

# BAFO MENTOR

Post-task : **Storytelling with guitar**

Madala Kunene makes two-chord Madalaline Music. It has been described as Zulu folk, maskandi, Zulu blues and trance music. It carries the old Zulu songs, aphorisms, proverbs, call-and-response sing-alongs and the urban memories of Apartheid, forced removals, harassment by police and rites of passage. It holds the messages of our culture for up and coming musicians. Madala is an international musician. He has impressively collaborated with Western blue grass, rock, Afro-rock, African jazz music.

Madala Kunene was born in 1951 in uMkhumbane, a vibrant mixed community just outside inner Durban. The son of a carpenter and a guitar player, Madala Kunene was raised by his grandmother. At the age of eight, in the year 1959, Madala Kunene and his extended family were forcibly removed from uMkhumbane. As a meditation on his history, Madala released the album 1959. "Music is the best medium to record and tell history. As African people, the way we know and understand our past is very influenced by music," Madala said.

Madala got his first guitar in 1965, in Kwa Mashu, after the forced removals from uMkhumbane. That guitar had five strings instead of six. He bought it for five bob, today's fifty cents. Madala, who was known as Mzwakhe in those days, was coming from Curries Fountain Stadium, after a show of Malombo Jazz, with great musicians including Early Mabuza, Mabi Thobejane and Happy Cindi.

After the show, Mzwakhe met a man carrying his guitar on his shoulder. He stared at the man in admiration and said he loved his guitar. The man asked if he had five bob. Mzwakhe replied, "Yes, but it's my bus fare." The man said, "Show me the money." He took the money and handed over his guitar.

Mzwakhe took the guitar and returned to Curries Fountain to go and ask for bus fare from the musicians. Now that he had a guitar, he was on a high. He was just in time to catch up with their maroon Bedford bus with a TJ number plate as they were leaving.

Believe it or not, Thobejane threw a red ten bob (ten shilling) paper note through the window. It came floating on the wind. Mzwakhe chased it as it flew over into the fire brigade yard. The guard at the gate saw the way Mzwakhe was running and asked if he had stolen the guitar.

Mzwakhe said, "No, I am chasing my ten bob, given by my friends in the bus. The ten bob that flew all the way into this yard."

Mzwakhe could see the ten shillings on the floor, but the guard could not. The

guard took the guitar and allowed Mzwakhe to go and fetch the ten shillings. It was a bit of a distance.

When Mzwakhe returned with the money, the guard wanted to take it. Suspecting that as an adult, the guard would not give the money back, Mzwakhe refused. The guard said Mzwakhe was not allowed into the yard and yet he had let me in, so he had to give him fifty and take fifty, but he had no change. The guard said Mzwakhe should leave the guitar and go to a nearby shop to get change.

“No, I will take my guitar,” said Mzwakhe. The guard watched his every move. But the moment the guard looked down, Mzwakhe vanished behind the shop, going for the bus.

## **Now answer the following questions**

1. District Six, Sophiatown and Mkhumbane all had in common forced removals. What is your experience of this history?

Can you find something about it to share with us?

2. Madala made his first guitar with a cooking oil can, a wooden piece and strings from a fishing line. Have you ever made a musical instrument?

Tell us about it and how it worked for you?

3. Can you take the two-chord style of Madalaline music and either transfer it to your instrument or improvise over it with the instrument you play?

4. Madala excels at taking a very simple story and turning it into music. What simple story do you have that you would like to tell over the two-chord music.

Can you put it into lyrics?