



Salulandela - Buci Ncube

I was born in Bulawayo, Matabeleland, Zimbabwe. My father was a part-time musician who played the double bass with various groups in Bulawayo. He also brought home recordings of music that was very popular all around Africa at that time -from South Africa, Congo and Cuba. My favorite was Dorothy Masuka, who also came from Bulawayo and wrote songs for Miriam Makeba. I got my first experience as a singer was in church, singing African gospel music. This kind of music is still a huge influence on my singing, and on South African popular music, traditional mbira music from Zimbabwe, jazz rock and funk as well. Growing up, I was listening to Miriam Makeba, Dorothy Masuka, Dolly Rathebe and also American soul music and even disco! As a teenager I began performing with local groups in the clubs in Bulawayo. When I was 19, I got an offer through my sister – who also was a singer – to join *Ilanga*, a well-known group in Harare. After I moved to Harare, *Ilanga* recorded three albums together and we made a huge hit with my song called “True love”. “True love” became one of the most popular songs in Zimbabwe and can still be heard on the radio in Zimbabwe today.

After *Ilanga* disbanded in the late 1980's, I formed my own group, *Band Rain*, with some of the best musicians including guitarist Rodger Mbambo, percussionist Adam Chisvo and my twin sister Phathi. *Band Rain* has recorded 9 albums and has toured in southern Africa, the Czech Republic, Ireland, the UK and Norway. In Zimbabwe, we have performed regularly at “The Book Café”, the best and most important venue in Harare. We have also played major

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gigs at festivals, such as the Harare International Festival of Arts and the Chimani Music Festival. I took part in a project called “Life at Home/Hupenyu Kumusha” that featured my friend Chiwoniso Maraire, as well as Adam Chisvo, Rodger Mbambo and others.

In addition to singing, my main instruments are Mbira, hosho and ngoma. Mbira is an instrument that is central in Zimbabwe's traditional music. It has always been important in village life, but was more or less forgotten during minority rule, because neither the missionaries nor the authorities wanted the people to express their own traditions. Thanks to a few individuals, among them Ephant Mujuru and the late Dumisani Maraire, the Mbira tradition was preserved for posterity. Mbira is now a significant part of Zimbabwean musical culture, through performers like Stella Chiweshe, Adam Chisvo, Chiwoniso Maraire and myself.

In 2001 I was invited by The Norwegian Concert Institute to take part in a seminar about women in world music. There I met Norwegian/Algerian musician and producer, Malika Makouf Rasmussen, who invited me to join a project called “Women's Voice”. This group consisted of female musicians from Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Algeria, France, Israel and Norway and released an album in 2004. We also toured in Scandinavia, Israel, Angola and Zimbabwe. We performed with Mari Boine when she received the Nordic Council's Music Award 2003, and with the great Somalian singer, Maryam Mursal, at Oslo Mela in 2005. In 2004 we were nominated for the BBC 3 World Music Award.

I am featured on Mari Boine's record “Idjagiedas” [“The Mermaid”] and I have performed with Norwegian artists such as Johan Sara Jr., Kristin Sevaldsen, Kossa Diomande, Banjo Mosele and even with a string quartet from the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra. I am currently living in Norway, and have formed my own group featuring some of the top musicians from the Oslo music scene.

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