((Laughs)).
WN: Is making everyone do crazy things. I'm crying, sweating, whatever; but in my first year, in doing that course, I got Matt to come in. I just said, all I want you to do is watch, and listen and respond. Eh, and, and my experience of him in that space was, was someone was intuitively; he's that, he's able to ss-, mm, I think it's an extraordinary skill and talent. And that he's ability to be um, invisible.
BLZ: Okay.
WN: And I mean musically invisible. His ego, He does not impose his own ego on their work, that he allows the work to guide them, so it's surrendering to the work. So he becomes part of the bigger text. Um, and I think that an *extraordinary* ability as opposed you know, to go away [00:18:00]. The Hollywood film kind of, which can work ( ). [00:18:06].
BLZ: Mm.
WN: Can be amazing. And where film works exceptionally well is obviously is an intense engagement.
BLZ: Yes.
WN: And there's a, you know... But for me it a, like a form it's more than music do although music has also broken boundaries in that, I'll just keep silent.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
WN: It's about the life performance. It's about presence. It's about gleam ( ), [00:18:36], it's about connecting sound ( ) [00:18:40] and we know that the research is being with sound and its impact on an audience just as much as movement. Big neuro-science.
BLZ: Mhmm.
WN: Even people who observe people dancing and that, that there is a shift in terms of can people balance an all that. There is a neurological shift. Do we wanna go and sit?
BLZ: Um, I don't know, we can.

WN: Or we can, we can Yeah.
BLZ: Although I'm cool here.
WN: Thank you, look at that. You are just, ((talks to a waiter)).
BLZ: Mhmm, what is the actor musician dynamic? Do they actually engage with one another or it's always, in your, in your experience or is it always through you?
WN: The way that I have worked, but I wanna change, I wanna do, there are some new things I wanna do. Um, is it been through me, it's been through bringing the different parts together, almost like orchestrating them.
BLZ: Mm.
WN: Almost like I play the conductor.
BLZ: Yeah, Yeah.
WN: And very consciously so that I, because, because I feel like actors who were not you know, Nat and Atandwa were not trained to work with life music.
BLZ: Mm.
WN: Musicians. Um, uh, and I think, I believe at least they have need to be trained. I think some are more able and awake and just intuitively. [00:20:51]
BLZ: Mhmm.
WN: But I think there's a kind, training has a level of awareness consciousness making that is not just intellectual but also, and cognitive, but also physical, postural, body, music relationship, sound, the power of sound.
((Someone speaks about a one-man show, about the last man left on earth)). [00:21:47]
BLZ: Um, what was the actual process with Hayani in terms of.
WN: Mm.
BLZ: I can't actually remember much what he said.
WN: ((laughs)).
BLZ: [Yeah I still have to sit and transcribe]. I've spoken to Nat I've spoken to Nathaniel and Matthew twice actually. Um, um, also got hold of some footage which was exciting, I got the Nunnery one; the very first one.
WN: [Mhmm]
BLZ: [Um, what was the process as like from your perspective.
WN: Goes back to what I previously said.
BLZ: Mhmm.
WN: I've had orchestrated. So we were very much going actors stay focused on your intention and where we working because also a lot of a lot of the work I was doing with Nat and Atandwa was listen and work each other and be able to shift in out of role so that kind that kind of flexibility then Matthew coming in. And in a way, I think maybe that I did it was introduce them to the idea. Matthew was there as a [support and]
BLZ: [Mhmm] [00:23:35]
WN: [( ) or whatever. And then what happened was as the play grew and it took shape and matured, the audience and I would give feedback but I was careful about that but the audience reflected that. The audience would be going, [the music]
BLZ: [Mhmm]
WN: [The music, and finally the actors started hearing the music, laughs.
BLZ: ((Laughs)) Okay.
WN: And, and like, and I'm not making fun. But really beginning to understand the absolute [00:24:11] pivotal nature of the music in the work and that thing reflected also in the audiences, responds even immediately after you know.
BLZ: Mm.
WN: And that sort of thing and began to that Nat acknowledged, acknowledged more professionally. You know, I think [00:24:38] ( ).
BLZ: Mm, mm.
WN: Where they singled out Nat and no one else, um, I think that.
BLZ: You and your award babies ((laughs)).
WN: No I'm not into awards.
BLZ: Mhmm.
WN: But I do think that sometimes it kind of says something about how people see a thing I think that what it does, it just replaces something back.
BLZ: Mhmm.

WN: Um, but, but for me, ultimately cultivating the respect, deep respect for each and deep respect for listening. And also that the actors, from my feedback, mm, I felt like [00:25:24] magic came in a little, like, there, or you know, that kind of thing or Mat going.
BLZ: ((Giggles))
WN: I don't know. Make a decision, you keep on changing and I'm battling, not battling.
BLZ: Mhmm.
WN: But you wouldn't say Matt wouldn't say that. You know pay that one out.
BLZ: Er.
WN: Mm.
BLZ: 'cause initially you had.
WN: Bennett.
BLZ: Yeah.
WN: Mm. For me, I realised very quickly that mhmm, it was to do with the instrument. Piano was too bold, [too]
BLZ: [Yeah.
WN: Like it didn't speak to.
BLZ: Mhmm.
WN: This story, the very ( ) [00:26:13] story telling that I was looking for.
BLZ: I see.
WN: So I mean I think.
BLZ: Mm, mm.
WN: So for me, watching, watching that show last, it's a violinist; and so a violinist is not afraid to like, distort, control, whatever and be beautiful and emotional whatever. But there's something about, I don't why, but for me; whereas um, you know; it's not, Voli would do beautifully but it's not Voli. [00:26:44]
BLZ: It's not mhmm. But there is as well, like yes, okay, you need a trained, *goeie genade* {good heavens}.
WN: Mm.
BLZ: The actors to be more, but, you know.
WN: Mm, mm.
BLZ: Receptive but with musicians as well. I mean obviously we not, most musicians.
WN: Mm, mhmm.
BLZ: Don't into school and decide okay, this is what I'm going to do, I'm going to be a theatre musicians.
WN: Mm.
BLZ: Especially since South Africa doesn't have a culture of like.
WN: Mm, mm. [00:27:10]
BLZ: Resident musician and theatre companies.
WN: Mm, mm.
BLZ: In theatres. Um, so.
WN: Zilch.
BLZ: I've, like.
WN: But I mean that is curious because we live in Africa and actually, one of the most telling things is when we started Drama for Life and all these scholars came from all the other countries...
BLZ: Mm.
WN: You know. And Particularly the North, more North we went.
BLZ: Mm.
WN: And like why got the drama, and the arts and the music.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
WN: Why then, like; they were wanting to go to music one day and then do this and then add this.
BLZ: Oh really!
WN: And ( ) [00:27:48]. Their sense of integra-, you like.
BLZ: Mm, mm, mm.
WN: That it's very much a Western kind.
BLZ: That like.
WN: Mm, deep.
BLZ: Box and silos.
WN: Divisions.

BLZ: Um, ‘cause I find that or I have found that musicians are also very like, what, what do you mean you want me to.
WN: Mhmm.
BLZ: They are not, they aren't to listen for, they aren't like the auditory, and they are not taught to listen. Like listening with your eyes, and listening with your face and listening with you skin, and listening with.
WN: The sensory.
BLZ: Yeah.
WN: And that what Nat's are good at. He can listen to the tone, like he can ( ) [00:28:32] give very lovely feedback sometimes. He can go Yeah you guys were up there.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
WN: Or the other audience that and that and there was that moment, which for me seems natural, completely natural. I suppose the reason I'm so careful where I place him, bring him in and all that was about going; these guys need to trust first, they need to become educated but rather do it through the process so now, [00:29:02] I mean Nat and Atandwa would *never* like.
BLZ: They wouldn't do it.
WN: They wouldn't do it without, without Matt.
BLZ: Okay! Silence. How does um, in terms of just like general, not general; but South Africa, the history of South African theatre traditions, just having musicians as well.
WN: Mm, who too.
BLZ: I would.
WN: Mhmm.
BLZ: Assume that given just culturally speaking music is a big part of just South African living and life, and lifestyle, which realistically I would assu-, I would have assumed that artistically as well, people would want to integrate music more into everything they have do, but.
WN: ( ). [00:30:05] To a Song and Dance have in the kind of style of Mhlanga, you just saw Mhalanga.
BLZ: Mhmm.
WN: He comes out of that tradition.
BLZ: Mhmm.
WN: Of work. I mean it wasn't heavy handed here but you know that um, sound.
BLZ: Mhmm.
WN: Story telling.
BLZ: Mhmm.
WN: And sing, other pieces in which is really worth seeing by the way.
BLZ: What is it called?
WN: Undermined.
BLZ: Okay.
WN: Um, Cloudy.
BLZ: Directed by.
WN: Beautiful story. There are three of them, and they, their singing is lovely, and I just love the singing. But it comes from a very particular tradition, long standing tradition. But the instrumentilisation, the inclusion of the instrument, maybe drumming yes.
BLZ: Okay.
WN: But I can't reference. You know what’s interesting? The first show I did where I consciously, I mean worked with mus-, no, I've worked with music before.
BLZ: Mhmm.
WN: But in this kind of style, was when I did My Brother's Bones and Nthebolang, NT from Botswana, My Brother's Bones.
BLZ: Oh yes, yes, yes.
WN: Nthebolang.
BLZ: Mm.
WN: Did the music.
BLZ: I remember, who did My Brother's Bones?
WN: Um, we changed.
BLZ: Uh.
WN: The one that we brought to Grahamstown once.
BLZ: Donald did.
WN: Yeah.

BLZ: The very first, yeah okay … You were saying something about something I don't remember. Something about instruments and dance.
WN: About NT.
BLZ: Mm.
WN: We'd use a s'tikana.
BLZ: Mm, setinkana.
WN: And he was good, he got better as we went on.
BLZ: Mm.
WN: What I'm interested in is doing, ( ) [00:34:12] work with about four musicians or whatever and that they actually, in that, and in and out.
BLZ: Mm.
WN: Almost like shadowing and performing as.
BLZ: Mm, mm, mm.
WN: Not I'm gonna perform now and then I perform music.
BLZ: Mm, musicians are very inhibited though.
WN: Mm.
BLZ: Big generalisation, but my observation that it's safe. It safe to sit in a corner and play, like get told, I need you to do this, and this and this and then do it; respond.
WN: Yeah, but that's how musicians are trained or trained particularly here in South Africa. I feel like we are still holding on to old ways of doing things, um, and some of those ways are very important, but there's also room to shift. I mean I'm working on something in Cape Town.
WN: They were, um; they were um, you know, I think five six drummers of the kind that not.
BLZ: Mm.
WN: Drum.
BLZ: They are drum type of marching band type.
WN: Marching drum. And these tall guys, all from Holland, young people. There was one or two women and they were all male, quite big, only about twenty years old, somewhere there. And they did an integrated experiment which got me thinking with um, different groups of people and they were, but no harm in moving and dancers coming in and out.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
WN: Like all kinds of stuff like. I was like Yeah, their presence is just like, so also.
BLZ: ((Giggles)) Boom.
WN: They were the more powerful in some respects than the other you know.
BLZ: Mm.
WN: So am I answering your questions?
BLZ: Yeah like I said there no specific question, these things come up and um, it's a general inquiry at this point and I wanna know what comes up from like.
WN: Mm.
BLZ: I interviewed James at some point and you know how he is. He was just like rattling on and on and in between all those rattles I found.
WN: Nice gems.
BLZ: You know how is like, he is the king of digression. He will go to the end of the earth and back again to explain a feeling.
WN: Oh, that's lekker.
BLZ: So, which is exciting.
WN: Mm.
BLZ: The way he is excited everything he talks about, which is actually quite exciting of itself. Mhmm, but I feel like actors and musicians feel like the other is bizarre.
WN: It's, I don't think.
BLZ: Like so bizarre, like musicians are.
WN: Mm, mm.
BLZ: Just like oh my God actors are so peculiar, whereas actors are the same. They are just like, how come, like with Nat. He was just like, Nat was saying that Matthew just didn't understand that we need you here now in this space to be with us for ritualistic be purposes sometimes and Matt would like grabbing a coffee or something like um, because like a lot of the time musicians don't understand things like focusing and call times and warm up and thing of that nature. [00:38:10]
WN: To be quite frank I think that is though unfair because I feel like.
BLZ: ((Giggles))

WN: Matt learnt that you coughed it out here it's all ready. It took a while, again for me it took a while for Nat and Atandwa to go *oh, this is part of and we don't have to be threatened by,* you know, and then, and then Matt would serve and be there with them as they were warming up and kind of checking in.

BLZ: Mm.
((Silence))

WN: Yeah I mean ultimately you wanna work towards a collective and it's gotta be truly collaborative for it to work otherwise it doesn't matter; it really doesn't matter. It becomes staged and artificial and for all the reasons why I wanna use music it doesn't matter.

BLZ: Mhmm.

WN: So if musicians of key, you know, like, even like so in terms of warm up, and been preparation, for Tefo and Voli, if they are not in key, I tell you, it's just a beat or two up but it's ((clears throat))

BLZ: ((Laughs))

WN: And, Yeah, it drives me coocoo dops and Voli can easily be like, easily distracted, um, so he's the discipline them; he's needing to learn and he's busy mhm, as that sense of not in the collective and this, this, everything matches here. So how he performs with Tefo and you know, not just playing back because play back has got a very a particular nerve. But more that, that, interpreting, and talk, like having a conversation.

BLZ: Mm.

WN: With them. For me that's really what's new, what's most important. There's a constant conversation but it means that they, ((silence)), mm, it is about training. [00:40:23]
((Silence))

BLZ: Alright Nebes, thank you. [00:40:59]

AUDIO ENDS

INTERVIEW 7 – KUTLWANO MASOTE
DATE: 17 DECEMBER 2014
JOHANNESBURG
DURATION: [00:47:51]

BLZ: Bongile Lecoge-Zulu
KM: Kutlwano Masote

BLZ: Okay, I don't necessarily have set questions.
KM: Okay.
BLZ: I would like to find out what your experience was working in [theatre]
KM: [Alright]
BLZ: [With theatre practitioners. Pros, cons … Yeah.
KM: Maybe I will just take you through the process that we followed and that will maybe just prompt you also on questions. So, Agreed was a piece that already existed when I was brought on. Um, Lionel Newton and Sylvaine Strike had done it as a one hander with Lionel sort of playing out these three pieces. The, the one for me, which is still the most successful, is The Pied Piper of Hamlin. And then they did a piece called The Hand-Over, which is the freaky middle piece by Nick Warren. And they did something else. I don't know what. A third piece. But when we did it this year Lionel wanted to do his own piece called Jasmine's Jewel which is, which he did so well because he got into the mind and the whole, you know the whole character of a – very stereotypical obviously – of this elderly Cape coloured gentleman who runs this, this establishment; this, this restaurant. So when, when, when I was brought in by James Ngcobo he said he will give us a slot at the Market in January. We started beginning of December. [00:02:02] We had two weeks. I remember when Mandela died it was probably the third or fourth day of rehearsals that we had. It was pretty much, you know we thought we'd do this in two weeks. Workshop it. Go away come back beginning of Jan and I think we opened on the thirteenth of Jan. So it was, it was really put together in a short space of time, which when you do something like this is really amazing I mean even for what we do as musicians. No script, not a single note scored. Lionel read these three pieces to me and he said, "okay, what do you hear?". ((Chuckles)) And I said to him I hear you reciting it beautifully. So we just needed to get together with Sylvaine's input as well. Wonderful director. Um, yeah I always … You know sometimes you come into a show with preconceived ideas, I always have the sound of Johan Sebastian Bach – the cello suites – because that would have been something that I was at home doing. So that kind of informed a lot of what we wanted to do. Each time I played they were like you know, "wow, it's so beautiful", because it is, it's just awesome, and you know you never really get to hear a cello played on its own like that very often. So that was … That influenced a lot of what we wanted to do with the music and how we wanted to treat it. And the fact that there wasn't going to be a rhythm instrument as such, so everything that was going to be percussive et cetera, I would have to think about how to come up with that and how to, to execute that. So the process was quite … It wasn't laboured as such … But it, it needed a lot of patience from everybody involved. And [00:03:50] I would also record on my cell phone, or on my iPhone what we wanted to do, go home, write it out. So in the end I came up … And I've got it on my computer. I have got a score. [00:04:03] I composed some of the, some of the music or the fragments of music and others I borrowed from existing pieces. Uh, stuff that people would recognize. Something that would, for example uh … You know there'd be reference to the queen of England and I'd play "God Save the Queen". Something literal like that. Those literal prompts. There was the Rule Britannia and pieces like that. But where I sort of started getting stumped was after the initial two weeks in December last year, uh, we got together in January. Uh, we had some rehearsals in the Market; Lionel started working the script, which is quite interesting because with us classical musicians; once we have decided this is what we are going to play, this is when we are going to play it that's it. [00:05:00] You know it's like I memorise what I need to memorise and once I've got that … You know, I know what my, my sort of my vocal prompts are from Lionel and I play. But uh then movement comes into play. You know. Um … So the choreography takes a couple of days, just doing stuff over and over and over again. And the last thing that we did in the last two days, [00:05:26] they said "oh no we are focusing lights today", and I had no idea what they were talking about! And it is literally that. You know, they are doing the light mapping. And of course everything is electronic these days.

BLZ: Yeah.
KM: Everything is done from a central PC or mother board, whatever app, and it's programmed so that even the lighting engineer doesn't need to be there.
BLZ: Mm.
KM: You know. Or the lighting designer rather doesn't need to be there. The lighting engineer has a cue sheet and knows that okay at this point, he presses this button. You know they're numbered, and sequential … Okay number forty-two is this. There is this white wash or whatever. For me it was, you know I was like really impressed see how, A) how quickly that would be done because it's a lot of detail.
BLZ: Mhmm.
KM Um … We also had a clock that was projected onto the floor. And just how focuses and all of that. And when we went to do that show in Grahamstown again … Sort of six months later … Uh reminding yourself of all of this … But because there was a template, a lighting template. Lionel also remembered his lines. I mean we were rehearsed obviously, but it was less intensive because [00:06:41] everything was done to such detail and you know you understood you know the template was there and you knew that this is what needs to happen. So I found that really fascinating. Working with theatre people, how they work. I mean they definitely work much harder than, than musicians. [00:07:00]
BLZ: ((Laughs))
KM: No simply because of … You know music is a funny thing. You know I often … Uh especially when I work with my son about how do you memorise. Do you memorise aurally, is it muscle memory? Uh, is it a photographic memory? Do you pull up things and you see the page? Or is it a combination of all of those? And which ones are more reliable than others? So I think … When I … Certainly the one that I found most comforting is the muscle memory. That just comes with repetition. You have to repeat, repeat, repeat. You know uh … So … And I find that that one, even after five years you just need to polish it up a bit and it stays. You've done enough already. It stays. So, that was easy for me to just come back and just do it. Or even while we were putting it together, if we worked on something, I got home and I thought about it and maybe just played it a couple of times, it's there, it's done. I can put it away and then I will pull it out again in ten years' time it's still there. With these guys, they work so much harder. They obviously memorise their lines very easily. But what I have found is things like where to be and choreography; that takes … I guess with dancers that will come more naturally as well … [00:08:16] So it was fascinating to see this great actor – by the way; we often spoke about him with Sylvaine that this guy could have gone to Hollywood. He'd have been a multi Oscar winner – you know he's and amazing actor and an amazing soul. But just seeing him work and sometimes stumble through his work. It's … It was … It gave me a real sense of how good you really have to be and how complex the work is because a pro like that also battled sometimes. I mean once he had it he had it and then we'd go away, we'd come back and he was like, "oh, what's my cue again? Oh, did we do it". And also often referred to the … To what they did in 2013, earlier in 2013 before I met them. When they did the show in a different form. But when we did it … Remember this … Oh but here Lionel you changed the ending … So it's just … And I guess I enjoyed that especially because it showed me that *ha ba e krema* {they did not cram it}. It's not like, "this is how we do it". It's a dynamic, [00:09:22] it's an evolving thing. When you put a cellist on stage, you can't sort of run across, you have to run around. Or whatever the case is. And er, and, and you can afford to be a bit more subtle because you've got help, you know of a soundtrack – a running soundtrack – as it were. So yeah, I think you have some questions at this point.
BLZ: Um, uh, wow. So what happens is that every time I do an interview and I hear the [story, it just]
KM: [Yeah.
BLZ: Everything goes on [fire] [00:10:00]
KM: [Yeah.
BLZ: Um, were there any difficulties in terms of relating to the other … to the other discipline? I know other people I have interviewed have stated like difficulties in vocabulary.
KM: Mm . . .
BLZ: Um just trying to get a … Like the director might say to you "it just needs something". And then you are just like: huh?!
KM: Yeah. Sylvaine is very musical, uh, as is Lionel actually. So they tried to be a bit more direct. Yeah they used, I mean I guess they use generic speak where … I mean this is a stupid example … Where they could say something like, "You need to crescendo to this point" …

They could say something like … I mean they would obviously use that word in this specific you know … But they would say something like, "It needs to be bigger". And then you'd go okay, what do you mean it needs to be bigger? Because bigger can mean slower, it can mean … You know. Yeah. So um, there were … there were sort of … And theatre jargon. I think I struggled with things like um, stage left. I was like okay I am sitting here, which way is stage left? Oh so that's stage left. Is she talking about her left as she's looking at me or is she talking about my left? You know upstage, downstage. Those kinds of things. The other interesting thing is … You know, the other day we were doing this opera production, well opera gala concert. And somebody was saying the call time for the orchestra; [00:11:43] I said orchestra doesn't have call time. They'll be there. If we say we're starting at half past seven; first people will be there at half past six, the last people will be there at quarter past seven. You know. Don't tell them they have to be here at half past six because you'll have to pay them from half past six. Which, which is a different way of doing things because in theatre, Lionel would have to do his warm up exercises. He would go through things for his voice. Because also there is a lot of movement so he would do his stretches. I'd literally show up. Uh, you know we had a half past seven start I'd be there at like seven, ten past seven … People would be like, "oh, you are here now?". Like yes.

BLZ: ((Laughs))

KM: When did you want me here? So, I started to realise that I need to treat this a little bit differently. Um, and kind of get myself into theatre space. I mean classical musicians … I've never started a concert late because somebody wasn't there. Maybe jazz musicians because just of the nature. It's more chilled out. But if it's an orchestra thing you understand, even when you are playing second violin, third desk you understand that, you know, you are needed and you have to be there and you will be missed. Um, so I, so I had to kind of like be a theatre person. Uh also be there … I mean there was 'costume, there was no make-up thankfully. And we had to get into these costumes, uh, you know well ahead of time. And you don't want to be the one walking – 'cause there is no back entrance – you don't want to find the audience there.

BLZ: Yes, yes.

KM: So that was also kind of a little bit of a shift. Um, uh, fortunately it was in a time of the year when there was not really any traffic or too many other gigs running from this. So I just needed to remind myself to be a bit early. That for me was a big thing. Um the call times as it were. Um and, uh, also just, just er, Sylvaine the director would come. We ran for four weeks. So she'd come once a week and she'd give us notes at the end of that show. So that was also quite an interesting thing.

BLZ: Mm.

KM: Uh, because I've done … I played in *The Lion King* … But I was in the pit, I was in the orchestra where nobody knew to give me notes. So I thought oh okay, this is what they do. Uh, you know being given notes to say you need to … You know you guys are forgetting to do this. Uh, you are rushing here, take your time there. You know er, 'cause we get excited, and some things we'd just ... You know when Syl- … It's interesting on the days that Sylvaine was there we'd say, "oh God the Headmistress is here, we've got to behave". And, and we'd try our best but you know if you've been doing it for three shows in a certain way you slacken off. It's kind of hard to bring it back so she'd kind of talk to us about, about where we taking too long, where we over-elaborating, where we not sitting the moment, and you know punctuating things. It's ja … Because it's a performance. Sometimes I get there I'm in a different mood and Lionel would try and take it one way and I drag my feet or whatever you know it's … And [00:14:56] we wouldn't catch each other. Some things we'd timed that it's a sequence and we'd catch each other … [00:15:00] Um we're both human you know. Sometimes, it worked, most of the time it worked but other times it wouldn't work. And as you know on the days the headmistress isn't … Is there … Those are the days it would falls apart.

BLZ: Of course.

KM: ((Re-enactment)) "No really on other days it's fine".

BLZ: ((Laughs)) Okay.

KM: Yeah, so its, er that's what I enjoyed. It was just that it's dynamic and you are constantly trying to get it better. Uh, we time the show, we needed to get … If I remember we wanted it to be … It was er it was supposed to be seventy minutes, but we were happy with seventy-five but there were days, especially in the earlier run, in the earlier part of the run where we just

battled. So Lionel needed to cut certain things especially in the last piece … Uh … Just not to [dwell]

BLZ: [To go overtime]

KM: [Because it just … Uh, I also used to like sit there and think now it's getting really long. You know, especially because I'm not actively involved the whole time, you start to feel like okay, I've been sitting for too long, you know.
((Long Pause))
And that the audience expect you to come to the bar so they could buy you drinks. I found that really strange.

BLZ: Are you for real? ((Laughs)) [00:16:30]

KM: *Ja*. Like Lionel said, "no, no buddy you can't just leave. You know, you have to say [hello to people"]

BLZ: [Oh yes, yes, yes, yes, yes]

KM: [You know especially because it's a two-hander. So for him it would obviously be all his fans. But yeah, there was an expectation that we stay one drink – at least, er.

BLZ: At the very, very, least yeah.

KM: And someone would always offer to buy … And you had to. So uh ja… I think they were out of iced tea by the end of the run. Er, because that was my drink.

BLZ: Yeah I had this conversation with a friend of mine that … Um, musician after they are done they pack up and leave.

KM: [Well actually they usually]

BLZ: [Or they go together.

KM: Yeah they do their own thing. Yeah.

BLZ: But they move away from … They separate from what's happened … Once you get your applause or whatever you are done. You go together to go do what you need to do.

KM: Yeah, yeah. Theatre is very different.

BLZ: But with theatre people the mingling is a big thing, like it's a big part of it.

KM: I think actors build a real following. You know, with us as musicians, well certainly as classical musicians, er, you're playing cello in the orchestra you don't have a following, your following is your friends. But they've built up a real following and you know, er there's always old friends, people that come and talk to him about a production they did fifteen years ago and how long. So you have, you have to go through those pleasantries with the, with the audience and really like humour them, you know like allow them to love you and shower you with compliments. Uh, and it's expected of us, almost. It was very interesting.

BLZ: Yeah.

KM: 'Cause me I was thinking, I need to go and finish that aria of *Madiba The Opera*, I'm behind, I'm behind.

BLZ: ((Laughs))

KM: You know. 'Cause I was doing that at the time. I remember it was a really stressful time. Because I was finishing orchestrating this thing. Well by then I was still … I was kind of half way, and we were going to start rehearsals in March or in February and scores were still getting sent to me. You know so my thing was I need to get going, I need to get going you know.

BLZ: But you had to sit down and have a drink.

KM: Mm.

BLZ: Um, so is this the only thing you've done in theatre, like in terms of [this very collaborative thing?]

KM: [Well, look I conducted an opera, a full-scale opera three months later, the Madiba opera.

BLZ: Yes, yes!

KM: I did something last week but it doesn't really qualify still, it was an opera gala concert. We were in the pit but there wasn't really any choreog- … It wasn't an opera …

BLZ: Is this last week's thing? Yeah, I heard about that.

KM: This was the State Theatre. So I've done … I did er …Yeah I mean this is … I mean, other than playing in an orchestra or conducting the opera, nah, that was it. I was, I mean I was properly an actor for *Agreed*, even though I didn't have lines. I was playing with the actor, especially the *Pied Piper*.

BLZ: Would you do it again?

KM: I would. You know, it was um, it was great to do it again for Grahamstown. Um. It really was. We got an Ovation Award down there.

BLZ: Nice, nice. [00:20:00]

KM: We've often spoken of taking it abroad. James anyway has, um. Because it's so easy, it's so compact. It's really just Lionel, myself, uh, and the, the lighting, the lighting engineer you know and that's it! So it would be easy to, to … Yeah I'd love to, I'd love to take it abroad. What we spoke of also doing kids concerts just to do the *Piper*, because it's a beautiful poem, I mean you know the poem.

BLZ: Yes, yes.

KM: Um ... It's, it's really … And [00:20:29] the story about greed, and about the consequences of our actions, our children pay for what we do; you know whether it's climate change, whether it's … Or whatever … The decisions we take today have a bearing on future generations you know. Um I think that kind of brings out the poem. I mean ... Just how we did it, just really drives it home. My kids came to see it, of course they had to leave after that one because the second one really is.

BLZ: ((Chuckles))

KM: Should have an age restriction. Um, and yeah, it's most enjoyable. And I think, yeah we, we definitely in future looking to do kids conce[rts] … 'Cause it's just twenty minutes long and you can talk about from a language point of view, you know you can pitch it at young kids as well. Um, ja we'll see, we'll see. It's just to find the time and the commitment because it's … We have to, I mean we have to sit, three weeks and not rehearse every day but just to get into it. I need to play the cello a bit in order to get into it. 'Cause it's not physically exhausting but I need, I need to be able to just sit down and play and not worry about a sore shoulder because I just did without any preparation.

BLZ: Yes, yes. Um. Who decided that like there should be a cello?

KM: It's very interesting. I think James, James Ngcobo did, and Lionel said, oh, and, Lionel said … 'Cause Lionel said to him, "I think it needs something". Um, because it's just, a one-hander, from an effort point of view as well. Everything. He carried everything own a low, uh… So he wanted an instrument you know, and James said I have just the, the person. Uh, cello or "shello" as he calls it. And I think Lionel got excited cause he imagined a young beautiful blonde girl playing the cello. And he said, this is him. ((Laughs))

BLZ: ((Laughs))

KM: But, but we hit it off, Lionel and I ... I must give him a call, we really did.

BLZ: That's good.

KM: Yeah! Yeah, it was James' idea [to]

BLZ: [He's a man on a mission that one.

KM: He is. He, he tried to bring an Opera to the Market. Uh, unfortunately the Market doesn't have a pit really. There's a, there's a Mandela opera that hopefully will take off at some point. Neo Muyanga is writing it. And James tried to bring it to the Market, it was supposed to already happen this February. Uh. He brought a play, an Afrikaans play which is the first time in twenty years they'd had a … or in twenty-five years ago that they've, we've had an Afrikaans play in the Market. So he's trying, trying to do interesting things you know.

BLZ: [Mm]

KM: [To, to make the Market a space for all.

BLZ: Yeah.

KM: Because obviously there was there was protest theatre, but, you know those days are gone

BLZ: It's not relevant [any more]

KM: [I don't know about relevant but it's, it's not, it's not what brings people to theatre. It's not the escape that people … It's not … Because then it was the one place where people could be themselves and speak of issues that they couldn't speak of in other spaces but you know it's a, it's different now. It's uh … It can be more experimental, uh it can be more … You know it could, it could be more interesting in so many different ways and I think he is trying to do that to bring different audiences, hence the idea of an opera. [00:24:25] You know now they have recitals. We did a, we did a recital actually with an opera singer. String quartet and an opera singer in February and again in March. So he is trying, he's really trying to make the Market this space.

BLZ: [More accessible to everyone]

KM: [You know to have renovations. That theatre actually that we used, was the last … That was the last production in the old Lager. [Now they've]

BLZ: [Mm, yes]

KM: [They've knocked down walls and making bigger and look more sexy. So I think it's er … Yeah, well done to him.

BLZ: *Ja*, no; he's a mover and shaker that one.

KM: Yeah.
BLZ: *Ja*. I do not think I actually have any other questions. The questions tend to come out as I'm actually transcribing it.
KM: Yeah. Okay.
BLZ: 'Cause I need to go sit down [and like]
KM: [You know what I'd suggest? If, if anything and I mean for the next three weeks I'm not doing anything. But if you have a question, you know maybe just send me – I read email all the time, so send me an email or give me a call and I will respond in writing. It's not an issue. Um yeah, if you have any questions ... I'm just also trying to think what else er ... Ja I mean I think, I think something like this is a must for every, every musician. You have to, you have to take yourself out of the comfort zone. 'Cause I learnt a lot, it was quite humbling actually. You know these guys, it didn't matter how badly I played; they loved how I played but obviously I knew I had to strive for more. But at the same time they expected more of me in other ways. You know, um you know that very question you asked to say: can you do more? They really asked me to search for more, more things. And [00:26:16] it forced me to think, not just about how to play the cello and make it sound different and interesting and all the sound effects that I've got; but they got me to think about, about being a sound track, accompanying, in a different way to accompany a singer. But accompanying the plot. Accompanying the story as, as it opens up … And maybe, and this also helps when you are musical director stroke conductor. To be ten minutes ahead of the action, not just two bars, but tens minutes ahead of the [action]
BLZ: [Mm]
KM: [00:26:50] [To say, okay that is a hit point that we must get to, and it can't fall flat because the show … But how do I set it up? Er, when do I start to crescendo? And when … Is it gonna be a surprise? You know those kinds of things. And that's the drama of it, which in classical music it's written into the music you can almost not worry about it – it will happen on its own. Especially if it's an orchestra it will grow on its own. The flute will do it, the oboe, the cor anglais will, will be that emotion, that people are thinking: aww, you know; he just got stabbed. I had to do it myself on the cello and find that voice of the cor anglais, or the flute, or of Pied Piper for that matter. Er, the, the pattering of the children's feet. Um, the way I had to scratch my cello ((laughs)). Which, has scratch marks; the way I had to, to whistle while I played; whatever the case. I think it … And I was really open to it. I was really, really open to it. I just said to them as long as I don't have to sing I will be fine. ((Laughs))
BLZ: As long as you don't have to sing. ((Laughs))
KM: Yeah, and don't ask me to dance either. [28:00] You know so just to allow yourself to be in that space, and be scrutinised, and have these bright lights in your face, um … And also do Q & As. We had two instances where we had groups. The one was a touring group uh, I think they were second years from a university in the States. It was a Saturday evening, they came to the show and we had to stay and do a Q & A with them. You know and just, you know just to be available for that kind of … And I think it was just a different space, you know how we are as musicians; like, "are you gonna pay me more?" ((Laughs))
BLZ: ((Laughs))
KM: So um, it was great to just, just be able to do that and just to see how … People are fascinating! And that, that was also, it was you know, it was confidence boosting in a way. You thought okay – after three weeks of people coming up to you saying: "wow, that was amazing!" – okay, they can't all be deaf. [It must]
BLZ: [They must … Yeah]
KM: [It must be true that this, this is an amazing, it's an amazing show.
BLZ: Yeah.
KM: And actually we recorded it. So I will watch it again just to see what, you know. Because it was … Some of the shows that we, some of the, and [00:29:20] I keep going back to the *Pied Piper*; that one was a natural, er, fit for me of cello and an actor because also it's set … Um Robert Browning wrote this poem I guess 150 years ago; but it's set even further back, it's set in the Renaissance I guess 500 years ago. Uh, you know this town from what they speak of; the wandering travellers and Guilders you know the currency, you know, and you imagine this Hamlin town and everything about the picture that is painted definitely from four-or-five hundred years ago in Europe. And it fitted so well. [00:30:06] The cello, the cello really complemented the story line and the music and the soundscapes I was able to come up with. I think, I think that one really worked well. And just seeing it, you know and seeing how, how we were able, without too much fuss to put it together and to produce a score at the end of it

… ‘Cause I said told Sylvaine, I’m gonna do, for a youth orchestra; a *Pied Piper* Suite because there’s about five or six little themes that I came up with, that I could expand, you know and write it for string orchestra. Whatever you know. So just to see the, the possibilities also of creating a body of work that one can say: this was inspired by this little production that we did once.

BLZ: Mm.

KM: Er, you know it, [00:30:55] it just gave birth to so much you know. Just the idea of being an actor, the idea of saying okay, I can do more than just play the cello, I can actually create drama; so it’s … Ja, from that point of view that’s why I say I think it’s important that all of us must try step out of our comfort zone. And this, you know because it was a short little thing – an hour and a bit, it really … And someone even paid us to do it, and they paid us quite well er, to be able to do this, this production. That was a great space, a great opportunity.

BLZ: Cool hot potatoes. I think I often take for granted how difficult it may be for musicians to step into theatre, because I suppose at Wits, at the time that I was there, there was a lot of that sort of cross-pollination. So, I found myself doing lots of theatre or dance stuff or being [involved in that capacity]

KM: [Right, mm]

BLZ: [But then at the same time the head of drama at that time that I was at Wits, the head of the Drama school was my high school drama teacher ****Privileged Content****

BLZ: [00:32:10] So in some ways I suppose I relate to theatre as someone who’s performed in theatrical capacity as well. So I take for granted how, how much more there is to consider if you are one who has come from a almost like solely musical background.

KM: Absolutely. ‘Cause when I was at Wits it was totally different. I mean the, the Wits Music School was more of a conservatoire.

BLZ: Mm.

KM: You know you did your disciplines. You could major in performance, composition; er what was, er, they used to call it er.

BLZ: Musicology?

KM: Well no, it was, it was performance and individual teaching. There was jazz, and light popular music I remember it was called. There was education, and there was composition, that’s it!

BLZ: Oh.

KM: You all did, yah no, no; you all did history up to fourth year, er which was a pain in the in the neck.

BLZ: ((Laughs)) [00:33:00]

KM: But er, I mean, basically what happened since then because um, well there are many reasons. They have to do with the characters that ran the music department. ****Privileged Content**** And the whole … I guess they, they, they amalgamated, for lack of a better word; the whole performance arts disciplines into one School of the Arts where there were separate; there was the Dramatic Arts. And they were not in the same building. Music was in the Engineering building where the atrium, where the organ is. Uh, Drama was, was in that, um *mx* ((clicks his tongue)), where that art museum is, what do you call that? University Corner.

BLZ: Mhmm.

KM: Uh, so it, it was, they were different disciplines. The only time we’d get together is when we did operas and musicals um, and you’d find the odd drama student who maybe sang in the choir which was not a compulsory music activity … It was the workers and other students that wanted to, so they would hang around the music department. But didn’t really talk to each other. There are people who were my contemporaries that did drama, that I never spent more than five minutes with them. So, ja, I guess, I guess it’s different. The whole degree is packaged differently and you are expected to, to be more multi-disciplinary, which is great [I think]

BLZ: [Mm.

KM: Because the old way kind of produced Neanderthals like myself [who]

BLZ: [((Laughs))]

KM: [Who didn’t … Who were, who have one thing; but now in times of hard economies like where the arts subsidised they used to be in this country, you have to do a little bit of everything. You have to do your admin, you know, er. You know; on Friday I took the train to the State Theatre to return that sheet music. I don’t have an assistant ‘cause I can’t afford one. [00:35:00] If I wanna make money out of this gig, I’d better do it all myself, you know. And, and so you are forced to do everything yourself, uh, and, and that I have learnt on the job to say, “okay, I will write the music out. I won’t rent that, that part, I’ve got a score, I’ll do parts

for everyone". And I did parts for about eight songs you know eight arias and things. Um, so it's, it's a little bit different. So to be able to do, to be put into different spaces, I mean fortunately I am open-minded, I can do this. Where if I think of someone, some of my colleagues, some of them came to the show and say how the hell? I'd say I just allowed myself. You know er, and it's … [00:35:41] But it's easy for us you know as musicians when you think about it. We're trained to listen, so it was easy for me. I listen. I listened to Lionel – I listened to everything, and I'd tell them that: listen you keep changing the text, what is it? Is it this?

BLZ: ((Laughs))

KM: Or is it that? You know. I mean the message is the same but actually I need the words, the exact words because I need to know what I am doing. So it's, ja. So I think your experience is a little bit … It makes your life a lot easier because uh, you, you will survive a lot more easily than people that are older than you that expect somebody … You know, when say bring your music stands for the rehearsal they will say aren't there stands provided. 'Cause we come from that … Everything was done for you! I'm the principle flute, and you can't tell me anything, I will play my part first time perfectly.

BLZ: And then I'll go.

KM: *Ja*, so don't ask, don't ask me anything else because I am a professional you know.

BLZ: Mm. Well I suppose at my, in my time at Wits in some ways it did make it, it made expression a lot … A different thing for me like in terms of myself, um, using my instrument as means of expression, ways of accessing different um, accessing and also I suppose displaying and portraying different ways of; and, and, and, what's the word I am trying to look for? Like different um, what do you call this? ((Laughs and gesticulates))

KM: A line?

BLZ: A line … Yes. But like different forms of [expression]

KM: [No sure finding different voices, yeah, yeah.

BLZ: Yeah in that made life a lot more exciting for me. But in the sense of, like when your flute teacher was like, "are you ready? Come, come for your lesson", and in that, in the opposite way it made my life a misery.

KM: Look the two are not, are not mutually exclusive. I think, I think you can achieve, um; you can achieve both.

BLZ: [Yes]

KM: [Um, there is no such, if you want to be the best flute player, there is no such thing, we have to practise but you probably have to start practising at age eight, you know. It's not only about that for me, uh, because, you know, let's say you have two or even three wonderful symphony orchestras in Joburg; that would be eight or nine flute jobs, what happens to the rest of, of you … That want to play flute. You basically have to wait for someone to die to get a job.

BLZ: Pretty much yes.

KM: So you also have to look at what the realistic prospects are. Uh, if you say I want to be the best cellist in town, great, you can play the cello but there is no work for you because the JPO's got no funding. And actually at age forty-one, people don't like seeing you, they'd rather see that nice girl. She doesn't play as well – we all accept it, but we'd rather have. 'Cause it's background music anyway. So these things start to you know, I mean you start to figure it out as you get older and say okay what am I really trying to do and what, what does the market want, uh, and how do I respond to that and [how] prepared am I? What do I need to be really working hard on in order to be able to stay, to stay relevant. [00:39:00] So, I think a broad training is, is, is utterly, it's crucial. Uh, but you need to know also that er, you need to compete with that person who studied at Stellenbosch and all they got was just, you know, they got performance opportunities, they had teaching that drove really drove them to practice, they want competitions ... You know, at a certain level, also I feel, at a certain level a good musician is a good musician. Whether I have Helen or Melanie or Lisa or you playing, at a certain point, it really is a much of a muchness you know. So it's what else you're bringing to the party. I always to my wife, I wanna work with … 'Cause she'll say why don't we book so and so; and I say no I wanna work with nice people and er … First and foremost. Whether they sound like Emmanuel Pahud or they sound like Bongie, I can work with them. You know. So I'd rather have this one because I can work with them. If it is, as we often find ourselves that I need to work an extra ten minutes, I know Bongie will say cool let's go for it, you know. And not say, "er maestro are we getting overtime?"

KM: Sorry there's no overtime but you know what we got a gig so give me ten minutes.

BLZ: ((Laughs))

KM: I will make it up to you next time. So it's about those, and those … And the reason I mention this is that you'll, you'll, I'm sure you'll agree that because of the kind of broad and more, you know, more kind of rounded – and it's okay to try and do this and its okay not be paying for – you can still get the results. If, if we have to do the aria for the last time, uh, and it's five to everyone understands, you know. Except the ones that are like: no but er my contract … I mean it happened last week, it was a violinist who was like: no, I'm sorry it's nine o'clock we have to stop, you know. Okay, you know; but everyone else is like no we can do it once more. But we had to stop, if one person says no. So yeah; I mean it's uh, we are digressing a little but I do think these things all count. You [know if]

BLZ: [Mm]

KM: [If your only obsession has playing in tune, you tend to only focus on that and not see the full picture.

BLZ: That's true. Yeah I did much of like what you are saying in that if everybody thinks this is working then clearly it's [working]

KM: [Yeah]

BLZ: [So it's that thing of doing you're like the theatre stuff, which always for me it felt like it was working and I got good feedback.

KM: Yeah.

BLZ: And then you go to school or you are in a lesson with so and so or you're in a class prac or whatever and there you are barely they are measuring up. [00:42:00] So that contradiction, living with that contradiction of like in certain, on certain platforms it works, others it's just not, yeah, not making the cut.

KM: Well, I mean I often ask myself, what do those people end up doing anyway. If I think of the wonderful group that I was in with people like Ceri Moelwyn-Hughes. There was one guy, you know Ceri the saxophonist?

BLZ: Mm.

KM: There was one guy James Davies; actually he and I were at St John's together, and we went to Wits together. He's now Dr. James Davies, he's just written a book. He was here actually earlier this year we all had dinner together

BLZ: ((Laughs))

KM: Okay, he's done well; he's done very well. He's you know, he's lecturing at Berklee; yeah, okay James has done well. Um and then I think of the other people, people like ****Privileged Content**** You know people like, some of them are not even playing music anymore. You realise that it's quite … Um, you look around and you think but you know the rest of us, people like ****Privileged Content**** er, the rest of us end up just, just finding a corner and just you know, and you are as good as you know, as you are prepared to work hard I guess, you know. The training is the training and what you did when you were twenty, yeah it all counts. As I say if you didn't start at eight chances are you gonna end up in here in Joburg hustling for work just like the rest of you know.

BLZ: Yeah. Yeah.

KM: Yeah. Uh I've got a son that plays as you know, and yes I'm pushing this boy not because of anything you know, it's because, and I tell him, when you look around, there shouldn't be anyone that you say but that one is better than me. You should look around and say okay, yeah I'm doing well and keep going. And you must always look over your shoulder then you will get all the scholarships, you'll win all the prizes. Then you know, then abroad starts to open up for you. But if you are an … Yeah you'll go to UCT, you'll end up, you know; I'm gonna be paying for your life for the rest of my life, no!

BLZ: ((Laughs))

KM: That's not why I'm doing this. If you wanna do it, do it properly because you got … It's at home.

BLZ: Mm.

KM: You have a father that drives you to lessons. You have a father that when he practice he says, oh, try this again, it's not in tune. How many kids have that? You know, they practice into a vacuum. *Ena* {he} he's got, you know, he can … I'm there to say, not this … And I say to the teacher try this piece. When he did a competition earlier this year I said let's try these pieces and the teacher is like no; oh yeah actually let's try this. He's got a whole machinery behind him. So he has to do well.

BLZ: ((Laughs)) Is he keen though, is he?

KM: Oh, he loves the attention.

BLZ: Oh well, that works.

KM: Maybe attention is the wrong word, but he loves the, he loves that people respond to him.
BLZ: Yeah.
KM: You know he goes to a boy's school and boy's school are all about sports.
BLZ: Yes.
KM: Obviously it's about academics but the boys that get glorified socially anyway are the ones that do .... So the jocks, everybody wants to be like, but everybody understands *gore* [that] music is Pendo's space. And, and actually it's elevated, I mean the head of music is so proud of this child. This child, you know; Pendo this, why can't you be more like him. So he loves, he loves the fact that even though he is useless at sports he's not the same level as the boys that play first team. Yeah because he's acknowledged and I think that all we want especially as children. We want to be told you are doing well, you know. We love you too; and not be the other one; oh, yeah, yeah.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
KM: So I think he loves that, he loves that.
BLZ: That's fantastic.
KM: No, he is doing very well. Makes us proud. It costs us a lot of money.
BLZ: Yoh! Eish, yeah. It's also very expensive this stuff, hey. Anything you do nowadays. Even sport. I've started playing golf, I'm just like no, it's very expensive.
KM: Where are you taking lessons?
BLZ: Um, in Gillooleys. There's a golf village there.
KM: Oh yeah, yeah.
BLZ: It's just like.
KM: I'd love to do that. I'd love to. Um I started, I went *ko* {to} World of Golf in uh, Woodmead.
BLZ: Yeah.
KM: Uh, I think I went to two lesson, it's about five years ago. I need to do it 'cause I mean it's such a sunny town. The sun shines throughout the whole year [and]
BLZ: [And who doesn't want to spend a Saturday walking around.
KM: For me it doesn't have to be a Saturday, I could do it on a Monday because I could plan it like that. And that's what I like about my life; is that I really own my time, I really, really do. Uh, obviously if someone says do this and that, I never say no; but it's my choice. It's, it's uh, not that I will get into trouble if I don't, and I'll get fired. No. Like, unless the money is really bad that I don't do the gig. But I do. Sometimes I take on too much 'cause you don't know when the next one is coming. But yeah, you own your own time; and that's fantastic. I love it, I love it.
BLZ: Mm. Thank you very much Mr. K.
KM: No, thanks to you. [00:47:51]

END OF AUDIO

INTERVIEW 8 – BONGILE MANTSAI
DATE: 24 OCTOBER 2015
TELEPHONIC INTERVIEW
DURATION: [00:33:18]

BLZ: Bongile Lecoge-Zulu
BMa: Bongile Mantsai

BLZ: Yes, it's me again, Bongi.
BMa: Hi there.
BLZ: ((Giggles)) *Yebo* {Yes}. Um, cool, so can we proceed with interview. Are you able to now or are you busy?
BMa: We can, we can, we can chat, we can go.
BLZ: Okay, that's awesome, m, to begin with, can you just state; I am recording it to another device, so do you mind just stating for the, for the record that it's okay for me to do the interview and to use some of your findings in my research?
BMa: I don't have a problem. It's okay.
BLZ: Okey-dokey. So the reason why I'm interviewing you having spoke to But' Mandla ((sniffs)) and everything, I, um, um, Mendi is one of the projects I'm looking at, or one of the productions I'm looking at for my Masters research project as a piece of theatre that had like an intrinsic musical aspect to it.
BMa: [Okay]
BLZ: [So dramatic theatre that has a collaborative musical Um, element but not like musical theatre per se, just dramatic theatre with music element in it. Um.
BMa: Yes.
BLZ: And I'm looking at the nature of collaboration itself, what happens how people feel, pe-specifically from the voice of the musician. Um, and that being said, he referred me to you as, as the musician; as the one who first, I suppose who devised the music for Mendi. Um, and there is no real structure to the interview. There are some questions that I'll ask you but I'd just like you to describe your experience of that collaboration.
BMa: Um, I think firstly when I was, when I was called in you know, by, by, by Mandla.
BLZ: Er.
BMa: Er, I, I, I, I didn't understand exactly what the role, because I'm also an actor you know
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: And, and, and partly [00:02:03] when we were busy trying to create the work I realised that eh, one of my strong points or one of what he wanted me to do was to create music for, for the piece
BLZ: Okay.
BMa: You know, and, and sadly there was something about it. The question in, in, in Mendi; the heading was did he dance, did they dance?
BLZ: Yes.
BMa: And what, for me what came into my, my mind, what triggered music; I mean what triggered the dance? [00:02:31]
BLZ: Okay.
BMa: You cannot move without a certain sound. You cannot move without something. You need something. You need something like er, sound or music that helps you to move.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: You know, and so when I was, when I was, [00:02:50] when we were busy work-shopping the process, I said to Mandla I don't want to do music for *Mendi*.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: I want to do, I want to help the story with the sounds and, and I never called it a music.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: You know because there was the, er, the, the, the sounds and, and what you, what people call music was not separated from the story.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: You [know]
BLZ: [Mm], so everything that we were doing was part of the workshop so instead of a cry I would say, um, I would compose something [that]
BLZ: [Mm]
BMa: [Would represent a cry.

BLZ: Okay.
BMa: You know what I'm trying to say.
BLZ: Okay.
BMa: So it will, it will be nev-, i- i- the, the music doesn't fight with the story.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: Music is part of the story.
BLZ: Okay.
BMa: And I might sound as if I am contradicting myself so hence I'm saying it was, [00:03:52] it was something different. It was not, for me it was not music, it was more of part of um it was part of, part of telling the story; part of um, creating the sound, and taking the voice of those people.
BLZ: Okay.
BMa: Ja.
BLZ: Um, so you were there, um from the beginning, when it was done in the Eastern Cape neh [like, like the workshop was done in the Eastern Cape]
BMa: [Yes], yes.
BLZ: And could you, sorry ((sneezes)) excuse me ((sniffs)) ((sneezes)) excuses me.
BMa: That's fine, bless you.
BLZ: Thanks ((laughs)). S- s- could you just describe that process more of how, how it all came together because my understanding from other interviews is that it came together, everything came together at the same time so it wasn't like a separate sort of you know, actors act, dancers dance; musicians music you know, and then come together. It was like er, it was sort of very integrated.
BMa: Yes. Um, I think, I think Mandla knew from the word go who he wanted to work with in, in, in that project.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: You know, and we ea-, ea- we each had er, different, um, so called um; we had our own strengths. We had our own um, we knew exactly who specialises in what.
BLZ: Okay.
BMa: But with that said, but we didn't allow that to, to you know, sort of the one person to drive the second process in, in, in the whole collaboration that. Everyone had something to do in that process. And the process was so amazing in the sense that we, we, we went to couple of places doing research and you know, we went to the Eastern Cape talking to old people in the Eastern Cape. We went to a couple of villages trying to find if they know anything about *Mendi.*
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: You know, er, we met the villagers. We met the old people who were also, some of them not very, very er keen to, to, to tell what happened. You could tell that some of the people were sacred.
BLZ: Okay. [00:06:25]
BMa: You know, for, for some reason, eh, I don't know exactly what is that [reason]
BLZ: [Mm]
BMa: Also we went to the academic side of it you know, er; where we went to Fort Hare University you know. People were also questioning us and they were also challenging us. So what I'm trying to say we, we; everyone who was in the, who was part of the pro- process witnessed er, a lot of things.
BLZ: [Okay]
BMa: [Er, you know, that [00:06:50] some of the things that we did were triggered or came out because we have witnessed the whole process, you know there was a time when I remember we went to the sea and we were just chilling, just sitting there for hours. Went early in the morning listening to the sounds of the sea, listening to the sounds of everything around us and some of the sounds came out, you know. They came from what, what we have experienced, you know.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: You Know it was like, it was not like let me home and compose something.
BLZ: Mhmm.
BMa: You know. Same applies with the choreographer. It was not like let me go and think of a dance move.
BLZ: Mhmm.

BMa: Every single thing was reference you know of what we have witnessed that pro-, from that process.
BLZ: Mhmm.
BMa: And that was something amazing and powerful about the process, that we had, we, we, we had a place to fall in. We had a place to reference everything, you know, like did you see this, did you hear that, did you hear this man who went … So you know, we had sort of er, an amazing cast. Um, there was a skeleton obviously of the story.
BLZ: Yes. [00:08:02]
BMa: But part of what we were doing we were saying how do we put meat in this skeleton.
BLZ: Okay. And the skeleton was that the p-, the poem *ne*, like the [basic]
BMa: The skeleton, there was a sort of a script you know, um, and I know, I know that there are four guys from PE.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: I don't if you know the whole Mzwayi. I think they call themselves PE Brothers or something.
BLZ: Okay.
BMa: And of course they are the people who, who had this idea and, and they approached the, the Lara Foot, [er]
BLZ: [Yes]
BMa: [Who] were the writer at that time.
BLZ: Mm, mm. [00:08:45]
BMa: You [know]. Um, and then um, but obviously with the script Mandla had some questions. Mandla had [some]
BLZ: [Yes, yes, yes]
BMa: [Stuff that he wanted to explore. So according to Mandla, the script was not just enough, there was more to dig in.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: So hence Mandla said lets go to such places, let's go to this place; lets dig more, and, and the whole cast went with the process where we were digging the story we wanted to know more, you know.
BLZ: Okay.
BMa: [Ja]
BLZ: [And] what was the outcome from that mu, music come soundscape. How did it, what, how did it end up? What did it end becoming? What form did it take?
BMa: Um, look I think what was also; with the outcome of the music, firstly I was working with people who were not er, so called musicians; you know what I'm trying to say. Not to undermine people that I was working with. Obviously they could sing. And what was interesting is the fact that [00:09:55] we were not looking for a concert, you know. We were looking for people who can still tell ((sighs)) so the story in many other forms so the music was also one of the aspects that was driving the story. It was a very strong er, er, um, wep-, er, i- you know, symbol of driving the [story]
BLZ: [Mm]
BMa: But [00:10:19] there was amazing, something about traditional music in it.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: Where I say traditional music in it, it was very much spiritual music, you know.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: You know, where I obviously visited, all the cast, we visited a couple of people, spiritual people and, and with those people obviously we were, we were singing every time we go to, we go to such places.
BLZ: Okay.
BMa: You know; and, and, and part of this music was influenced by this spiritual world, you know. And I remember Mandla saying we are killing a story of um, debt. We need a permission.
BLZ: Mm. [00:11:05]
BMa: To do this work and that stayed with me because then I realised we, I'm not going to write any kind of music you know. This is not a score music.
BLZ: Okay.
BMa: You know, this is music, this is a sound that needs to take people to another level.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: You know, and the interest was not key. The interest was not how beautiful you can sing. The interest was not how well the group can sing together. [00:11:33] The interest was how do we connect with the sound and make one powerful spirit and make one powerful spirit.

BLZ: [Okay]
BMa: [You know] because the music was influenced by that. And, and, and er, I remember explaining to the guys when we first met they obviously were scared that they can't sing and I said to them, look there's something amazing about er, how I, I, I compose and how I write music. It's coming from the culture of black people, And, and, and this, this thing of when we go to the funeral there is a contrast. You can see people sad, crying but having hope. The songs are giving er the people who are grieving hope.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: You know, and I was saying to, to these, to the cast members that I, I really want to form some sort of er, um, a contrast because the question; did they dance? I think there was, there, people were confused because it might have happened that people were actually talking to their ancestors you [know] [00:12:46]
BLZ: [Mm.
BMa: It might have happened that people were, were, were actually um praying to their Gods, you know. It might have happened that people were doing some sort of rituals at the time.
BLZ: Yes.
BMa: But from the outside world, from who doesn't understand what these people are saying, it's a question if; are these singing, are these people dancing, are these you know. But for me the music was influence by the question; did they dance?
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: You know, because none of them were sure if these people were dancing at that time or they were praying or they were singing, you know, and then it took me back to my culture where I've, I've witnessed where er, you know, even in hard times we sing, in celebration we sing. You know, in, in, in every moment Black people have that thing of we, we, we comfort ourselves by, by song.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: You know.
BLZ: Yes.
BMa: And, and then obviously that's where the music came from, where I said I will look for a contrast. I will look for a point where um, everything that happens around er these people has to be driven by the music, but not just any music. It has to be a spiritual world. [00:14:09]
BLZ: Mhmm.
BMa: You [know]
BLZ: [Yeah.
BMa: It has to be a spiritual. And also if you look at the instruments that I had when I was er, playing, it was also you know, instruments that are sangomas, instruments that are used by traditional healers; you know and I was using all those drums and the horns you know, and the sound of the horns and every instrument for me had a story. You know it was not just Um, me playing nice instruments on stage. I, I, I chose certain instruments for specific reasons you know, and I explained to the cast this is what this instrument the, e- e-, represent for me. It might represent something different for, for you but it is important that you know exactly where I am coming from with this particular instrument so that the sub-text you know exactly where what to do with that sub-text.
BLZ: Okay. And what was the cast's response to your, your like decision, your choices musically?
BMa: Come again!
BLZ: What was the cast's response [to]
BMa: [It] was a, it was a very strong response. And I mean part of what was happening on stage every, every day was a different, a different performance.
BLZ: Mhmm.
BMa: And as I've said to you it was driven by music. I remember in the Eastern Cape … Eastern Cape is also very strong in traditional healing you know, because some of the people even when they go to townships and, er or grow up in townships, some of the things we really still take note of.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: But we, we, we you know, Eastern Cape is very strong traditionally.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: And the cast you know, there was something very amazing about being at that place at that time, you know. I remember Mandla at that time was working in Steve Biko Foundation where we visited a lot of stories and we visited a lot of places where I felt like I was just a tourist er you know.

BLZ: ((Giggles))
BMa: Within my culture.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: Things that I didn't know about, the legals of um, of South Africa. Things I didn't know. So there was a lot of you know, revival within my spirit as well. [00:16:40]
BLZ: [Okay]
BMa: [So, also with that, we, we were in a position where in our world of crea-, of creativity
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: There was something that influenced that world, you know.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: And like I said to you the cast was connected all the way. The cast knew when, when I was, when I was saying look, remember when we went to the sea, remember when, so the point of reference was not only for me, it was, the whole cast was involved in that, i- i- in witnessing what was happening so the music was written out of what we have experienced, you know and the response within that, [00:17:20] it was not just a person come to the cast with a score and saying guys lets sing this. It was how do we create this [according],
BLZ: [Mm]
BMa: To what we had witnessed.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: You know, so it, it, it didn't allow people to, to be disconnected from any kind of world that we were trying to create. It didn't allow any of the cast members, so every time every when you propose something people would be part of that because they know, they witness, they feel and they were part of it.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: You know, and there were times something would not work we would talk about it and say uh, it doesn't work and we will find ways of making other options, make it work, you know.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: And it felt for me as mu- I mean a person who writes music it felt like, everything felt like I didn't have to go home and then to think about how do I write another, you know. There was, there were, there were no notes.
BLZ: Mm. [00:18:23]
BMa: If, if, if I may say, there were no notes. It was just eh, the spiritual world that took place you know. And I, and, and, and I've allowed people in that world to just play.
BLZ: [Mm]
BMa: [you know], be who they are; and, and [00:18:41] my interest was not how beautiful these people can sing. it was more about how honest you are in telling the story. [00:18:52]
BLZ: Okay. [Um]
BMa: [You know]
BLZ: [Ja, ja I do. Like its, its, it sounds; I'm sad I didn't get to um witness the process itself it would have been interesting. Um, do you perhaps have, do you perhaps footage of, of, of the production?
BMa: I think Mandla had or, or Mopo Productions because it was part of the Mopo Productions at that time. So I think er, between the two; Mandla or Mopo Productions, they should have cos I know there are a couple of clips I saw um, via I think u-tube so, so I think there is something because I have seen a couple of er, [clips from it]
BLZ: [What production?]
BMa: The Mopo Productions was the company that was in the Eastern Cape of [producing, Um
BLZ: [Is this Mopo]
BLZ: [M-o-p-o?]
BMa: [M-o-p-o. Mopo Productions [00:19:54]
BLZ: Alrighty! Um. [Er]
BMa: [But] they were in collaboration obviously with Steve Biko Foundation, Yeah.
BLZ: Oh, okay. [I'd]
BMa: [Ja.
BLZ: Have to, to look that up because I tried to get them from Warona Seane, or get footage from Warona Seane but it's, it's somehow been corrupted in, I don't know. Somehow it doesn't work.
BMa: Mm.
BLZ: [Um]
BMa: [Try Mopo], ja.

BLZ: I will. I will, I will definitely do that.
BMa: Ja.
BLZ: Um, I really don't have any more uh, questions. Not, nothing [specific really]
BMa: [Come again.
BLZ: I'm just saying I don't have any more like er specific questions. Is there anything else that you feel you'd like to add or do have any questions for me perhaps.
BMa: Look, Yeah, I think for there were, um, I've done couple of works you know, and when I was doing *Mendi*.
BLZ: [Mhmm]
BMa: [It was also an, an, an eye opener because I remember when we spoke when we were talking with the cast and Mandla, the director we spoke about the poem.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: And that, that poem stood out.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: And everyone knew it and something funny about it, they didn't know where it was coming from. And I remember studying the poem at school but I didn't even know what was the connection.
BLZ: Mhmm. [00:21:14]
BMa: And, and, and doing it was a, a big eye opener for me.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: Of, um, one of the stories that were never told to us.
BLZ: [Mm]
BMa: [You know, one of the very strong South African history that we weren't, that were never shared to us,
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: And how many stories are not told you know. How many stories that we tell but the wrong, you know, the right people are not telling those stories. [00:21:50]
BLZ: Ja.
BMa: You know, and when I was doing *Mendi*, I felt each and everything that we were doing was right for the story.
BLZ: Okay.
BMa: You know, and hence I am saying to you even you know, asking for permission to do the story it meant something you know; visiting traditional healers, visiting old people, visiting wise people. And, and hence I am saying uh, uh, uh, there was something amazing about that; that you know that you, [00:22:28] you can't really say this is music, this is dance, this is you know. There is something about the world that we were creating; the world that was healing. It was quite healing. It was part of saying wow, I, I'm growing as an artist. I'm carrying different stories. It is not about the impression, it is about the impact, you know. You don't, you don't expect people after watching to come to you and say wow; you are a very good [actor]
BLZ: [Mm, mm.
BMa: Or music, er, musician. You expect people to come after the show and say this story has moved [me]
BLZ: [Yes, yes.
BMa: You know. And for me it gave me that two, those words that as an artist may be some of the work I've been about an impression.
BLZ: Yeah.
You know, expecting people to say wow, you a very good actor or musician and this particular one, it was I don't care but I've just healed myself and I now want to heal.
BLZ: [Mm]
BMa: [The rest. And for me that I called an impact, you know.
BLZ: [Mm]
BMa: [Yeah, so it was one of those.
BLZ: That's fantastic.
BMa: [Yeah]
BLZ: [So, you said you are an actor cum musician, where do you, where do you; what do you do actually.
BMa: ((Gentle laugh))
BLZ: That's a better way of asking.
BMa: Um, look, for the past couple of I've been working for the Baxter Theatre.

BLZ: Okay.
BMa: I'm part of the festival called Zabalaza Festival.
BLZ: Okay.
BMa: Yeah.
BLZ: Okay.
BMa: And eh, part of my job description is to go around the world and look for ground breaking sh- sh- things and invite them, give them the home at the Baxter Theatre and, and also give the right people a voice to tell their own stories and that what I'm doing. And part of that I'm also a creator, director, musical, musical director.
BLZ: Okay.
BMa: I'm and actor. I was doing a show called "Mies Julie" [00:24:39] which was something that eh, I think made a big breakthrough as well for me as an actor.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: Er, directed by Yael Farber, [ja] [00:24:51]
BLZ: [Mm.
BMa: We've been for the past four years, with that. It's been travelling for the past four years. So I've been doing *Mies Julie* for the past four years! Er, and also creating music for souls, sounds, wild landscapes [00:25:04] you know, and, and ja and that what I'm doing, I'm doing now. I'm working with Mandla doing *Jikela la Mawela* also creating landscapes and telling the story, music, you know. As [00:25:21] I've realised that people are trying to write scores within the story.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: You Know and part of what I'm doing is to sit with the story tellers and say what do you hear, what do you want to hear you know, there is no competition between music and the story.
BLZ: [Okay]
BMa: [And, and, and part of what of what I'm doing and I think I'm specialising in is to link the, what so called the music world into the story without creating a confusion where people say people say wow! We didn't like the story but the music what now?
BLZ: Yeah.
BMa: So, you know what I'm saying. So I'm cutting that line where I say you have to like everything.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: Because musicians what they do, they just want to make sure that their music is [heard]
BLZ: [Yeah]
BMa: [Their music is beautiful, and the music gets er thinking in a way you know and it becomes about them, it becomes about them not the story.
BLZ: Mhmm.
BMa: You know, so that's what I'm trying. I, I, I, I'm trying achieve at the moment from the music point of view. I'm trying to ja to write music or to, to create sounds, or to create the world where I'm still telling the same story as story writer, as a director, that's it's not about me at all. It's about the world that I'm trying to create because music has a language, dance has a language you know
BLZ: Mhmm.
BMa: Story has a language but we forget when we mix these worlds together. Yes.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: Yeah.
BLZ: That's awesome.
BMa: Yeah, ja.
BLZ: ((Laughs))
BMa: Ja. ((Laughs))
BLZ: No its, its, Yeah, it's really amazing.
BMa: Yeah.
BLZ: Er, and are there any other productions, like other than *Mendi* that you've in, on in a similar capacity?
BMa: Yes, I'm, I've, um, I've wro-, I've written music for *Karamouse*. [00:27:27]
BLZ: Mhmm.
BMa: Which was directed by Lara Foot.
BLZ: Mhmm.
BMa: I've written music fro, Yeah, hey, for *Udalabafazi*, exclusive women story where women were just like, it was about, I think about five women on stage.

BLZ: Mhmm.
BMa: Er, talking about their own personal stories.
BLZ: Mhmm.
BMa: Obviously work and you know that, which was also an eye opener just to sit around five powerful black women.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: Er, and telling stories that were very powerful and that made me respect women as well. As you know we grow up in a culture where you think women have, have to be submissive all the time.
BLZ: Ja.
BMa: And, and, and as a young Black man, you know, that was eye opener. I, I think I was writing the music, wow I didn't know, its wow! These women are inspiring me as well.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: Obviously looking at the world in a different way. But that work in as well … Now the Baxter is obviously working as a music coach for *Born in the RSA*.
BLZ: Yeah.
BMa: That went to, to Grahamstown this year.
BLZ: Yeah.
BMa: And also working with them and er, I was working ( ) [00:28:55] now also writing music for ( ) [00:28:57] which is also happening also training at the Baxter now.
BLZ: Okay].
BMa: And I'm also directing music in *Jikela la Mawele* [00:29:09] which is Xhosa novel at the Arts Cape. Mandla is directing it with er, Thando Doni, you know.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: So ja the list goes on and [whilst]
BLZ: [Mm, mm]
BMa: [And obviously I'm working as a creator and working for other companies. I'm directing fifteen, also it's a musical; fifteen Muslim guys are doing a musical called *Bleak is Funitup* [oh-] [00:29:38]
BLZ: [Okay.
BMa: We took it to ( ).
BLZ: Oh wow, okay.
BMa: Ja we, they took it to, we took it to Tanika Hall in New York.
BLZ: Mhmm.
BMa: Er, last year. There is festival called Ubuntu Festival,
BLZ: Mhmm.
BMa: So, so I was approached by the fifteen Muslim folk, with respect Muslim guys and they said to me they want me to direct their show.
BLZ: [Okay]
BMa: [And the show was very cultural and the show was very cultural. How do I direct ((laughs)) a culture ((laughs)) that I don't even understand.
BLZ: Yeah.
BMa: But also for me I was a creator and that was a very big opportunity and amazing challenge where you know, we went to New York. Our first opening.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: And, and it was well received and back at the Baxter, well received and it's going now to ( ). [00:30:37]
BLZ: Oh, okay is it.
BMa: And, and, and there's something amazing about that because directing a different culture makes you understand a lot about you, you know it corrects assumptions. A lot of assumptions have been corrected.
BLZ: Yes.
BMa: You know, a lot of assumptions have been corrected and we are now working with these guys, amazing cast. And also working, I'm working with farm; so called farm workers, Um the story called *Sida* [00:31:12] it's about flames, flaming that time, farm workers and I'm working with in Stellenbosch in Franshoek where I'm directing that as well. And the people who are, and the actors and the musicians were part of, of the old farm workers.
BLZ: Okay.
BMa: You [know]
BLZ: [Alright.

BMa: They are for me, I always say to them, you are my artists. So I respect you.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: Other people will look at you as farm workers but me you [are]
BLZ: [They artists, yeah.
BMa: So I'm working with these beautiful souls, beautiful artist, that whatever they, you know, everything is just honest impulse. Everything is just honest.
BLZ: Mm.
BMa: [Acting]
BLZ: [Yes, yes, yes.
BMa: Is just honest. That's fantastic. Yeah, I will probably be in contact with you because that sounds like very much my type of I don't know. I've no idea what I'm doing with my life but this masters is opening doors and window in sorts of directions which is very exciting for me.
BMa: Amazing.
BLZ: Yeah. Thank you so much. Thank you so very much. Thank you so very much for giving me your time. May I please ask for your email address so I can send you eh, information sheets and stuff like that for ethical purposes.
BMa: No worries. My, you know my name and my [surname I presume]
BLZ: [Yes.
BMa: And my name, first and my surname.
BLZ: Bongile Mantsai, okay. Thank you.
BMa: Yeah. Thanks to you. Thanks for this interview as well.
BLZ: Yeah no, no, [it's been amazing].
BMa: [They help you] to recall [stuff, yeah]
BLZ: [That's good. I'm glad]. Alright. Okay, enjoy the ride!
BMa: Have a good weekend!
BLZ: You too!
BMa: Okay then.
BLZ: Bye.
BMa: Bye. [00:33:13]

END OF AUDIO

INTERVIEW 9 – WARONA SEANE
DATE: 11 SEPTEMBER 2015
JOHANNESBURG
DURATION: [00:30:37]

WS: Warona Seane
BLZ: Bongile Lecoge-Zulu

BLZ: If you don't mind saying in, in in, the English language that it is okay for me, Bongile, to use your um interview in my research.
WS: Um, it is so okay for Bongi to use my interview in her research. It is so okay, it is *so* okay.
BLZ: Thank you.
WS: ((Laughs))
BLZ: ((Laughs)) It is so lovely,
WS: ((Laughs))
BLZ: I can't deal with myself right now]. Um, right, okay, so my research basically is about the collaborative experiences of musicians in theatre. Meaning *gore hela* {that} just very narrative and I'm just collecting stories but I'm not only collecting musician stories, *ke batla go itse* {I want to know} from a theatre practitioners *hela go itse* {just to know} what the experience of collaborating with another art form is and what, how it went, what went, how didn't go, um the process um, um, and in this, for this particular project I'm looking at which you did with Buti Mandla *mara* {but} I know that you've done other stuff like *Tin Bucket* where you worked with um, musicians and that can obviously come in in terms of the general experience. [So]
WS: [I also did an opera.
BLZ: You also did an opera which I need to see but Donato did.
WS: ((Laughs))
BLZ: He did and he was like, it's good so I feel like if he sees a thing I see it to. And I want hear about that, I do. You're dancing it means that's good.
WS: No, I'm, I'm in [love with opera]
BLZ: [Are you?
WS: Yeah.
BLZ: [You didn't]
WS: [Oh well.
BLZ: Imagine. Sit and talk to Donato, he's obsessed.
WS: ((Laughs))
BLZ: It's his thing. I walked into his office and I'm like dude like the previous [slow down].
WS: ((Laughs))
BLZ: I'm like books upon books [and videos].
WS: [Mm, mm.
BLZ: If you need anything to watch, please just call me. Um, *ja* can you please tell me *ka* {about}… I didn't watch, I didn't watch *Ukutshona ko Mendi*.
WS: Why?
BLZ: I don't know, I didn't.
WS: Mhmm.
BLZ: But it is one of the shows that I am, I am; one of the productions that I am looking at which is why I asked if you had footage [because ( )].
WS: [Yeah, eish, I haven't sent you the footage ne?
BLZ: No, *e teng?* {is it there?}
WS: There is footage. There isn't edited stuff but there's footage. [Um]
BLZ: [Mhmm].
WS: I just, I just have to find, find from Mma Mbila er, and then Mma Mbila can sent to you but also I can talk to Mandla because he sent some stuff to her.
BLZ: Oh, okay.
WS: Um, but you've already spoken to her. [00:02:49]
BLZ: Yes I have, I have [((sings))]
WS: [Yeah], yah, yah. Um.
WS: Mhmm.
BLZ: Okay, so I don't know anything, I don't even what the plot of this play is. I don't So please kindly talk me through and then we [look through]

WS: [00:02:56] [Okay], the piece itself was about um, the SS Mendi that sunk in 1917 off the Isle of Wight. Um, the SS Mendi was carrying um, South African, um, the native, the South African Native Labour Corps, [00:03:20] so it was um, Africans obviously, who were promised that if they went they would get their land back from the Boers, by, with the help of the [British]

BLZ: [Mm].

WS: So they went there to help the British so that they could get their land back. When they arrived on the um, on the ship, er, they were disarmed so uh, all their traditional weapons so to say were taken away and they were given buckets, and mops and what not so they were the labour corps. ((Coughs)) Um, so when they got to, they were on their way to France. When they got to the Isle of Wight another British ship, uh, the SS Darro, hit it in half, uh, like at, in the centre of the boat and just carried on like nothing had happened. Um, obviously er, the *Mendi* had um, er, a chaperone, and a ship was following them whatever, so a lot of the assistance came from that. Er, long story short – a lot of the men died. There's a myth around it, that the men danced as the ship sank. Um, the guy who was the captain of the SS Darro after the court case and what not only got a year of suspension and then went back to duty. Over, there isn't a clear number but over six hundred men died that day. [00:05:03]
So the play itself, the thought around it with Mandla was to question the notion of dancing as they died; so what kind of a dance was it? Was it celebratory? Was it prayer? Was it I give in to death? Was it ritual? Was it – what kind of a dance of a dance was it as they really died? Um, there were kids um, and a few women on the boat but my character er, the embodiment of the spirits ((sigh)) of the women who were left behind, who were mourning their husbands. But my character was essentially calling back the spirit of her husband because she's managed to call all these other spirits to come back and she still can't find her, her husband. So um, that's that. Um, the original text was written by Lara Foot about twenty-six pages.

BLZ: Mhmm.

WS: So when Mandla decided on a cast um, the eight of us went King William's Town, um, for six weeks to rehearse the res- and research and all of that. [00:06:33] We spoke to all of the historians, went to Forthare University, we spoke to chiefs in the area and all of that and that formed a huge bulk of the, of everything that was put into the twenty six pages that Lara [provided]

BLZ: [Mm.

WS: The twenty six pages for us were problematic. Twenty six pages for us were problematic. Um, firstly as he came from Mqhayi's poem which was studied in, er, in Xhosa schools, uh, the translation that was used we felt was not deep enough, it did not go anywhere so we searched for a different translation, which is the translation that we used in the play. [00:07:10] Um, however, that translation also, the English translation I also translated into Sesotho as well. Um, the story focused on the court scene so what Mandla felt was that, what it does is that it still gives the White man the voice as opposed to actually the issues of the men that left in sunk and so he shifted the focus from the court scenes into the ships, into this woman, uh, who's left behind, um, and how did she deal with the loss, what sort of things does she do in order to deal with, with, with her grief and all of that and then introduced another character who was sort of like the spiritual guide to the, to, to the woman. Um, yeah and who was helping to sort of call back the spirits. Um, um, [00:08:13] we did a lot of rituals.

BLZ: Okay. [00:08:16]

WS: Um, we went to see a spiritual advisor because uh, Mandla was always talking about how the piece itself need to be a living monument, um, ((coughs)), um, and we need to ask for permission to tell these stories because we don't know, there are so many different stories around it, so we don't whether we gonna be telling the right one or not and so we need to, to ask them uh, for guidance and that, that even if we don't tell the story fully, that um, that we, we are aware and we are trying to honour, and that by not telling it fully it's not that we are being disrespectful it's that we just don't know and can they open the [gates]

BLZ: [Mm, mm, mm]

WS: [For us to learn so we um, we so, we saw er, er, er a doctor! We went to the sea um, lots of times, very early morning like before the sun came out and, and talked to the sea and each one of us separately did our own prayers and asked for whatever we wanted to ask for and then went back and did research obviously then with the oral historians um, and um, ja. Er, In Jo- [00:09:45] we did it in Jo'burg because, because there is no ocean. ((Chuckles))

BLZ: ((Laughs))

WS: The coastal people brought uh water and so we would sprinkle that water on stage every time, ja. Every time we performed, um, when we were rehearsing, when we were, when we wanted get into the emotions, then we would do something with the water to help us access the sea and ja.
BLZ: [Must have been intense]
WS: ((Laughs)) [And obviously, okay yes. [00:10:21] And obviously because it's a spiritual journey, African spiritual journeys include music.
BLZ: *Yes.*
WS: Um, and, and because the question is did we dance, so there was a choreographer and that choreographer would need music to choreograph to so um, we had a choreographer Owen Monamela Mogane [00:10:51]
BLZ: Sorry, say that.
WS: Owen Manamela Mogane.
BLZ: Surname again?
WS: Mogane. Um, I thingamagic there. [00:11:02] He was the choreographer and then Bongile Mantsai was [the]
BLZ: [Yeah]
WS: [The, original musical director, ja and musician.
BLZ: How do you spell his surname?
WS: Mantsai.
BLZ: Y or just I?
WS: Ja, and then, and then, so, so because also the great thing the first of stages of making this space was that we all lived in the same house and we were away from our families, what not; so it was like a residency in creating, in creating the piece and so we were so… And also we were, we were asking for stories from the soil of the Eastern Cape and we were in the Eastern Cape. Um, and, and just by virtue of being in the same house, so we'd cook and eat together, um those rituals were also very [important]
BLZ: [Mm.
WS: At some point of, they, they, that broke but the funny thing is that the three characters who were the family that the piece was centred around, we er-, we continued to cook together up until the end of the six week; myself, Owen and Thando. Um, ((coughs)), um. [00:12:15] So rehearsals were structured. In the morning we did physical warm up, um, then vocal warm up, and then Owen would um, would have a session, for choreography, choose a moment whatever, and then choreograph that and then, and then, and then as he's choreographing we play the sounds. Um, a lot of the music was created in the rehearsal room. [00:12:45] All the music was created in the rehearsal room, but then obviously there are, there are hymns that we took and ja. A hymn to.
BLZ: So the music was created by the actors? [00:13:05]
WS: And Bongi.
BLZ: And Bongi yes.
WS: Yeah.
BLZ: Alright.
WS: Um, uh, what else? And then, and then when Bongi couldn't do it anymore, that was for the Joburg leg, um, Nolufefe Mchabe came but essentially she was coming in to, to just help us remember our voices.
BLZ: Okay.
WS: And she ended up making us very comfortable to the point where actually I thought yah, I can sing. Um, she really knows how to work with us. Um, I mean she's teaching Italian kids Xhosa songs there and they sing like they've been to the Eastern Cape you know.
BLZ: Mm, mm, mm.
WS: Like she's that kind of a yah. Um, ja, then ask away [00:14:03]
BLZ: Okay, first question that, the, the Xhosa poem you mentioned *e bidiwa mang* {what is it called?}
WS: Ukuzika.
BLZ: That's it?
WS: Mm, mm. Ko, uh. I think it's Ukuzika ko Mendi or Ukuzika ko Mqhanawe.
BLZ: ( ) [00:14:24]
WS: Just.. look for SEK Mqhayi. SEK M-q-h-a-y-i [00:14:27]
BLZ: Thank you. ((Sings))
WS: Yoh, wow!

BLZ: Um, so right now *ke tshwerwe ke* {I am surprised by} [00:14:46] performance in terms of ( ) so. I understand the, the, hey, for lack of a better term: the usual process of, of, of coming, of pulling something together in terms of the research um, and rehearsal and time you set to do things together, um, but as far as [00:15:28] I can tell with other production my research commissions; Hayani, Mother of All Eating, Songs of Migration, I don't know, and there's something else, Agreed, um, but this one seems, this one appears right now as the most integrated in terms of start the music from the beginning and, and starting it in the most collaborative sense as opposed to yes, director, musical director [meeting].

WS: [Mm, mm] [00:16:02]

BLZ: Having a conversation, um, and then musical director goes off and starts thinking and coming up with idea comes back in.

WS: Mm.

BLZ: As rehearsals have already started, with the actors, and then get close a bit [00:16:11] and goes back to go do something and then brings them the [music]

WS: [Mm.

BLZ: So this is different. So? [*ke a bona gore go nna jang* {I can see how it turns out}]

WS: [Mhmm.

BLZ: But it's a good thing, it was good. Um, so in terms of sound and music what, was it predominantly song, um, or creation of sound, or trying to recreate certain things or *jang jang*? {how} [00:16:45]. *Ee, so, e ne e le*, {it was?} yeah; *e ne e le* what? {what was it}

WS: ((Coughs)) [00:16:56] There had to be song like song that is song. But there also had to be lived moments. Um, so, so Mandla titles his scenes, um, and each one of these plays, hey, and I don't know if I should say this; ****Privileged Content**** [00:17:46] obviously the body, the body, when the body is working, the body is emitting sound you know; and so, and so always has to work. I mean the play start with, which is not in the original written text, which is something that we devised and developed, um, and choreographed and found the music for. Um, it begins with um, you see the Woman at her worst actually. It begins at her worst where she is attempting to drown herself in the ocean in order to finally actually reach her husband, you know, um, and, and so it starts from a suicide and then goes into the joy of having, having him around to the loss of him and the and the loss of the men in, in, in, in, the, in, in Afri- in the African world to everybody including the spirits being crucified, you know; everybody. And then, and then back to then how do you heal yourself from that and then once you heal does it stop, no it doesn't. It actually, it's carrying because there's a lot more spirits that haven't been raised. [00:19:06] So, so, so each scene inherits sounds but there was also song.

BLZ: I see.

WS: And the sounds had to be. He was particular about, about where you went with your exploration of the sounds that you emitted. The, you know, um, with like the first scene as I said, whatever it is that came out of my mouth before I started to call out the names of, of, of, of all … of as many names as possible the people who sunk, before, before getting there, I - had to be, to be choking on water and I had like to be throwing myself into the sea to get there because I need to die so I can find my husband, so do you know [((laughs))] [00:20:00]

BLZ: ((Laughs))

WS: I laughed, no I did ((laughs)). Eh, it's one of my, my favourite pieces though I loved it, I loved it.

BLZ: Did you not like laugh.

WS: No I did, but you know; so, so, so the, everything that came out, that have a certain type of thing. And then even, [00:20:19] even the song wasn't supposed to start as a song. The song, the song had to start as something that was done to her, ah, and she realises that she is singing.

BLZ: *Wa singa* {is singing} I see.

WS: Yeah.

((Silence))

WS: [00:20:51] ****Privileged Content****

BLZ: [00:21:35] Um, there were other musicians involved *ne* {right}?

WS: Mhmm, the only terms, my, you see, [00:21:45] my understanding particularly of Xhosa people is that they are all musicians and they are all; there is a thing, there's a, there's an energy in the Eastern Cape or the, I don't know. Xhosa people can sing. Xhosa people can dance.

((Laughter))

WS: Xhosa people can act ((laughs)) I don't know what it is, the, everything is integrated you know. And so when you sitting around and you're like, 'what are gonna do?', someone will just burst in song and start moving and you're like okay,
BLZ: ((Laughs))
WS: 'let's try that and see where we can take it'. Yeah, it, it, it was a very song heavy rehearsal space, yeah.
BLZ: Um.
WS: Thank you ((speaking to someone else)), Oh that?? Can, can I ask for like a bowl so I can share with my friend there so that he doesn't feel alone.
BLZ: And, and, no, not that. We are almost done so your friend can come. [00:23:08]
WS: I told him we were not that formal that but he
BLZ: His fine. These people ( ). [00:23:16]
WS: ((Laughs))
BLZ: Um, okay fro, so, in performance were there, what other instruments were there, were there any other instruments?
WS: Drums, it shifted with the second; okay. So the Cape Town and Eastern Cape performances Bongi was the musician right! So ehm, drums, ehh, ehh, drums and then there was a kudu horn, no it wasn't a kudu horn. No, it wasn't a kudu horn.
BLZ: Kukuku.
WS: Lots of triangles.
BLZ: ((Makes a horn sounds))
WS: The cow bell...
BLZ: Oh, the moo okay. [00:23:58]
WS: ((Laughs))
BLZ: I thought you were talking about [the I was like]
WS: [Yeah, the cow bell
BLZ: Moo ((laughs)). ****Privileged Content****
WS: ((Laughs))
BLZ: ((Laughs)) oh wow.
WS: Um, the, ehm, there were, the feet on the ground, so it was very percussive. ehm, um, in-breath. It is part of it. Um, we did a lot of that shit. um, ... laughs.. this guy *waitse* {you know} *ha a* {he is not} organised. So Mathlase *o tlo ja salad ka menwana* {will eat salad with his fingers?}
BLZ: Yah, he's ( ). [00:24:43]
WS: Yah.
BLZ: Um, okay and then in, in, in JHB?
WS: In Joburg, um, ehh, Mandla held auditions for percussionist.
BLZ: Yeah.
WS: Um, the one that we wanted to work with, he was not available because he had some gigs in Germany to do but then he found another one who was amazing.
BLZ: Thapelo.
WS: Thapelo, yeah.
BLZ: I spoke to him, he was the first person I interviewed.
WS: Yeah.
BLZ: ( ).
WS: Yeah.
BLZ: Thapelo.
WS: Ja, but 'cause it's because we had known each other and he's used to working with people he'd tell them what to do and Mandla wanted him to do things.
BLZ: Okay.
WS: Um. *wa bona* {you see} comes in.
BLZ: *Ga ke re* {isn't it}?
WS: Who knew?
BLZ: Who knew.
WS: So Thapelo had drums, he had a kudu horn, he had, that ehm, that, that, that ehm a Cuban drum; that Cuban square drum.
BLZ: Okay, yes, the yeah.
WS: He had the, the Japanese gong, um, he had, I mean he had all manner of drums.
BLZ: Mhmm.

WS: You know. Um, I had, there was a lot of flak. He had ehm, he had a like a flute-like type of thing. Um, he had a lot things in his station.
BLZ: Yeah, he's got toys.
WS: he had a lot of things, a of toys. um, and sometimes in rehearsals you'd like you'd hear him just falling in there, you are like are you okay 'cause you have a lot in there. Um, yah, sorry neh! You know when somebody goes shopping with you, you must take care of them.
BLZ: You must for real. Let me make spark. It's easy, does he wanna come here.
WS: Okay.
BLZ: Either way, I'm ((sneezes)) ((silence)) um, [00:28:04]. Last, last question.
WS: Mhmm.
BLZ: Um, what the impact of affect of sound in your opinion; sound and music being in what would typically be a dramatic theatre space?
WS: I really love the prevalence now, of having live music on stage with theatre. I'm liking what's happening now, it is a, it is, it's very key, I think it's important. I must say some sounds.
BLZ: Yeah.
WS: That's okay.
BLZ: It's a lot of food.
WS: Yah, from one salad, uh. so, so I think it's, its 'cause what it does is just to go to when I was working Matthew; [00:29:07] as opposed to the stage being, being just word and with the potential of getting really, really frustrated because of the process, um, because he was there, then I could play. So, so, so, he could play whatever he wanted and I could improvise around it and then he would find something and he would keep it. Whereas, if he hadn't been there, I would have just been improvising around my own mind and it would been frustrating. Even more frustrating than it was, but because he was there, it was, I had somebody to struggle with.
BLZ: ((Laughs)) You know um and it's not real about the struggle but what it ended up doing is that it ended up giving us the a way to each other so that he was not that a prop.
BLZ: Mhmm.
WS: And music is not just a prop, it is also a language, it is also a persona in the play and also, you know, and I like that. Yeah, yeah.
BLZ: Winning, won! I love my life right now.
WS: ((Laughs))
BLZ: Until I sit down to transcribe this and cry every day.
WS: ((Laughs))
BLZ: My mother has to help me now. She's just like oh my [child].
WS: [Mm]
BLZ: [Thank you so much *tlhe mma* {dear lady}]
WS: [Good to see you hey. [00:30:36]

END OF AUDIO

INTERVIEW 10 – MANDLA MBOTHWE
DATE: 6 JULY 2015
GRAHAMSTOWN
DURATION: [00:31:57]

MMb: Mandla Mbothwe
BLZ: Bongile Lecoge-Zulu

BLZ: So I generally don't have a ruberic of questions. I'd just like you to tell me about your, like, to recount your experience of doing *Ukutshona ko Mendi*.

MMb: *Ukutshona ko Mendi*. Um. It … The, the, the show is *called Ukutshona ko Mendi. Ukutshona ko Mendi: Did We Dance*. Uh and *Ukutshona ko Mendi* is a title that is taken from S.E.K Mqhayi's poem of Mendi. And it's called "Ukuzika ko Mendi". Now, in Xhosa you don't use an object with *ukutshona* {to drown}. Uh, *ukuthsona* is referred to a human. A human drowns. Not a ship.

BLZ: *Ja*.

MMb: Okay. So I intentionally said it's *ukutshona* because of I wanted to actually make the ship a human, a ship you drown, a ship is called *ukuzika* {to sink}, it's *ukuzika* in a wave. Uh, I'm saying this because of … It, it, it opens many collaboration that I have to go through with making of the production. Uh and when it comes to, to, to the music for me, all my productions have an element of music. I come from a very strong background of African oral tradition of storytelling. And I've done quite an intense research around it, and I, I'm inspired by it. And for me what [00:02:05] I call the reclamation of the aesthetic of oral tradition of storytelling in our contemporary theatre – it's always central. I might have done it. I 've, I've been able to articulate about it after my post grad studies off course. Uh, but when I look back before even my post grad studies, that my work has always been defined by certain elements that exist or strongly exist within the story of *intsomi nezinganekwani* {fairytales} that our aunts, our grandmothers used to tell us. [00:02:36] Where there was no distinction between a physical movement, a physical metaphor, the idiomatic expression of the spokayen language and the movement. But also … And the kinds of communicative modes that existing in the community are totally reincorporated in the telling of the story. Poetry, singing, dance, playing from one character to another. Um, interaction with the audience. Allowing audience access to the elements that are so familiar to them. It might be songs, it might be part of dance, it might be ululation, to evokaye a special relationship between the audience and the performer. But over and above that to make sure that the relationship the story and the performer is beyond that … Them. The story becomes the crucial point of the person who is watching to actually accept it as a story. And for me that's very important. That's the element of my work. [00:03:33] And, and er, and I, and this thing of [00:03:39] the singing also comes from the fact that when the body experiences the highest part of emotions, or the extreme part of emotion at both ends it loses the language. It finds other means of expression, which is so sincere and so true, that can never be rehearsed. So those expressions are both in sound and physical expression and singing. And they are quite prominent in South African theatre because of … They come from our culture and our traditions. And in Mendi, as many other productions that I have created, are a typical example of what I call [00:04:22] a total aesthetic of African culture. And, and, and, and that can never happen without the music. The song you know. And it's not only about composing and creating song. It's to find songs that exist already that speaks to that thing. And find freshness and newness in them and then put them back on stage. And simply Mendi is about that. And that's, that's a relationship. Now I needed to find someone who's going to deal with music. Not only someone who's a composer, but someone whose got an ear of teaching the actor and the dancer to sing. Okay. So I don't start looking for someone who can sing. I look for someone who can act because I know I can teach that person to sing within a day or two. Because I work with people that can make that. So it's not just a composer but a teacher, you know of music. So I've … And, and someone who's going to say in the rehearsal, "okay, what song do we have around the room?" Not say, "here are the songs". [00:05:24]

BLZ: Yes, yes, yes.

MMb: So I, in a way again when I say reclaiming of the aesthetics, it's also reclaiming of the process of making, of making theatre. That it's a developmental process, it's a devised process, it's a process that incorporates multiple voices within the space. That we try and get as much as, as possible things that, that you know. And some of the things that you know but you don't know

that you know. That the process must actually excavate that from you. So it's not only about excavating the buried stories, like the stories of Mendi and the stories of Biko's quest or stories that are … But it's also about using the process to excavate those kinds of story. So it's for me to ask questions like, "What is the song that makes to remember of your home on Sunday morning?". "What is the song that makes you to remember the funeral next-door?". "What is the song that makes you remember to see young boys going to the mountain?". "What is the song of you that just ... when that song or the sound or the rhythm; makes you feel so sad? Or makes you want to just pray? Or makes you to just want to hug someone? Or the song that heals you? Or the song that makes you to stand up?" Each and every actor must bring that song. And we start finding a way from that song. And that's a kind of collaborative. So the person who's our facilitator ... So from my choreographer must find movement from the dance performers. Okay. [00:06:55]

BLZ: Mm.

MMb: And we cre- And then we create something out of that. My music person must find ways ... Things that … Within the actors and stuff. And, and, and I … Hence I always work with multiple uh, uh, uh creative team of people, you know, in a way. So um, I'm never alone. There will always be a musical director. I will always work with someone with a physical and uh, uh, um, physical and dance experience that can be able to work with performers. Uh, I used … You know in the last two productions I haven't with them, but I've also used with a multimedia specialist quite a lot with my previous productions. Uh, and I also work with people whose interest is in teaching. That after the process you can go and repeat the process with the other group or with your own story. That's my interest. I'm a teacher before I become a director of a theatre maker. I'm a teacher, that's where my art is. And my process does actually justify that or does satisfy that aspect. Um, so, so the work in *Mendi*, if you like is the songs. Ninety percent of those songs, or eighty percent of those songs are songs that are familiar to us, are songs that we know, are songs that we have sang. It's the question of reincorporating them and finding newness. So as the rituals. If you see the rituals of *Mendi* … And also are the songs that also … [00:08:28] Each, each story in our life is dominated by one life element or the combination of two. And *Mendi* of course it's, it's, it's two life elements which is the sand water and the, the combination of them, which is mud. And *Mendi* is constructed around that. And you need to find the song that speaks to those kinds of things, but also the song that speaks to the lost souls. The unburied bodies and the unrecorded names. And the misspelled and misrepresented and misappropriation of those kinds of things. So we needed to find those kinds of songs of saying as bodies of actors in the space we are so small. We need to ask, so we need to find prayers of the song. [00:09:13] Hence in the very first page, Warona actually is trying to remember or is playing with a memory. The memory of saying "no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no". [00:09:23] And the mediator that side starts singing the song when he wants to make sense of their world because of the text itself and, and, and that is ruled by grammars and particular language, fails us to express certain emotions or to express our smallness in this big story. And the song is our survivor to help us. Now, the way of using the songs like in an oral tradition of storytelling, there are many ways of using the song. A song is used as a language and a text and a dialogue. So the song itself ... So in a way a song it becomes part of the dialogue. A song is not just a background. A song responds to certain things. You know, a song tells a particular story. A song argues with the people. A song represents the community. A song becomes the plural of the community - the song. Um, so, so it's not just a background you know. That's one element of a song. I'm starting with that because [00:10:25] every time I work with a group of ... With the musicians I tell them that you are not here to play instruments.

BLZ: ((Laughs))

MMb: Each and every instrument of you has got a character. You need to find an attitude. You need to find a subtext.

BLZ: [Yes]

MMb: [What's the subtext of your guitar, what's the subtext of that drum? And each and every time that it comes in: are you angry, are you what? What are you responding to, why are you doing? Who are you talking to? And, so, so the musicians they used to be very angry with me because of they said I don't know what I am doing and I don't know what I want from them. They are just musicians. I said, "then, well". Um, so as I aud- when I audition I ask them certain questions you know.

BLZ: [Mm]

MMb: [And they are constantly in character. You are not going chew a chewing gum while you are

waiting for your cue and watch. You are in totally, and in my productions no actor leaves the stage. You are always on stage. Once you enter the story you do not leave the story. I don't care – you do not leave the story and that's the kind of work that I do. So, so, that's a kind of thing so that the, the, the, the, [00:11:21] the musicians are characters. Whatever they play, whatever they sing, they are entering the conversation of the story. They progress the story. They take the story forward. They, they, they take the story forward and, and um that's one other thing. And then the other time we ask questions like, "in this scene; who's leading the story? Is it the musicians who determine the rhythm of that that scene? Or the musicians are just following the rhythm of the dance or the rhythm of the performance?" You know. So I ask certain questions that who leads? Who is the main voice in this scene? Is it the music? Is it the … Do you understand? Because those questions are quite important because they create a dynamic of the story itself. And then there … I, I, I also place the stories in locations that are in different realms. So for example I said uh, Nolufefe is just amazing. My musical director who always creates music with the actors and stuff. I will say, "I want the song that comes from underneath the sea", and he understands that. You know. Er, "I want, I want, I want the wailing song of the women in the village", and he understands that you know, um. And he's able to actually play with that. Um, "I want the song that we can't... I don't people to recognise it right up until the last bar that – oh! That's the song that they were singing!" I like, I want those kinds … And he understands how to take a popular song and make it so familiar to you but not really. You can't really see what it is up until when they finish you're like, "aaah!" And then it's going into another. Because that is actually what Brecht talks about *Verfremdungseffekt* disconnection or, or, or estrangement.

BLZ: Mm.

MMb: To make something new.

BLZ: Alright.

MMb: Uh, which is familiar to the audience so that there is a second look that has been done into it. [00:13:18]

BLZ: Mhmm.

MMb: Um, so that's another one. Of course the other one is to help the rhythm of the story. It's to help the ... It's to progress the like … Exactly if you, if you, if you read the analysis of the African tradition of storytelling, that it will tell all these elements that I'm talking about. That actually what the role of the song in the African performance is. So the other one is to … [00:13:39] It will determine the rhythm of the story, and it's to progress the story, it can slow down the story, it can make the story to be fast. Um, and then the other way of course is to, is to expand and deepen the subtext of certain elements or certain points of the story. Uh, the emotional. What I call the vertical travelling of the story, so in a way if you like you've got your horizontal travelling of the story which is the beginning, middle and end. And then there's the vertical travelling of the story. And it helps us. It helps to progress with the horizontal but also it helps us to deepen and work with the vertical understanding of the ... The vertical travelling of the story. But also the song helps us to emphasise certain things that I want to highlight in a particular space, in a particular time. So if you are like reading a book, the song at some point becomes my highlighter. That okay. I don't want you: no matter *u bu u sms* {you were sending a text}, *o kanye u bu ...* {or whether you were … } We lost you somewhere, that story will bring you back so that you can look at that moment uh of, of that. So that's the kind of song. And of course the song that helps with the rhythm of the dance - the song that comes with the dance. That takes you away from that story a little bit but makes you to remember if you are an African in a, in a way. I'm using the word African so loosely here you know. Uh, that makes you … Your heart pump and, and, and, and ((laughs)) you know like a little bit of ululation inside yourself happens you know.

BLZ: ((Laughs))

MMb: And, and, and at times you'll find yourself singing it while washing the dishes. [00:15:20]

BLZ: [Mm. Mm]

MMb: [Or so you understand? Uh. My work uh, er, I ... My, my, my work in art has always been enquiring the appeal of the art than the intellect. That I, I you know er, it is better to change the heart than the intellect. An intellect can be changed by a poster or a flyer like this, [picks up a loose flyer lying on the table in front of him] "Oh shit, well that's okay, I've been looking at this differently".

BLZ: Yeah.

MMb: But the heart you need to do more work to do that. And, and, and things like songs drives us, and are the most [00:16:02] powerful communicative tools that speaks to the heart. Uh, but

also I work a lot with what Victor Turner calls "communitas" a spiritual ecstasy. [00:16:10] Victor Turner was an anthropologist who works quite a lot with drama – the relationship of drama and real life and culture in Africa. And he talks of communitas, communitas – a, a, a, a, a, the in between-ness of spaces where a group of people feel the spiritual of ecstasy. It's what the comrades during *toyi-toyi* they felt even if they were holding rocks to face the guns. *Because* they were singing the *toyi-toyi*. So, what you get when a group of people are feeling exactly the same thing and they lose who they are, lose gender, state, and anything, but they become one.

BLZ: [Mmhm]

MMb: [And my work also looks at that and how to use songs and to use music, to use, to use rhythm, to use elements of sounds that are repetitive and that create some sense of, of, of remembering um, in terms of holding the entire group together but also including the audience themselves. And then of course the other elements of using the songs are quite poetic elements. That the song itself becomes poe- or a poem in a way. So it will be in the chorus, it will be in a singular voice. It will be in a typical way how the opera uses singing – that you speak your text but you sing your [text]

BLZ: [Yes, yes, yes]

MMb: [So there will be those elements where the text is been sang in a way. Um, um, and, and of course the, there's a … My … I … You know both singing and a chorus for me works quite well. And a chorus might be people speaking together – same line.

BLZ: [Yes]

MMb: [Not the chorus in the sense of the music you know. And it can be a chorus in the sense of the [music]

BLZ: [Mmhm]

MMb: [So in a way, for me because they are quite powerful tool they always end my plays and they always starts them. And it's either they end them, but always, mostly, they always end my play. My plays mostly end by chorus. A community for me, and plurality always comes first in a … There's a sense of multiple voices coming together in the community. Um, um, yeah. That's it! [00:18:55]

BLZ: ((Laughs))

MMb: *Wa bona iphelel' yonke into yakho* [you your whole thing is done]. Everything I've answered. That's it.

BLZ: ((Laughs)) No you've answered a lot of questions that I didn't even ask; which is fantastic. I appreciate that. I do have a question, which is slightly, like tangential to the actual main issue [here]

MMb: [Okay]

BLZ: Which is: the shocking lack of archival material where theatre is concerned. As far as, as far as I can tell in looking for archival material. For example um, footage to begin with is … I don't know what it is in terms of theatre's not retaining, or making an effort to um, um, to capture footage of rehearsals come um, performances. I know that many rehearsal processes are quite sensitive and having somebody just walk in and record … Having other people just have access to that process can be a bit of a touchy subject. But then in terms of performances, just … I mean maybe it was wrong of me to make the assumption that give that it was performed at the Market Theatre or Soweto Theatre there would be footage of it. And also maybe other archival material. [00:20:07]

MMb: [I was quite]

BLZ: [Like photographs, or notes]

MMb: [I mean, there are lots and lots of photographs. Of course there are a lot of ... There are a couple of things that make the work less archived or ... The first one is, is, is I think for me it's funding that the you know, that's one part. That's the first one. It's not the only one you know. And the other one it's, it's, it's academics and scholars that ask such questions.

BLZ: ((Laughs))

MMb: Do, do, do you understand?

BLZ: [Yes. Yes]

MMb: [They've got that interest of saying we do not write about our we, we do not document our work. [00:20:48] Artists' interest is not that much in the process. It's in the output because of their interest it is the story and the audience. So how they get there really it's not their memo to document it. Do understand. Unless you are a scholar, do you understand. I have documented some of my work and people have written quite inten- extensively about my work you know. I've, I've, I've you know ... So in a way I might be aware of that. I might be

even to [respond to]
BLZ: [Mm]
MMb: [To that. It's sad because of at the end that we lose our voice in a way. There's that people who end up analysing and our own way of telling stories. And in different ways that we are again going bad to the same issue of being misappropriated. First we said that we want to tell our own stories in our own way and all of those kinds of things but we still don't write about them. It makes it quite difficult to even ask the students to go and reference because of now; your point of reference when you write depends on what is written down. And most of what is written down is written down by people who might be actually distant from the [actual]
BLZ: [Mm, mm]
MMb: [Content you know that the work has been um, er, created. So, so that's a challenge, and that's a challenge. Also that challenge is not only from you guys. I was talking to this other er, gathering. I was saying that one of the challenge that we need to look at is also black journalism in work of art in theatre. Our work has been poorly, poorly critically analysed by people who think they know so much.
BLZ: Mm, mm, mm.
MMb: And with that arrogance. And then for me it's quite sad because of also they cannot contextualise the process of how it got to that space. How it got to that particular moment. They can't deeply analyse certain metaphors that means certain things to certain people because of they are directly connected to particular cultural institutions and cultural practices of individual families or communities. Um, and at time its, got, its ... And theatre, that's where theatre comes from you know um. So it, it needs those kinds of scholars of people who really … You know I've been reading quite different articles um, in, in Grahamstown and, um, and at times it has got nothing to do with race also. It has got something to do with what the students are being fed at school and what they understand to be the priority of be what defines theatre or performance, or movement, or dance, or music. Do you understand?
BLZ: Mm.
MMb: And that's their point of reference you know. It's like if you go to any rural area and you ask them to, to, to dance. It's either they show you the traditional dance or they show you break dance. Because that's what they see on TV. That's their point of reference. You know um, so, so there's a huge lack of that – of people writing about their work and documenting their work. You know uh and, and at times when, when you thing *ukuthi* {that} actually for the next six months I'm going to reflect on my work, I'm going to make this book, and I'm going engage with *bani bani* {so and so} and then we start writing certain things. And then a burning issue comes into my heart that there's a story [that wants to come out]
BLZ: [That needs to be told now!]
MMb: Yes! But then you think, [no okay]
BLZ: [Later] ((Laughs))
MMb: [Let me just park this.
BLZ: Yeah, yeah.
MMb: [00:24:52] So I think across the board the collaboration should not only be an artistic collaboration. You always need to identify a scholar to work with.
BLZ: Mm.
MMb: Someone who's going to start writing about these processes and stuff. And that relationship needs to be established long before the process. Right from the conceptualisation of the process, so that by the time you guys come with the cast, the cast knows you. Do you understand? So that even if the processes are so sensitive, the cast is there. You are part of the family.
BLZ: Yes.
MMb: Do you understand? You are part of the family. If it means that you run away and get to water because of some who is a cast member has just actually collapsed. You are part of the family. You are part of the family. You are writing about these things because of you are part of reclaiming the, what I call the stolen memory.
BLZ: Mm.
MMb: And we're all in this mission. So it should never be separated because of I'm telling you; if you think that person will come a week later then we haven't documented the process. You've missed out the beginning [of the process]
BLZ: [Yes, yes, yes, yes]
MMb: [You know so, the creative team must be also … I mean not only the dramat- … Dramaturgy is something else. You need to have someone to analyse the work. Someone at the end. After

the first performance that person will write um, part one of the article and then ... And see and watch the production growing during the performance and write part two of the thing you know. This is what came out of the script. This is what came out of the performance.

BLZ: Mm.

MMb: You know, and categorise it in that manner. And, and, and also that needs to be encouraged also in, in, in, in higher learning institutions of, of, of, of, of as a, as your fourth year and post grad students where part of their in-service training they need to identify a particular practitioner that will sit with that practitioner for [six months]

BLZ: [Yeah]

MMb: [And work with that practitioner. But also not bluntly so, but heir institution also needs to identify what is lacking in our archives when we study theatre – and African analysis of work is lacking, then that should be the priority you know. Uh, it's you know … We cannot just make theatre courses and all those kinds of things and ignore the past as the past. [00:27:02] We should always try and seek, when we studied, we will go to um uh we will go to our libraries you know our theatre libraries and drama libraries. And when we start looking for, for theatre work – African theatre work or South African theatre work, it will be like just four, five books.

BLZ: Mm.

MMb: And the rest it's you know er ... I can tell you more about all these other practitioners. But so less, er about Maishe Maponye or uZakes Mda for that matter. And it's sad. I count the people who have actually said that I'm gonna design a lecture around Brecht for ten days, or Augusto Boal or whoever. Or, or Stanislavsky or …You know I can, I can, because I studied them so extensively. And I spent so much time you know er … And, and you need to start redressing those kinds of thing because of those are other illnesses of our past in the theatre. Or else we continue perpetrating the same thing, the same thing! And we always … And what, what that does: it makes still the visitors in the world of theatre. Because of we are not incorporated – we are not full incorporated and we still define what theatre according to their own way. *Ndiqibile ngokayu* {I am done now}. That's it.

BLZ: ((Laughs))

MMb: But do, do, do you understand?

BLZ: Yes. I do, I do, I do.

MMb: And you guys, it's your responsibility now, to make these documentaries and also to make the films you know to, to write these articles. To talk about our voice.

BLZ: Mm.

MMb: To make these up young coming performers to say, "I want to be … I want to do that". Do you understand? Make them accessible, make the easy for them to be easy to Google and there it is. To go to the library: there it is. To Youtube; there it is. Do you understand? As long as it is a struggle to access it the more we'll go to what is easily accessible [and]

BLZ: [That is true]

MMb: [The more we'll keep on actually being stuck in this thing of saying when are we hearing our own stories? When are we seeing more our own stories. Mm. Um and, and, and, and I mean you look at the festival. And the festival as been in Grahamstown for more than fifty years I think. But they still, Eastern Cape is the least one that comes with more interesting work more interesting work. Meaning that Grahamstown doesn't really influence the location [00:29:33]

BLZ: [Yeah]

MMb: [What does it mean? But also you know if you go around also the shows, there are far lesser shows where there's indigenous instruments in music. Whereas it's located in the university of the archives and the history of the indigenous instruments are here.

BLZ: They are.

MMb: In Grahamstown university but we don't see that in the festival. That's what says something.

BLZ: Shu! yeah.

MMb: Where you see traditional dancing it's so strongly rooted here. But you can only see it in Sundowners. Not in the mainstream of the dance. Because of it's not recognised as a dance.

BLZ: Yeah. I was talking to Warren Nebe just before this and we were talking about just the, the way it's very middle class. Like you know.

MMb: Very white!

BLZ: Very white middle class. That's really what it is now and there's not enough like you know … Work, like work. Like meaty pieces like … It's all very palatable, very consumable. Pre-digested for your convenience.

MMb: Yeah, yeah, exactly.
BLZ: But that being said I'm also doing something that is pre-digested. But [I mean]
MMb: [No, no, the reason is … Are you performing in it?
BLZ: Yes I am.
MMb: Have you directed something?
BLZ: Oh no I'm … I haven't directed … I'm not a director. Not by any stretch of the imagination ((Chuckles))
MMb Come on. Jeez. Don't say that.
BLZ: Not, not yet. Not yet. I'm still … Yeah.
MMb: Okay.
BLZ: No but I'm just that it's, it's the easiest thing to do. [Not all]
MMb: [So, so, so there's so much that at times you feel that the centre doesn't want to shift because of there are. It's guarded by certain things that you might undermine. And those certain things is what I called ((calls over to a man walking past)) that's the, that's Bongi Mantsayi.
BLZ: Oh, Okay! Hello.
Bongile Mantsayi: Hi.
BLZ: How are you?
Bongile Mantsayi: I'm okay, I can't complain and you?
BLZ: I'm good. Um I'm also Bongi. [Um I]
MMb: [She's studying the singing of *Mendi*. So I was telling her that the original maker of the music of *Mendi* she we made ... It's Bongi.
BLZ: [Yes]
MMb: [When we did the music and all those kinds of things. So you need to find time to talk to Bongi.
BLZ: I would love to steal a moment of your time.
Bongile Mantsayi: Uh I'll give you my details.
MMb: So *mina* {I} I'm done Bongi. So *cel'u thathe lento yakho* {please take your thing}. ((Laughter)) [00:31:57]

END OF AUDIO