

**A close reading of the opera *Mandela trilogy*,
with a special focus on the performance of
Mandela's masculinities**

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Declaration

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focus on the performance of Mandela's masculinities**



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ABSTRACT

This study explores the mediation of socio-political and life realities, and the performance of Nelson Mandela's masculinities in the opera *Mandela trilogy*, and what that says about the function and nature of contemporary opera in the current socio-political contexts in South Africa. *Mandela trilogy* is a three-act opera in which events that unfolded in Nelson Mandela's life are portrayed, from the time he went to the traditional initiation school to his speech after his release from prison in 1990. Acts 1 and 3 were composed by Péter Louis van Dijk and Act 2 by Mike Campbell, and the libretto was written by Michael Williams. The style of the original music in Act 1 is derived from AmaXhosa traditional songs, but it also includes arrangements of existing traditional IsiXhosa songs. The music of Act 2 is predominantly in a jazz style, and Act 3 is in a contemporary classical operatic style.

In this close reading, significant technical aspects of the music, musical styles, orchestration, textual content and structure (libretto), staging, costumes, choreography, acting, the locations depicted, and singing are described in detail. In addition to this, a number of important issues, presented as 'digressions' from these descriptions, are highlighted. In Act 1, 'post-blackface' is presented as a concept that relates to the progressive reconstruction of social relations in South Africa. Stylistic influences are suggested to be symbolic of Mandela as the 'elder statesman' and the 'prosecuted outsider'. In Act 2, jazz is referred to as a symbol of exile and as a space for an emerging, politicized African urbanism. Historical correctness in the depiction of previously-oppressed persons and cultures are related to the use of existing music in this act. In Act 3, more 'conventional' operatic devices portray the prosecution and imprisonment of the Rivonia trialists. The separation of men and women takes on musical significance as women become a tool for strength and endurance for the prisoners. In this act, Mandela is first seen as vulnerable, and later as a token of hope.

In Act 1, masculinities that come to light include 'militarism', the display of which is reflected in the music through the instrumentation. The influence of the Thembu regent on Mandela's masculine development is presented as being significant, as well as seminal in shaping Mandela's gender performance amongst Thembu people. The self-assertion of Mandela's masculinity comes to light in a number of ways, including his participation in activities that served to strengthen male camaraderie. In Act 2, leadership

qualities Mandela acquired are displayed through dance and music. The idea of 'smart-cool/bravado' is linked to womanizing and gender-division as a display of masculinity. In Act 3, militarism, rather than being a symbol of power (like before), is connected to loneliness, weariness, helplessness and endurance; this is especially evident in the military-like routine the prisoners were subjected to, as displayed in this act.

In conclusion, I suggest that the combination of musical platforms from which Mandela's story was told in *Mandela trilogy* was necessary in sketching the almost complete picture of him we encounter in the opera.

Keywords: *Mandela trilogy*, Nelson Mandela, masculinity, Péter Louis van Dijk, Mike Campbell, Michael Williams, contemporary South African opera, Xhosa music, South African jazz

OPSOMMING

In hierdie studie word die bemiddeling van sosio-politiese en lewenswerklikhede, en die uitvoering van Nelson Mandela se manlikhede in die opera *Mandela trilogy* ondersoek, asook wat dit suggereer omtrent die funksie en aard van hedendaagse opera in die huidige sosio-politiese kontekste in Suid-Afrika. *Mandela trilogy* is 'n drie-bedryf opera waarin gebeurlikhede wat in Nelson Mandela se lewe ontvou het voorgestel word vanaf die tyd wat hy die tradisionele inisiasieskool bygewoon het tot sy toespraak na sy vrylating in 1990. Bedrywe 1 en 3 is deur Péter Louis van Dijk gekomponeer en Bedryf 2 deur Mike Campbell, en die libretto is deur Michael Williams geskryf. Die styl van die oorspronklike musiek in Bedryf 1 is afgelei vanaf tradisionele Xhosa-liedere, maar dit sluit ook verwerkings van bestaande tradisionele Xhosa-liedere in. Die musiek in Bedryf 2 is hoofsaaklik in 'n jazzstyl, en Bedryf 3 is in 'n hedendaags-klassieke operastyl.

In hierdie stiplesing word noemenswaardige tegniese aspekte van die musiek, orkestrasie, tekstuele inhoud en struktuur (libretto), verhoogontwerp, kostuums, koreografie, toneelspel, die voorgestelde plekke en sang in detail beskryf. Verder word 'n aantal belangrike kwessies beklemtoon, aangebied as 'afwykings' ('*digressions*') vanaf hierdie beskrywings. Met verwysing na Bedryf 1 word '*post-blackface*' as 'n konsep wat verband hou met die progressiewe rekonstruksie van sosiale verhoudinge in Suid-Afrika aangebied. Stylinvloede word voorgehou as simbolies van Mandela as die 'ouer staatsman' en 'vervolgde buitestaander'. Met verwysing na Bedryf 2 word na jazz verwys as 'n simbool van ballingskap en 'n ruimte vir 'n opkomende, verpolitiseerde Afrika-stedelingskap. 'n Verband word getrek tussen historiese korrektheid in die uitbeelding van voorheen-benadeelde persone en kulture en die gebruik van bestaande musiek in hierdie bedryf. In Bedryf 3 word meer 'konvensionele' operagebruike aangewend in die uitbeelding van die vervolging en gevangenessing van die Rivonia-verhoordes. Die skeiding van mans en vroue neem musikale betekenis aan soos wat vroue 'n bron van krag en uithouvermoeë vir die gevangenes word. In hierdie bedryf word Mandela eers as broos en later as 'n baken van hoop uitgebeeld.

Manlikhede wat in Bedryf 1 aan die lig kom sluit 'militarisme' in, waarvan die uitbeelding in die musiek gehoor kan word in die instrumentasie. Die invloed van die Thembu-leier op Mandela se manlikheidsontwikkeling word uitgelig as seminaal in die vorming van

Mandela se gender-uitvoering onder die Thembu mense. Die self-beklemtoning van Mandela se manlikheid kom aan die lig op verskeie maniere, insluitend sy deelname aan aktiwiteite wat dien om manlike kameraderie te versterk. In Bedryf 2 word leierseienskappe wat Mandela verkry het deur middel van dans en musiek uitgebeeld. Die ‘*smart-cool/bravado*’-konsep word aan rokjagtery en gender-skeiding as simbole van manlikheid gekoppel. In Bedryf 3 word militarisme, eerder as om as simbool van mag te dien (soos voorheen), aan eensaamheid, lewensmoegheid, hulpeloosheid en uithouermoeë gekoppel; dit is veral opvallend in die militaristiese roetine waaraan die gevangenes onderworpe was, soos uitgebeeld in hierdie bedryf.

Ter afsluiting stel ek voor dat die kombinasie van musikale platforms waarvanaf Mandela se storie vertel is in *Mandela trilogy* nodig was in die skets van die amper-volledige prentjie van hom wat ons in die opera teëkom.

Kernwoorde: *Mandela trilogy*, Nelson Mandela, manlikheid, Mike Campbell, Michael Williams, hedendaagse Suid-Afrikaanse opera, Xhosamusiek, Suid-Afrikaanse jazz

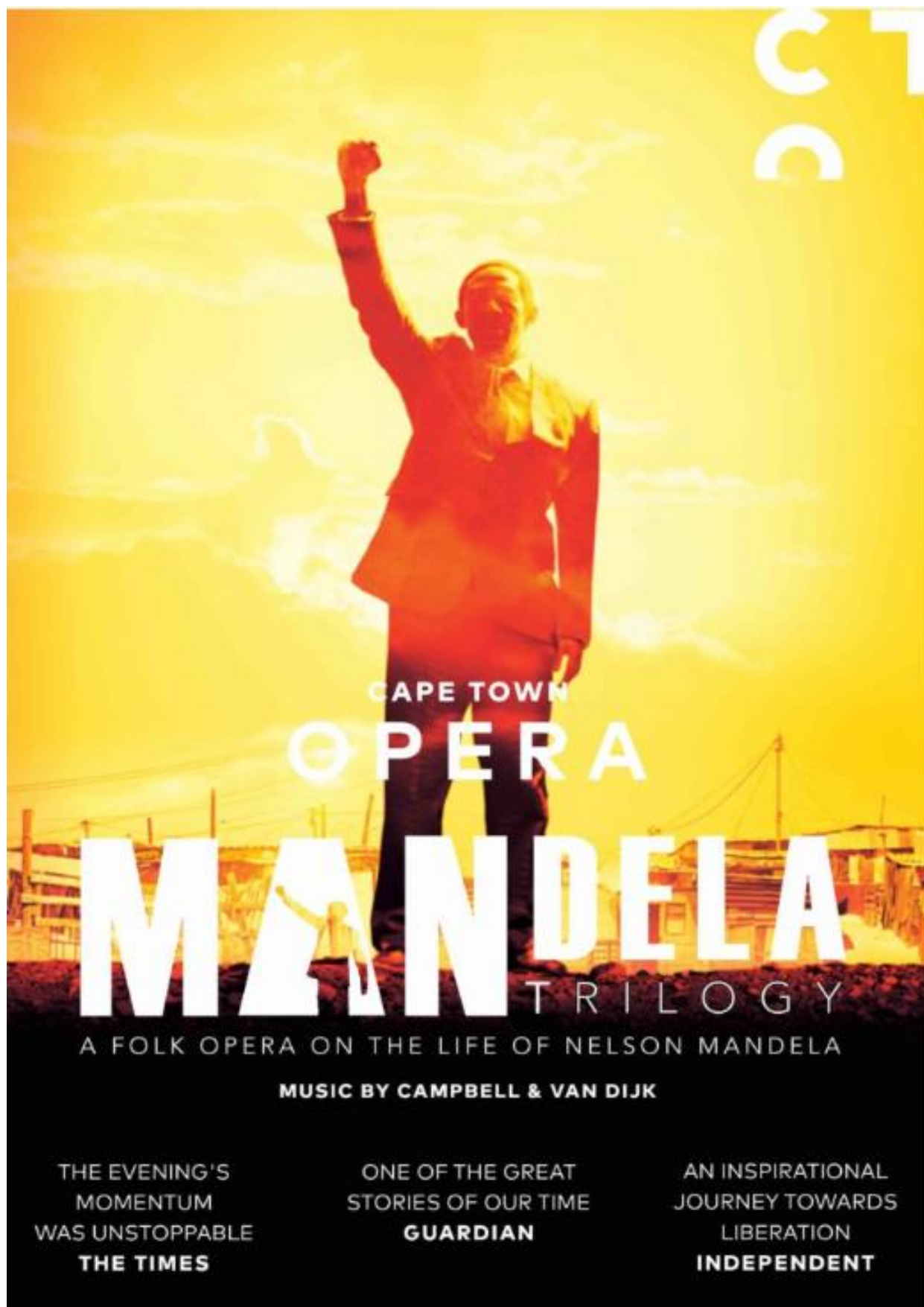


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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION: A LIFE IN THREE PARTS

1.1 Introduction

Mareli Stolp (2016: 139) mentions a number of operas that have been composed since 2010:

Five: 20 – Operas made in South Africa by Bongani Ndodana-Breen (“Hani”); Martin Watt (“Tronkvoël”); Peter Klatzow (“Words from a broken string”); Hendrik Hofmeyr (“Saartjie”); Peter Louis van Dijk (“Out of time”); *Winnie, the opera* by Bongani Ndodana-Breen; *The Mandela trilogy* by Allan Stephenson¹, Mike Campbell and Peter Louis van Dijk; and *Die poskantoor* by Braam du Toit.

Stolp (2016) makes a general pronouncement regarding these operas’ nature and function in that they deal with subject matter and issues topical in contemporary South Africa by portraying the lives of people significant to the anti-apartheid movement, other historical figures, as well as the current socio-political contexts in South Africa. In this dissertation I zoom in on one of these operas, *Mandela trilogy (2014) – a folk opera on the life of Nelson Mandela (Mandela trilogy hereafter)*.

This study explores the mediation of socio-political and life realities, and the performance of Nelson Mandela’s masculinities in *Mandela trilogy*. The opera was composed by Péter Louis van Dijk and Mike Campbell, and the libretto was written by Michael Williams. The opera fuses traditional IsiXhosa song, jazz tunes and modern music², in three acts respectively, in a tribute to the life and achievements of Nelson Mandela. The above-mentioned socio-political contexts, life realities and Mandela’s masculinities will be considered through a study of the musical content, fusion of musical styles, choreography, stage design, performance, and with a strong focus on libretto.

¹Please be aware that Stolp speaks of first *Mandela trilogy* of which act one was composed by Allan Stephenson. Although it forms part of the first version it is relevant to operas composed post 2010, this dissertation will be exploring the 2014 version in which Peter Louis van dijk composed both the 1st and 3rd act.

²Modern music, as referred to in the literature on *Mandela trilogy*, can in very broad terms be described as ‘western contemporary classical’ style.

1.2 A brief Biography

Nelson Mandela (1918-2013)

1.2.1 Mvezo (1918-1920)

Nelson Mandela was born in a small village called Mveso, which is in the Transkei region of the Eastern Cape (Limb, 2008:1). This pastoral landscape, according to Limb (2008), seemed uncontaminated, with rivers flowing, and with inhabitants attending to their flocks. Limb adds that “it is the heartland of the Thembu people, an important section of AmaXhosa nation”. When they moved to Qunu, this is where he learned the customs and traditions of his family and people. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2016:78), his father Gadla Henry Mphakanyiswa was chief of the area, and Alexander (2013) mentions that he named Mandela “Rolihlahla”, which means troublemaker, or literally “pulling the branch of a tree”. His immediate family was forced by their living circumstances (since his father lost his wealth and title) to move to Qunu, where they would have support from family in the area (Mandela, 2013:8).

1.2.2 Qunu (1920-1939)

Crompton (2007:16) adds that Mandela grew up as an ambitious boy in Qunu. At the age of seven he went to school and was the first one from his family to acquire formal education. His schoolteacher gave him the name “Nelson”, and according to Boehmer (2008:23) during his free time Mandela enjoyed a “pastoral childhood of herding, outdoor games like stick-fighting and fireside tales”. At the age of nine Mandela lost his father and he moved to Mqhekezweni (“Great palace”), which was the “provincial capital of the Thembuland”, according to Mandela (2013:19). Lodge (2006:24) attests that he learned of the oppression of black people already from a young age. He was a companion to Justice (his cousin), who was the son of then regent of the Thembu – Jongintaba Dalindyebo (Mandela, 2013:21). Mandela says that Justice was four years older than him and that he looked up to him. Mandela (2013:30-34) recalls that at the age of sixteen he was initiated, and during this transition he learned in abundance what it meant to be a Xhosa man. Mandela went to Clarkebury boarding school, and when he was 19 he went to Healdtown at the Wesleyan College of Fort Beaufort where he completed his matric. It was at Healdtown where Mandela (2013:46) took up long distance running and boxing. At his completion at Healdtown, South African History Online (2011c) dates that he

enrolled at the South African College at Fort Hare in 1939 to study a Bachelor of Arts degree.

1.2.3 Fort Hare (1939-1940)

It is at this University where he met a couple of people who contributed greatly to his being. Gormley (2016:46) mentions Kaizer Manthanzima, who encouraged and motivated Mandela to take part in extra-mural activities like soccer. Mandela was also part of the Students' Christian Association (SCA), which went to villages and preached the Bible to residents. Gormley (2016:47) confirms that this is where Mandela met Oliver Tambo. South African History Online (2012) writes that Oliver Tambo became an attorney who jointly opened a law office with Mandela in 1952, according to Sampson (2011:77), and also became the chancellor of the University of Fort Hare in 1993. He joined student politics in his second year and later got expelled from the University for boycotting elections. He was also elected to the Student Representative Council (Buthelezi, 2002:31). During this time at home Mandela and Justice had had prospective arranged marriages by the regent Jongindaba. To avoid the marriages they fled to Johannesburg (Solani, 2000:45).

1.2.4 Johannesburg (1941-1964)

Mandela worked at Crown Mines as a security guard (Mandela, 2013:73&75). He corresponded with UNISA to finish his BA (Mandela, 2013:83) and later studied at the University of the Witwatersrand, where he pursued an LLB qualification (South African History Online, 2011c). Alexandra is what Mandela (2013:89) regards as his home even after he moved to Orlando. In 1944 Mandela joined the African National Congress and met Evelyn, née Mase (who would later become his wife) through Walter Sisulu's wife Albertina.

1.2.4.1 Lawyer

Not much is known of his work as a lawyer at Witkin, Sidelsky & Eidelman, Terblanche & Briggish and H.M Basner but his work at the firm with Tambo (Mandela & Tambo Attorneys) was known as the sanctioned firm for the ANC (Sampson, 1999:78). They helped many black clients with their problems. Sampson (1999:78-79) says that Mandela would travel to where many black people would gather to listen to and watch this

“legendary black lawyer”. His cases ranged from arrest cases like the Manhattan brothers who were arrested for having a concert without passes, to witchcraft allegations.

1.2.4.2 African National Congress

It was through Walter Sisulu that Mandela became involved in the ANC (Mandela, 2013:109). He became part of the ANC Youth League and later served as the ANCYL president. In South African History Online (2011c) it reads that Mandela became the spokesperson for the Defiance Campaign, which led to the establishment of the resistance movement *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (Murphy, 2013).

1.2.5 Sophiatown (1953-1955)

Mandela (2013:179-198) became the ANC’s foremost speaker in Sophiatown, where he fought the Western Areas removal scheme that forced black South African residents of Sophiatown to Meadowlands, which was further out of the city. Even during this time he was a boxer (Mandela, 2013:225).

After his marriage to Evelyn fell through the cracks Mandela met Nomzamo Winifred Zanyiwe Madikizela whom he married in 1958 when she was only 22 and he was 38 years old (South African History online, 2011c). Winnie Mandela became part of the struggle. She stayed in the Hospital hostels where she worked as a social worker, and where she met Adelaide Tsukudu who eventually married Oliver Tambo. Winnie had a reputation in politics before she met Mandela, since her activist involvement led by her research in Alexandra about the death rates of children under the age of 1 in the area (South African History Online, 2011d).

1.2.6 Treason

In 1962 Mandela (2013:237) underwent a treason trial for wanting to overthrow the existing government through violence, and the Freedom charter was used as evidence before the Rivonia trial in 1964, where he was sentenced to life in prison with other comrades (Bernard, 2014:126). He spent 27 years in jail before his release in 1990, when FW De Klerk ended the apartheid system. His jail sentence was served in Robben Island prison (1964-1982), Pollsmoor prison (1982-1988) and Victor Verster prison (1988-1990).

1.2.7 Release

In 1994 Nelson Mandela became the first black president of the Republic of South Africa. It was only in 1996 that Mandela divorced Winnie Mandela, following allegations of her involvement in torture and killings of some people, including the 14 year-old Stompie (Naipaul, 2010). Limb (2008:119) indicates that the two had started accusing each other of neglect. South African History online (2011a) dates Mandela's marriage to Graça Machel as 1998. Karimi (2013) confirms that Mandela died at the age of 95 at his home in Johannesburg in 2013.

Maanga (2013) outlines some of the efforts by Nelson Mandela that had created a fundamental legacy for Africans at large. Maanga (2013:98) speaks of him as an "icon of forgiveness and reconciliation". This iconicity came with being a role model for young South Africans as far as love and peace were concerned. Maanga (2013:101) maintains that he encouraged and empowered the poor to fight for better living conditions. The labour relations act of 1995 was intended to "maximize democracy in the work place". "Supplying social services" (2013:103) refers to fulfilling basic needs like electricity, water and housing for communities across South Africa. "Protecting the vulnerable" (2013:104 &105) called for protecting the old and the young. The old have grants that allow them to have medical and financial support, and he created homeless shelters for children. Other legacies include "sympathizing with the condemned and the marginalized", "moral integrity and ethical uprightness", "positive attitude on political and racial pluralism", "pan-African commitment and international development", and "standing for independent judiciary and rule of law" (Maanga, 2013).

With over 250 awards across the world, Mandela's international legacy as a token of peace and liberation continues. According to Carter (2013), Americans lowered their flags to show respect and honour on President Obama's order. His international campaign for HIV/Aids is still influential to date, and Murphy says (2013) his legacy is of the kind that inspires music and films, as Carter (2013) also attests.

1.3 An overview of Mandela trilogy

The Mandela trilogy is a transformation of the original work entitled *African songbook: A tribute to the life of Nelson Mandela*. *African songbook* was composed by Allan

Stephenson, Péter Louis van Dijk and Mike Campbell, and the libretto was written by Michael Williams. According to Stolp (2016:12), the trilogy is marketed as *Mandela trilogy: A folk opera on the life of Nelson Mandela* (Mandela trilogy:2014), and is described on Cape Town Opera's website (2015) as "A musical tribute to the life of Nelson Mandela".

The Mandela trilogy is a three-act opera in which events that unfolded in Nelson Mandela's life are portrayed, from the time he went to the traditional initiation school to his speech after his release from prison in 1990. The music entails three different genres, as stated, to support the contexts of his life circumstances and events at different stages of his life. Act 1 was originally composed by Allan Stephenson, but was recomposed and arranged for a tour to Munich, Germany, by Peter Louis van Dijk. The style of the original music in this act is derived from IsiXhosa 'traditional' songs, but it also includes arrangements of existing traditional IsiXhosa songs. The act explores Mandela's younger years in Qunu. It begins at his rite of passage ceremony, and introduces us to the people whom we can assume to have been influential through the course of his life, such as his cousin Justice, whom Mandela regarded as a hero.

Act 2, composed and arranged by Mike Campbell, is mostly in a jazz style. Campbell takes us on a journey through life in Johannesburg, and specifically Sophiatown, in the 1950s, by including arrangements of existing popular tunes such "Pata pata" (by Miriam Makeba and Jerry Ragovoy) and "Meadowlands" (by Strike Vilakazi). The portrayal of Mandela's multiple partnerships with other women while he was married brings about a less explored aspect of his life. At this stage of his life he is also deeply involved in politics and the African National Congress. Act 3, composed by Péter Louis van Dijk, is in a contemporary classical operatic style. The act starts in the courtroom during the Rivonia trial, and takes us on a journey from then until his release from prison.

Each of the three Mandelas are played by a different singer – see the complete list of cast and characters below:

Mandela 1	Thato Machona
Mandela 2	Aubrey Poo
Mandela 3	Aubrey Lodewyk

Jimmy Kruger	Christo Brand
Judge	Derick Ellis
Justice	Lukhanyo Moyake
Dolly Rathebe	Zolina Ngejane
Praise poet	Tshepo Moagi
Evelyn Mase Mandela	Pumza Mxinwa
Winnie Madikizela Mandela	Siphamandla Yakupa
Chief/Regent	Lindile Kenneth Kula
Mandela's mother	Tina Mene
Father Huddleston	Adrian Galley

Ensemble: Herman Theron, Niel Roux, Tshepo Moagi, Nonkululeko Nkwinti, Michelle Saldanha, Jacobi Benkenstein, Babongile Manga, Ernestine Stuurman, Bukelwa Velem, Lukhanyo Moyake, Kenneth Kula, Mthunzi Mbombela, Nkosana Stimela, Lusindiso Dubula, Vuyisa Jack, Lindile Kula jr., Andile Tshoni, Lubabalo Velebayi, Thando Mpushe (Ravenna Festival, 2016)³.

1.4 Purpose statement

The purpose of this close reading is to explore the mediation of socio-political and life realities, and specifically the performance of Nelson Mandela's masculinities in the opera *Mandela trilogy*. Reworded as research questions, they read as follows:

³ The casts for the 2014 Munich production and the 2016 Ravenna Festival were the same. Take note that the role of Dolly Rathebe was also played by Gloria Bosman in previous productions.

1.5 Research questions

1.5.1 Main question

How does the performance of Nelson Mandela's masculinities in the opera mediate what has been suggested in the literature about his masculinities?

1.5.2 Sub-question

In order to answer the main research question, one has to ask: How does the opera mediate the socio-political and life contexts in which Nelson Mandela lived his life?

1.6 Significance of this study

This study aims to make a small contribution to the knowledge on a newer generation of South African compositions through a study that will be based on a strong empirical foundation. A consideration of how Mandela's masculinities are performed in the opera and the extent to which it is mediated should add to a more balanced and complete understanding of his character. This study may also indirectly contribute towards a better understanding of the nature and function of contemporary South African opera and art in the socio-political contexts of South Africa today.

1.7 Delimitations

The limited scope of this study necessitates a study of this opera only, and not other musical-theatrical portrayals of Mandela's life. Since the 2014 Mandela trilogy version is regarded by Cape Town Opera as the official one, I will only base my study on that version and not the 2011 version. This study will not take Suttner's (2014) articulation of Mandela's masculinities as an a priori guide going into the analysis, although I will compare my results with it. I am also aware of Agawu's (2016:268) point that "to analyse only a specific performance is to risk fixing a composition's ontology in the contingencies of a particular occasion".

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Literature review

In this literature review, I will first discuss operas other than the trilogy about the portrayal of Mandela's life in which the different socio-political and life contexts are articulated, and then move on to media other than operas, namely films and books. I will then move on to literature about the Mandela trilogy itself (mostly reviews and one academic paper). This will be followed by an overview of literature about identity, under which my discussion of the musical construction of masculinities falls.

Winnie the opera, by Bongani Ndodana-Breen, is a bi-lingual (English and IsiXhosa) opera (Andre et al., 2016:3) which showcases the life of Winnie and the Mandelas from Winnie's point of view, and with Winnie as the main focus. *Madiba, the African opera* by Unathi Mtirara, which premiered in 2014, covers mostly the younger years of Nelson Mandela in Qunu. It depicts the stories of his childhood that are seldom told, and it is almost entirely in isiXhosa (Kennedy, 2014). According to Redvers (2011), Winnie Mandela was impressed and overjoyed by the manner in which she was portrayed in the opera (*Winnie the opera*) as a struggle icon.

Mandela and de Klerk was filmed in 1997 (directed by Joseph Sargent). It follows the events that unfolded during the Rivonia trial (1963-64) until Mandela was released from prison in 1990. The film, starring Sidney Poitier, shows a tight connection of events; some events involving the white government officials and Mandela, talks between Mandela and his wife Winnie, and between Mandela and his fellow prison inmates. It also depicts his efforts to reconcile people the nation after his release. Parkinson (2016) believes that the shortcomings of retelling a story of current events, like in *Mandela and de Klerk*, is that one has to be sensitive and as a result the truth is not told in its entirety. This resulted in what I believe to be a romanticized version of events. *Goodbye Bafana*, also known as *Colour of Freedom* (2007), is a film directed by Billie August, which focuses on the relationship between black and white through the life of James Gregory. Gregory grew up on a farm with his black friend Bafana, but their relationship is cut short when Gregory relocates to the city. The South African Secret Service finds out about Gregory's ability to speak African languages, after which he is appointed as a prison censorship officer. This is where he met Mandela: he pre-read Mandela's

messages and was always present when he had visitors so that he could interrupt the conversations as soon as they spoke about the African National Congress or politics. Mandela and Gregory's relationship later improves after Gregory had read the freedom charter that put him in jeopardy. There is a lot of controversy around this film.

Tunzelmann (2012) heard from those who were imprisoned with Mandela that some of the fundamental events have been disregarded in the film. *Invictus: playing the enemy – a game that changed the nation* (2009), also a film (directed by Clint Eastwood), is a story of Nelson Mandela (post-apartheid) and his relationship with the national rugby team of that time (just before the 1995 Rugby World Cup). This film adaptation of a book by John Carlin (2008) is one of the few, if not the only one, that tells the story of Mandela, played by Morgan Freeman, after his election as president. The story focuses on the Springbok rugby team and their struggle to adjust to the new South Africa that urged them to possibly change their name, learn the national anthem and teach rugby in the townships. For many South Africans the colours and the name of the national team carried with them a bad history, and since many Afrikaners feared losing their identity, Mandela decided to keep the name (Eastwood, 2009). Jennifer Hudson starred as Winnie Madikizela-Mandela in the film *Winnie Mandela* (2011) by Darrell Roodt. The life events that affected both Winnie and Nelson are captured in the film. Where most films about Nelson Mandela show his life as a boy, in prison and for a short period after prison, *Winnie Mandela* focuses on the seldom-told story of Mandela's family while he was in prison. *Long walk to freedom*, directed by Justine Chadwick and starring Idris Alba, is a film version of the book (Mandela, 2013).

The internationally acclaimed autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom* (Mandela, 2013), first published in 1994, starts with Mandela's childhood years, also describing his traditional cultural practices and beliefs. The book then moves on to when he comes to age and how his education contributed to socio-political events and outcomes that affected his whole being, and then the older Mandela in prison and the time he became the president of South Africa. The book gives the reader the basis for exploring the ever-changing Mandela throughout his life. I will therefore refer to it sporadically throughout the dissertation. In his book *O' Mandingo! (Before Mandela was Mandela)*, Miyeni (2007:45) states that when Mandela was released from prison he told children to forget about revenge and remember the scarring and self-destruction of hatred. Miyeni adds that although Mandela survived a bullet in 1990, "his heart never stopped dripping

love.” Barnard (2014:31) suggests that Nelson Mandela’s cultural context is more that of AbaThembu than AmaXhosa. (Thembu is an ethnic designation of AmaXhosa nation (Mandela, 2013:1)).

2.2 Literature on *Mandela trilogy*

An academic paper by Mareli Stolp (2016:2) describes *Mandela trilogy* and *Winnie the opera* as dealing with topics and issues relevant to South Africans, by portraying the lives of “political figures significant to the anti-apartheid struggle, historical figures as well as contemporary South African life”. Critics and bloggers have shared experiences that illuminate the performances of *Mandela trilogy*.

A “sense of Africa” can be derived from the opening of *Mandela trilogy*, according to Thomas Watmann (*Baster Zeitung*) (in *Mandela trilogy*: 2014) when the sound of metallic percussion from the prisoners who bang the bars of their cells with forks/spoons is heard. The librettist is acknowledged for tackling the figure of Mandela from different angles, i.e. of Mandela being a young Xhosa man, a lawyer, freedom fighter and the old prisoner whom Watmann described as “South Africa’s greatest force for reconciliation”. Horst Dichanz of *Operanetz.de* (in *Mandela trilogy*: 2014) added that although apartheid is not in existence, there is still segregation and racism, thus leading to the desire to orchestrate a musically “authentic” production. Barbara Renter of *Augsburger Allgemeine* (in *Mandela trilogy*, 2014) said that the change between the musical styles seemed irregular at first, but certainly provided a clear divide between different stages of Mandela’s life. Robert Braumuller of *Abendzeitung-Muenchen* (in *Mandela trilogy*, 2014) stressed the fact that the portrayal of a national hero’s anti-apartheid story was done by an entirely black cast. (This is mostly true, bar a few white actor-singers, to whom I will refer again later.) He also said that “[t]he audience expressed two sentiments: the enormous enthusiasm for a very entertaining show by the Cape Town ensemble and the deeply felt empathy for the aims of black people in South Africa.” Uwe Mitsching (*Nürnbergischer Tageszeitung* and *Bayerische Staatszeitung*) (in *Mandela trilogy*: 2014), like his colleagues, articulated this folk-opera as an amalgamation of politics, years of imprisonment, prison walls, barbed wire, repression and struggle. Most of these sources make general statements on their impression of the opera without an in-depth analysis. On the other hand, although Mareli Stolp discusses the 2011 version of the trilogy with Allan Stephenson as the composer of the first act, some of her findings may be useful as a starting point for the investigation.

In summary, many books, films, operas, plays and musicals have outlined and portrayed the contexts and life events of Nelson Mandela. All art (even 'bad' art) by definition mediates or (re)constructs reality. This study aims to articulate how these portrayals mediate reality; also, none of them has considered how the performance of Mandela's masculinities in the opera mediates what was about him. Although some of the reviews, for example those of Horst Dichanz and Robert Braumuller (in Mandela trilogy (2014), shared their sentiments about the opera and its function in the current political contexts in South Africa, there are no studies that have illuminated what the opera may suggest about the nature and function of contemporary opera in South Africa today on a larger scale.

2.3 Identity

Before one can move on to discussing masculinity, which is an aspect of identity, one has to outline the concept of identity itself. From this, I will move on to discussing the generalized individual, gender performance and the musical construction of identity. My outlining of the performance of masculinity will lead us to the discussion of literature pertaining to Mandela's masculinities.

2.3.1 Identity: general overview

In very general terms, identity can be defined as a term that carries 'meanings' into contexts. Vokwana (2007:5) draws the definition of identity from other scholars⁴ who refer to it as "an individual sense of self". This sense of self follows the role of one within a group and as a result "ingroup, outgroup and subcultures" fall into place. The *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary* (2017:743) expands on the definition as "characteristics, feelings or beliefs that make one different/same in comparison to others". Lucia (2007:iv) also affirms identity as a "concrete reality in people's daily lived experience". Demmers (2012:18) considers identity as "doing things", "as driving individual and group behavior". Demmers (2012:19) explains that ultimately the main purpose of identity is to answer the question "who or what are you?" Richardson (1982:28) defines identity as recognition. The way in which one recognises their essential "sameness and continuity" implies a self

⁴According to Vokwana these scholars include: Alcoff and Mendieta, 2003; Capozza and Brown, 2000; Hall, 1993; Hebdige, 1987; Sanchez-Mazas and Klein, 2003; Tajfel and Turner, 1986.

within their context. This sameness and continuity do not suggest that one's identity is stationary and does not change over time. Jenkins (2004:5) and Kruger (2007:2) share the same sentiment by testifying that identity is flexible and negotiable. Richardson compares one's identity to a Beethoven symphony with a theme that is recurring throughout the movements – either transformed, muted or emphatic (1982:3).

Lucia (2007:iv) draws the term into music where she says:

Identity is intimately connected to performance, since music as cultural expression only exists in and through performance. The performance of culture is a major issue for music ethnographers – how people perform it, what that means, how societies and individuals frame, articulate, and own cultural identities.

2.3.2 The generalized individual

Hanekom (2016:12) regards the generalized individual as one who emerges from the transformation when a collective and a person meet. Also referred to as generalized is being able to take part in shared meanings with others. This is the projection of “imagined boundaries” represented by symbols that become apparent. Hanekom (2016:15) considers one to be a generalized individual when one takes on the role of another in order to adopt suitable or chosen role or position within a group. This concept is rooted in identity as a human desire “incorporate[ion] in[to] social networks”. Hanekom (2016:15) therefore contends that any gathering that may take place can activate “a ritual process”. Also, Papa et al. (2008:37) say that we take upon us the attitudes of the group we belong to in order to take part in “shared meanings”.

2.3.3 Gender performance

According to Sallee (2011:413), gender is created by/through social interaction and is not biologically determined. Sallee (2011) quotes Zimmerman where he says, “gender is a process, not a role that one inhabits. A person's gender is not simply an aspect of what one is, but, more fundamentally, it is something that one does, and does recurrently, in interaction with others”. Biologically the term in place would be sex; that which is determined by the chromosomes (X/Y) to identify men from women physiologically. Butler (1988:521) says the following:

For both Beauvoir and Merleau-Ponty, the body is understood to be an active process of embodying certain cultural and historical possibilities, a complicated process of appropriation which any phenomenological theory of embodiment

needs to describe. In order to describe the gendered body, a phenomenological theory of constitution requires an expansion of the conventional view of acts to mean both that which constitutes meaning and that through which meaning is performed or enacted. In other words, the acts by which gender is constituted bear similarities to performative acts within theatrical contexts.

Butler (1988:523) suggests that over time, through the revision, renewal and consolidation of how one acts, a body becomes gendered. She further says that those who do not conform to gender expectations are punished by society or their communities (Butler, 1988:522).

2.3.4 Musical construction of identity

Hanekom (2016:15) regards musical behaviour as social, depending on how it is realized practically “practical realization”. Hield (2010:3) regards musical expression as the “performance of life” in an instance where the one performing is placed between those who are making (doer) and those with the knowledge (knower). From this, Hanekom (2016:14) concludes that “the values, beliefs and practices generated by music express socially constructed, negotiated meanings integral to total communal existence”. Turino (2008:1) believes music expresses important aspects of people’s lives, be it social, about themselves, spiritual or emotional. Martin (2006:41), as quoted by Hanekom (2016:17), argues that the construction of musical identity could be supported and be seen through “enactment of appropriate talk, gestures and actions involved in music”. Frith (1996:125) concludes that music is a cultural form that crosses boundaries of race, nations and classes, among others, in order to “define” places, be it clubs, scenes in theatrical productions or in concert halls etc.

2.4 The performance of masculinity

Jonita (2016) suggests that in order for one to understand masculinity, it is necessary to be able to differentiate between sex and gender. As suggested, sex is a biological term, whereas gender is a sociological construction. The term LGBTQ+ or LGBTQIP2SAA encompasses the constituent elements of these social constructions and biological traits. Angello and Bowman (2016:n.p) describe them in this manner:

L – Lesbian refers to women who are attracted to other women,

G – Gay refers to someone who is attracted to the same sex, often to men who are attracted to other men,

B – Bisexual are those who are attracted to both sexes,

T – Transgender refers to someone whose sexual identity or gender does not correspond to their birth sex,

Q – Queer is anyone whose gender or sexual identity does not fall within the societal norms

Q – Questioning refers to those who are questioning or uncertain about their attraction to either women or men,

P – Pansexual is a person whose sexual identity is not limited to biological sex or gender,

2S – Two-spirit refers to the native American tradition that acknowledges persons with both male and female spirits,

A – Asexual refers to persons who don't identify with any sexual orientation, and

A – Allies refers to people who support the LGBTQ+ community.

The use of LGBTQ+ according to Stonefish and Lafreniere (2015:5) pertains to the “fluidity and variability of gender identity and expression, and social orientation”. Jonita (2016) admits that it is possible that sociological discourse may have exaggerated the differences between genders.

Judith Butler (1990:25) regards gender as performative, because it entails “the identity it is purported to be”. Thus, gender is a “doing” factor that does not suggest a fixed identity. I aim to articulate how gender was performed in the opera (“performed” here can be taken to include “composed”).

Hörschelmann and Hoven (2005:10) say that although masculinity can evoke images of maleness, it can be adopted by or attributed to women as well. Kimmel et al. (2004:503) refer to masculinity as including the behaviours “prescribed for men in a given society at

any one time". According to these authors, certain cultures require what they call masculinity to be proven (read: performed) through sexual conquests, while other cultures are more concerned with one's civic participation, emotional involvement and having to provide for the needs of the community. What some may regard as masculinity also changes over time. Lastly, what is considered masculine differs at any given time within a society because of the coexistence of aspects that contribute to it (Kimmel et al., 2004: 504).

2.5 Literature on Mandela's masculinities

One may wonder why it is necessary to study the performance of masculinity in general, and more specifically in South Africa. People are freer to choose the way they would like to live their lives, what roles to take on in society and express themselves. Especially in traditional societies, this has left masculinity in crisis: without the need for them to necessarily lead and provide, many men have resorted to violence in order to assert their traditional, dominant role in society. Salie (2017) has the following to say:

There are so many angry men among us. There are angry women, too, but they're only beginning to claim this emotion that has long been denied them. Women's public anger delivers deliberate messages — it's pussy hats, reclaiming our time, and #MeToo. It's the kind of anger that gives girls voices. Men's anger tries to shut down the voices of others. Today's angriest women galvanize; today's angriest men murder.

I believe that the meaning of manhood was misunderstood in the first place. Coming from a small town where initiation rituals are still prominent, I have often witnessed boys who go to initiation schools (or 'the mountain') for their rite of passage, who then come back as corrupt individuals who believe their assertion of manhood has to entail bullying the community and abusing women. An exploration of the masculinities of an important political icon may help men to embody the positive aspects thereof. Conversely, the study of the negative aspects may serve to create awareness of the issues outlined above.

This summary of Suttner's (2007, 2014) discussions of Mandela's masculinities functions to provide a few examples of this author's more elaborate writings on this topic; I will refer to these sources sporadically throughout the dissertation. Suttner (2014), in his article entitled "Nelson Mandela's masculinities" discusses Mandela's different masculinities under headings such as "heroism", "public/private dichotomy", and "embodying freedom and the nation to be" (348-349, 354).

According to Suttner (2014:342), “[t]he intricate strands of Nelson Mandela’s evolving masculinity introduce a complexity that may contribute towards boys and men exploring [performing] ways of ‘being men’ which are not only strong but gentle.” Mandela is regarded by Suttner (2014:343) as a person of multiple masculinities because of constant personal change, and because of the alterations in his conditions that played a role in his development as a human being. According to this author, Mandela’s model of manhood at an early age was formulated by an emphasis on courage and muscular strength. The following statement by Mandela may be seen as supporting that of Suttner: “I learned to stick-fight – essential knowledge to any rural African boy – and became adept at its various techniques [...]” (Mandela 2013:11). Another example Suttner (2014:345) gives is based upon Mandela’s (1994:25) statement that “I was determined to not disgrace myself, the group or my guardian. Circumcision is a trial of bravery and stoicism; no anaesthetic is used; a man must suffer in silence.” As mentioned in the biographical information given earlier, Mandela was a boxer. This also relates to this aspect of his masculinity.

Suttner (2014:345) mentions circumcision as emphasising toughness and therefore significant to being a man. To overcome the pain of circumcision with bravery and poise manifested one’s capability of being a man. Suttner (2014:346) also mentions that Mandela (1994:26) said that he was “ashamed” because the other boys seemed to have more strength and steadiness than he did and as a result he had to hide his anguish. Suttner (2014:346) finds this reminiscence of the older Mandela (in his mid-seventies) significant as it opens the inner-self of him that is not known; that which Suttner affirms to be drawn between “cowardice and bravery” and may enable those who do not see it important to appear powerful or in charge of their feelings even when they are afraid.

Suttner (2014:347) imparts Mandela’s observation of his friend Paul Mahabane who did not follow the orders of a magistrate (in 1941) in Umtata showing Mahabane’s disobedience to white people. Mandela found Mahabane’s action brave and also disturbing. Suttner concludes on this situation as not necessarily ‘cowardice’ but Mandela’s “sense of duty” from someone who was being groomed to be councillor to the Thembu King who was to come; so his behavioural patterns and respect were essential.

After Mandela’s move to Johannesburg at the age of 23, he meets Walter Sisulu who is drawn to him and secures a job for him at a law firm. When he joined the ANC after Walter

Sisulu noticed his leadership skills and got him involved, Mandela inherited the masculinity of the party (Suttner, 2014:348). Sisulu's wife was protective of Mandela and did not want him to find himself with the wrong crowd roaming the streets of Alexandra and take advantage of his aggression. Mandela becomes one of the founders of the ANCYL, which ridiculed the older generation of the party whom they accused of not allowing their hands to get dirty. The ANC was perceived as a masculine party even though it had women who were influential as well in the party as Suttner (2014:348) quotes Limb (2010:120-122, 241-244). Suttner (2014:348) says that "the ANCYL simultaneously embodied and contests the male leadership tradition and imagery that had been dominant within the ANC." Suttner (2007:116) also mentions that the ANC's masculinities are embodied by Nelson Mandela:

Within the ANC, as in society in general, there is not one model or mode of expression of masculinity. There are multiple models of masculinity and each is contested, both by the men who may be said to comprise the model concerned, but also by women in relation to whom these masculinities sometimes collide and sometimes reinforce what women want to do with their lives or in politics (Suttner, 2007:117).

Mandela was always complimented by his political counterparts for his appearance and how he dressed. He had a gym and boxing routine that that he followed that helped in shaping him physically. Suttner (2014:352) refers to Mandela's "boxing imagery" as that of aggressive masculinity, which differs from his "gentle" parental side. This imagery helped Mandela to equip and prepare himself as an "armed freedom fighter". Mandela, according to Suttner (2014:348), was a volunteer in charge of the defiance campaign and coordinated the M-plan⁵ which bared characteristics of militarism. Mandela's boxing imagery also speaks to his militaristic traits, whereby a boxer needs a certain amount of discipline in order to succeed (Suttner, 2014:352). Although he was not a soldier for long, his bravery during the Rivonia Trial proved to be evident of him being a man who is willing to die for the struggle. His "heroic masculine project", Suttner (2014:349) believes,

⁵The M-plan was believed by some, according to Suttner (2003:129), to have been established by A.P. Mda. Its conceptualisation was linked to Mandela, with some assigning the "M" to Mda or Mandela-plan. It was an instigation that allowed the ANC to function and communicate effectively through having a structure of street representatives who reported to other hubs and back to avoid the banned illegal gatherings in the 1950s (Green, 2012:81, Limb 2008:54).

became apparent when he was prepared to devote himself to the struggle and neglect his family.

In *Long walk to freedom* (Mandela, 1994: 8-9) Mandela mentions becoming aware of expectations of what it means to be a man and Suttner offers examples like “gendered division of labour”; what a woman’s work is and what that of a man is. Suttner (2014:344) points out that the affirmation of being a man was not only brought about by social interactions between men or boys only, but in some cases mothers deliberately interacted with boys differently from girls. Suttner (2014:349) refers to the conversation between Meer (1988) and Evelyn, who mentioned to her that Mandela did not conform to the notions of being a dominant patriot at home to confirm his manhood. (This is what Suttner (2014:349) refers to as Mandela’s public/private dichotomy.) With that said, Suttner (2014:349-350) mentions that although his engagements with the struggle were sometimes at the cost of his family, Mandela was very much involved in his duties at home. Suttner (2014:350) speaks of rumours about Mandela’s marriage to Evelyn, who believed that their breakup came about because of the distance between them that emerged when she moved to do “training as a midwife”. Even when these rumours surfaced, or when she saw the marriage falling apart, Evelyn was still willing to fight for their marriage because they still shared a strong bond (Meer, 1988:61). Suttner (2014:350) says that Mandela did not see himself as a “heroic warrior” who went to “perform courageous deeds, presuming his wife would be at home waiting for him to return”.

Mandela was passionate and ardent before, but in prison he was different; he had to be a leader that had courage and patience (Suttner, 2014:352). He became calmer and firmer the older he became and in the letters he would write to Winnie and the children Suttner (2014:355) says that that he appeared emotional (by his absence, hurt by Winnie’s torture, in love) and passionate. His “tranquillity” came about when his mother and son passed away, and he would either stay in his cell or wrap a blanket around himself, Suttner (2014:353) cites.

Mandela was decisive (a leadership trait) and would negotiate by himself. According to Suttner (2014:354), Mandela was not afraid to be called an 'individualist' as a result. Suttner says that "personally he had nothing to gain and much to lose from this course of action. In many ways, this was a continuation of a journey into the unknown and towards an ever-maturing masculinity". Lodge (2006:157) and Sampson (1999:346) refer to him as a shepherd, metaphorically alluding to his younger years as a shepherd when he had to gather sheep, even those lost, and sometimes had to take a path less travelled to look for them. After his release there was a lot of unhappiness within the ANC about the outcomes of the negotiations, because they felt side-lined and possibly did not agree with how they were concluded. *Toyi toyi* as a symbol of militarism emerged (even before his release). Suttner (2014:354) adds that *toyi toyi* came about as a masculine dance that implies warfare. The words in the chant utter anger and sometimes killing the enemy. He was a man who had let go of anger and be prepared to act as 'peacemaker' (Suttner, 2014:354). He would get into a crowd that is *toyi toying* and dance in his unique 'shuffle' dance style to show inclusivity. Those who are oppressed stand together to fight for the same vision or rights and as a result unite in this mandate and mission. Suttner (2014:354) believes that "Mandela's gestures were never random and ad hoc. He knew that how he represented himself and how he was understood by others were important, bearing symbolic importance". Mandela had become a different leader than he was before imprisoned, where Suttner (2014:352) discusses that he had become courageous and patient. There is an instance Suttner (2014:352) refers to where Mandela wanted to fight, but had to be aware and careful about when to fight.

Suttner (2014:355) concludes Mandela's masculinities in this manner:

In general, however, when we review the development of Mandela 'the man', we see a series of journeys, where he constantly changes, but without abandoning everything that he has been before. Even in his last days he remained attached to his Thembu identity and was buried near his place of birth. The Mandela who found peace for the country also found peace with himself as a man.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Close reading

3.1.1 Research design

The research design of this study is qualitative, with the purpose of gaining a deeper understanding of how the opera mediates the outlined realities and what has been suggested about Nelson Mandela's masculinities in existing literary sources (Merriam 2009:5). Kinsella (2006:32) suggests that there cannot be one authoritative reading of a text ('text' in the case being the opera) in a hermeneutic study, such as this one (see the data analysis section). Therefore, the way in which the opera is constructed and designed will be interpreted with the understanding that there may be multiple interpretations of *Mandela trilogy* (Merriam, 2009:8).

3.1.2 Research approach

My research approach will be that of a close reading. Brookman and Horn (2016:249) regard reading closely as to conduct deliberate and skilled analyses of structure, style and other features found in the language in a "literary text". Boyles (2012:90) says that close reading is finding "layers of meaning" that may bring you to an in-depth interpretation.

Opera as a form of narratology, Papayanis (2016:5) affirms, means that there are aspects such as "music, words, voice, dramaturgy and mise-en-scène" that need to be taken into account. It is for that reason that using the libretto alone in this reading becomes inadequate for guidance or drawing meaning. Papayanis (2016:5) offers reference to Boito's libretto of Verdi's *Otello* and Shakespeare's play of *Othello* as not comparable, thus one would not study them the same to draw meaning. Papayanis (2016:5) explains the reason for this is because in opera music tends to take priority over words and as a result "linguistic aspects of the form may be marginalized".

In literary analysis, close reading takes an excerpt from a text for interpretation and uses it in order to think or derive meaning of a bigger phenomenon (Burke, n.d:2). A complete music-theoretical analysis is unnecessary. A close reading suggests focusing on selected parts of a musical score and musical elements that serve the purpose of the study, and

not a complete analysis that requires scrutinising the entire score by way of a formal analytical method. Like Bullindah (2017:46), the reason for doing a close reading of *Mandela trilogy* is “to make associations between the music and play’s structural elements” or that which may be regarded as *mise-en-scène*. Bullindah (2017:277) further elaborates on the analysis of musical structure, all of which applies to this study:

In all these processes, composers showed awareness of the functioning of musical structural elements such as text, melodic structure, timbre, rhythm, tempo, harmony, form, volume and accentuation in creating various meanings in plays. Some of the elements are important in formation of cultural associations, mood, emotions and atmosphere, locales, identities, scenic effects, characterization and presentation of characters’ thoughts, and marking current and historical matters.

3.1.3 Data collection

The only available visual recording of the opera will be used to capture relevant moments and events in the opera as they happened. This will include the identification of aspects of stage design, choreography, and smaller gestures made during singing. I will use both the vocal and full scores of the *Mandela trilogy* to study the interplay between the music and the libretto, and in the identification of significant moments in the music (in terms of, among other things, style, tonality, texture and orchestration), that relate to my research aims. Both the vocal-orchestral scores and visual recording were provided by Cape Town Opera. This visual recording is of the *Mandela trilogy*’s 2014 Munich production.

3.1.4 Data analysis

Creswell (2013:195) explains it as such: “The process of focusing in on some of the data and disregarding other parts of it is necessary because text and image information is so thick and cannot be all used in a qualitative study”. This type of close reading also serves to avoid “imply[ing] and suggest[ing] other research topics that may not have anything to do with the study at hand” (Creswell, 2013:195).

In relation to focusing only on selected moments in and aspects of the opera (rather than analysing it as a whole), Agawu (1997:304) refers to a reading of the first movement of Brahms’s Third Symphony by Susan McClary:

A theorist who argues that McClary’s analysis lacks detail may well be making an irrelevant point. There is enough detail to support the specific characterizations that she wishes to make.

3.2 Text, intertextuality, space and time

If one regards opera as a 'text', it is necessary to define this concept. It is also crucial to outline the related concepts of intertextuality, space and time in order to see how they play a significant role in the creation of an opera.

3.2.1 Text

Generally, or loosely, we know text as a written form of communication imprinted to offer meaning within a given space. In the *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary* (2010:1544), text is defined as "a speech, a play, an article", etc. Minors (2013:1) considers music as language and implies that it may be understood as text. Derrida's (1986:167) notion that everything can be seen as text becomes evident also with other poststructuralists. Olsen (2016:18) considers Schwandt's (2007:289) point that the idea of text is limitless, including aspects such as "life experiences, events, relationships, activities, practices and cultural artefacts" amongst others.

Malmgren (1987:7), like Olsen (2016:18), agrees with Barthes's (1977a:155-164) elaboration that a work is a "physical entity" that one can hold by hand or find on a bookshelf whereas text is performative, therefore "activity of production" can only result in a text. Malmgren (1987:7) quotes Barthes:

[...] the work can be held in the hand, the text is held in language, only exists in the movement of a discourse (or rather, it is Text for the very reason that it knows itself as text); [...] It follows that the Text cannot stop (for example on a library shelf); its constitutive movement is that of cutting across (in particular, it can cut across the work, several works).

Viljoen (2012:17) says that "it is only [through] the process of decoding and recoding of the original work that meaning evolves and text and subtexts emerge". Simandan (2011) adds that Barthes's theory of intertextuality argues that text is not singular but plural because it is open to multiple interpretations.

In *Mandela trilogy*, one may consider the music, libretto, acting, singing, choreography, stage design, story, costumes – all of which also effect the display of cultural practices and/or artefacts – as forming texts.

3.2.2 Intertextuality and hypertextuality

Viljoen (2012:23) traces the concept of intertextuality back to Kristeva who termed it *intertextualité*. It is a phenomenon which Olsen (2016:19) describes as texts “which are placed in ‘conversation’ with one another”. Bakhtin, as one of Kristeva’s influencers, also believes that text and textuality stem from and cannot be removed from its cultural or social construction (Simandan, 2010). Lacasse (2000:37) refers to Genette’s definition of intertextuality being “the actual presence of text within another”. Lacasse (2000:37) refers to a couple of examples of intertextuality in music. It should be obvious that in opera, the elements that form ‘text’ (named in the previous section) cannot only act separately from each other. Intertextuality can therefore be seen to be inherent in the genre.

Quotation is the insertion of an “excerpt from a given text into another”. They have two different meanings, with one being ‘allosonic’, while the other one is ‘autosonic’ quotation. Allosonic, Lacasse (2000:37) says, is common in jazz and it is when a soloist decides to ‘quote’ a catchy tune from an already existing song. Autosonic is used in recording and refers to sampling, when an element of music is directly extracted from one context to another, for example the use of a drumming loop (present in abundance in Act 2 where African jazz is apparent). Another intertextuality-related concept Lacasse (2000:40) discusses is allusion; this refers to the reference of past songs or events in text. Parody, travesty and pastiche, copying and covering should not be confused with intertextuality as they form hypertextual practices, which are concerned with “production of new text from a previous one” (Lacasse, 2000:40) (see Figure 1 below):

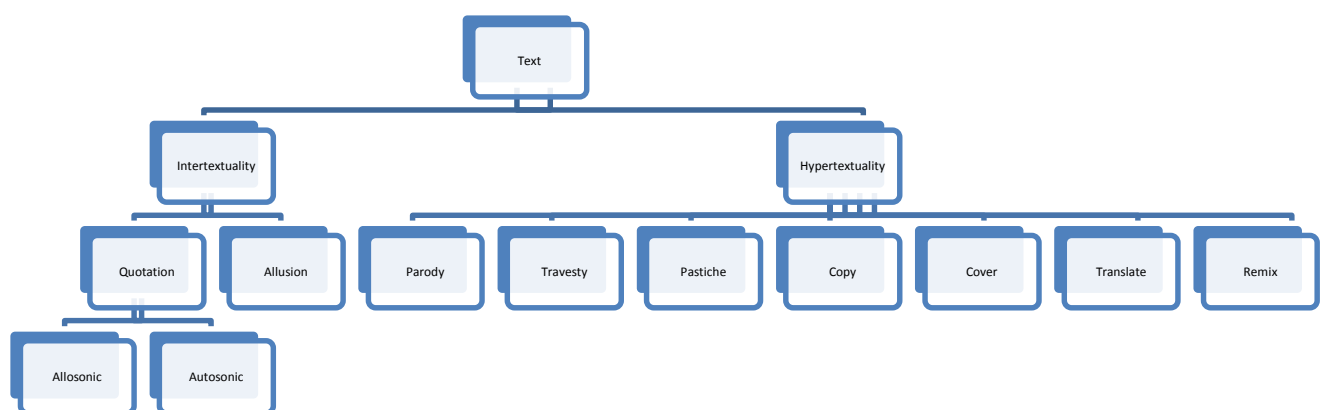


Figure 1 An illustration of two types of texts (Sello, 2017)

Hypertextual practices in the opera include Blackface, the use of existing songs (sometimes with new lyrics) and pastiche, as it features in the music of Peter Louis van Dijk.

Viljoen (2012:104) refers to Locke's (2009:19 & 20) three notions of musical intertextuality being "influences, borrowings and appropriations". The three concepts define themselves; take for instance folk music, which influenced much of western classical music (e.g. Polish folk-like tunes in Chopin's pieces). The influence of traditional IsiXhosa music on the music in Act 1 is an example of this. Viljoen (2012:104) describes borrowing in this manner:

Borrowings, for example, could refer to the borrowing of unchanged material by another composer or to self-borrowing of material from the composer's own oeuvre".

Appropriation is described by Locke (2009:19) in Viljoen (2012:4) as "enhancement or adaptation" of an element that has the possibility to be a catalyst for a "specific meaning". This does not necessarily mean appropriation is improvement of something that is lacking in quality, quantity or purpose. The adaptation of an existing hymn in Act 3 serves as an example of this.

3.2.3 Space

In the literal sense, Ryan (2014) mentions the *Oxford English dictionary's* description of space as the height, width, and depth in a given area to form a dimension. This could be an opera house's stage, for example. In narratology, space, according Buchholz and Jahn (2005:54) (in Ryan, 2014) is an area in which characters exist. Bal (2009:136) claims that within space characters make use of three senses – hearing, seeing and touching – in "the perceptual representation of space". Despite the size of a stage, backdrops and lighting, for example, create a certain space. The volume of a sound, for example, can create distance (Olsen, 2017:25). Olsen (2017:25) states that 'touch' is a more abstract concept that pertains more to literature and is difficult to convey in an opera.

I will use some of Ryan's (2014) categories to illustrate narrative spaces, as they manifest in the opera. Ryan (2014) speaks of spatial frames; those that are the "immediate surroundings of actual events", like the prison phone booth in Act 3. They are flexible action scenes that may follow one after another. The second type is the "socio-historic-

geographical environment in which action takes place”, like the Odin cinema in Sophiatown where people would gather for political meetings, as seen in Act 2. The third type, story space, are the spaces relevant to the plot, for example the rural area in which the cultural ceremonies in Act 1 take place.

3.2.4 Time

Bal (2009:77) considers time-based arts that may include theatre, video and dance etc. against still artefacts such as paintings, photographs and sculptures. Viljoen (2012:41) considers story time as that which is concerned with “context and plot of the story”. The story time of *Mandela trilogy* stretches from his initiation ceremony to his release from prison. Olsen (2016:22) points out three forms of time in the arts and narrative as described by Bal (2009:77). Bal firstly mentions micro-time, which is how the “small time of moments and the variations of intensity of experience cross through the regulated time of the day’s occupations”. Secondly we find the agenda or “watch time” that regulates one’s day and lastly we find “monumental time” which Olsen (2016:22) describes as time that “refers to the past and memories associated with a particular temporality and spatiality and how these elements are remembered and handed down from one generation to the next”. Viljoen (2012:100) regards the exploitation of “temporal aspects” in opera to be the manner in which the narrative exceeds “real time” or day-to-day time and lets the audience connect with participants on stage outside constraints of “temporal logic”. Monumental time seems to be paramount in *Mandela trilogy*, as the narrative moves between the past-present and the past of the past-present, as will become clear in my descriptions.

3.3 A note on the structure of the dissertation

The chronological explications of the prologue and each act contain descriptions and historical and cultural contextualizations of the story, and selected parts of the music, stage design, costumes, acting, and libretto. Interspersed with these descriptions and explanations are short digressions to interpretive issues that emerged from the opera. These digressions are placed in boxes in an effort to alert the reader visually to the momentary break from the chronological flow. The requirements and scope of this project did not call for theorizations of, or detailed literature reviews on every topic addressed in the digressions; rather, they stand as acknowledgements of and/or introductions to issues

related to the study that have already been considered by others, or can be considered in more detail in the future. The manner in which the digressions are placed within the text should be seen as a creative liberty.

CHAPTER 4 PROLOGUE AND ACT ONE

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will provide a close reading of the Prologue and Act 1. The Prologue depicts a conversation between Mandela and Jimmy Kruger in Mandela's prison cell in Robben Island. Act 1 explores Mandela's childhood through three scenes; the initiation ceremony, the Chief's kraal, and Mandela and his cousin Justice's plan to go to Johannesburg. In between I will digress to topics including 'militarism', 'the romanticized homeland', 'historical correctness in the depiction of previously oppressed persons and cultures', 'post-blackface' and 'eclecticism'. Lastly I will focus on issues concerning Mandela's masculinities relevant to the Prologue and Act 1.

4.2 Prologue

Before Act 1, in the Prologue, Mandela 3 is conversing with Jimmy Kruger (referred to as the 'Whiteman' in the score). This Prologue is the catalyst and the glue of the three acts of the opera. Mandela 3 is introduced first, signalling to the audience that the events portrayed in the opera are in fact him reminiscing. Mandela 3's narrations between the scenes fast forward and inform us of the events that may not have been possible to cover in the limited timespan of a two-hour opera. The following description in the score sets the mood of the prologue:

Robben Island (1976) Bleak industrial lighting glow; Possible images of arms protruding through prison bars, beating mugs and plates with spoons – or universal anguish than just the one at hand (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014:2).

Soon after a siren is heard, a strongly accentuated rhythm in the irregular time signature of 7/8 – grouped differently in each of the three lines – is played by snare drums, and the banging of mugs and plates (see Figure 2).

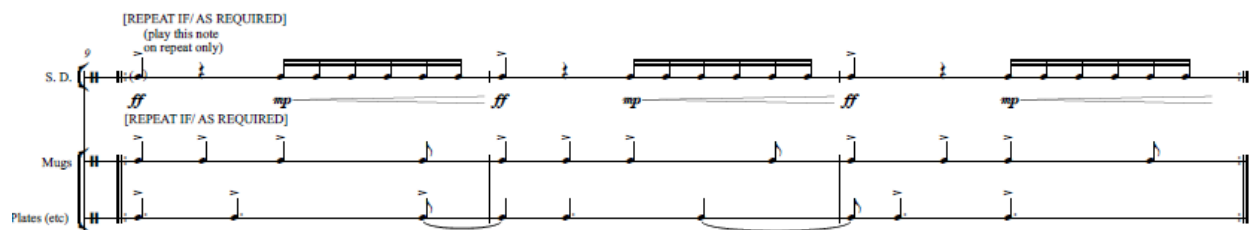


Figure 2 Prologue, orchestral bars 9-11 (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 1, 1)

This rhythmic display at the start symbolizes the monotony of the lives of those jailed at Robben Island; it conveys the feeling of a day that is the same as every other day: you wake up, go to work, eat, exercise and sleep. (In Act 3 this monotonous lifestyle becomes evident, as will be discussed.) The sound also reminds of steel or tin plates and mugs that were assigned for use by maids and gardeners in the houses of their white bosses, but moreover, it is reminiscent of road and railway work. This symbolizes class and social belonging, because in many households, maids and gardeners were not allowed to use white people's cutlery and crockery. For a general layman's audience, the intended cross-rhythm, as shown in Figure 3, alludes to the (stereo) typical 'African' intricacy of its rhythms. One could see or hear it as merely monotonous or perhaps invested with deeper and older notions of community. This may refer to the notions of rhythm making black people dance⁶, or as Jones (1949:22) calls it, a colonialist notion.

The tempo is *Agitato* and the volume indications *forte* or *fortissimo*. The agitation in the music creates a sense of urgency in the dialogue between Mandela and Jimmy Kruger. This agitation can be that of two eminent figures within their respective spaces trying to get the other one to listen to them even though they don't get to an agreement. The first line (the 'motif' of Jimmy Kruger⁷; see Figure 3) is heard throughout the Prologue, in imitation between the two vocal lines (see Figure 4), or between one vocal line and the orchestra. Imitation, according to Staines (2010:27), may symbolize a sense of unity and of progression. This could have been the composer's suggestiveness of a unity that is to come or the progress thereof; meaning the attempt of Jimmy Kruger trying to negotiate with Mandela was a progressive attempt. The *forte marcato* articulation allows the singers to intensify text by applying force on the notes for the text to be almost exaggerated.

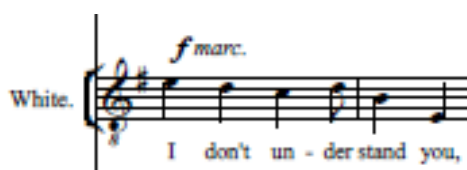


Figure 3 Prologue, orchestral score, bars 23-11 (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 1, 4)

⁶In this instance Agawu (1995:392) refers to Jones's point that Africans dance with all their body parts to accommodate or enhance the different rhythms in a different meter.

⁷As referred to in the *Mandela trilogy* score.



Figure 4 Prologue, orchestral score, bars 48 – 51 (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 1, 7)

Strategic silences and accents in the orchestral accompaniment further signify feelings of mutual suspicion and curiosity in the two men's dialogue. These descriptions could be seen as depiction of two powerful men from different social classes who are arguing and not agreeing. This is admittedly open to interpretation when one considers that call and response patterns in African contexts express cooperation. This micro-structure may be profoundly prophetic in arguably pointing forward towards gradual reconciliation in the 'new' South Africa. Musical dialogue is part of wider expressive engagement.

During the events described above, Mandela 3, positioned centre-stage, is sitting upright, with other inmates behind him. He is barefoot, and wearing a short-sleeved t-shirt and chino trousers. There is a blanket serving as a bed, a table with an open chess board on top, a dustbin and a bookshelf. There is also a stool on which Mandela 3 is sitting, and on the side of the backdrop there is a hook on which his jacket is hanging. The other inmates are wearing jackets that match their trousers, with their heads facing the floor.

The three wardens, who are wearing brown uniforms, are standing at three entry points on different sides of the stage, on an elevated walkway. The warders are in elevated positions in order to monitor prisoners. One could extrapolate a deeper meaning from this practical situation, namely that the staging depicts a picture of the different levels of power, and white supremacy. The black prisoners are on the lower level, whereas the white law enforcers are of a different socio-political rank (see Figure 5). Those on a lower level are looking down as though they cannot even look at the warders or authority in the eye (a militaristic feature of plebes not awarded the right to look at their superiors in the eye).



Figure 5 Prologue, Mandela 3 in Robben Island prison (Cape Town opera, 2014)

At this point Jimmy Kruger⁸ storms in with his first text, “I don’t understand you Mandela” (see Figure 3), beginning a dialogue that many thought would not take place during their lifetime. As Kruger tries to negotiate Mandela’s release with him, and as Mandela responds to the offer, the composer suggests that both men are annoyed, though in a controlled manner. The piccolo, clarinet and oboe play non-melodic, accented three-notes motifs, albeit on rhythmically weak parts of the bar. Meanwhile, staccato strings are playing syncopated rhythms. We could see syncopation as a symbol shared between older forms of African music and their repatriation back into South Africa in popular musics such as jazz. Tension further increases as the two men move closer to each other on stage.

⁸ Mandela (2013:486) refers to Jimmy Kruger as a “stout blunt man, not nearly as polished as I would have expected from a cabinet minister.” Green (2004:83) refers to him as “an unusual man, superficially quite amiable in a vulgar way”, and who spoke English in a Johannesburg English accent rather than in an Afrikaans one.

Figure 6 Prologue, orchestral score, 47-51 (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 1, 7)

As was mentioned earlier, the two men start to sing in imitation in bar 47, although different texts are assigned to each character. As Mandela sings “Seven years ago, Seven years ago I wrote to you”, Jimmy Kruger interjects with “offering to release you” (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014:7). As I read the two lines, the ‘annoyed but controlled’ dynamic on Mandela’s part, suggested earlier by the music, became understood. Mandela reminds Jimmy Kruger of the efforts he made to make contact with him on matters that he and his companions were not pleased with (bars 47-82). The fact that Mandela tried to reach out on such matters that affected the Robben Island prisoners seven years ago, and that Jimmy Kruger only presents his offer now, justifies his feelings. There are further developments in their dialogue: Jimmy Kruger, who came in at the beginning (bar 23) with what may be seen as pleading for understanding and accepting his offer (bars 95-119), suddenly realizes that he cannot break through to Mandela and consequently loses his temper whilst saying that they are cutting Mandela’s criminal sentence in half (bars 121-128). From bars 90 to bar 120 Mandela is determined to tell Jimmy Kruger that it is too late now, and that he is disturbed by being referred to as a criminal. He addresses Jimmy Kruger by pointing at him in a defiant manner, and saying that they are political prisoners “jailed for believing in a free South Africa” (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014:21). A free South Africa is one in which everyone can be liberated and not discriminated against based on colour. The other prisoners look up straight as though they are listening or channelling their energy to the ongoing conversation. Jimmy Kruger calls the stubborn Mandela a communist, along with those jailed with him. Mandela takes his seat as he puts on his shoes whilst listening to Jimmy Kruger pleading again to be reasonable. Mandela then stands up to put on his prison jacket as Jimmy Kruger guarantees and assures him of his freedom. The musical device described below, which is simple enough to be understood by a lay audience, is heard in the harmony, signifying

a sense of arrival or relief as Mandela responds to Kruger, saying that the purpose of freedom is to create it for others. Score indications of *piu tranquillo* (with tranquillity) in Mandela's voice part, and *con calore* (warmly) in the orchestra accompaniment, are executed perhaps to allow the melody to flow more and support the bold statement of 'freedom' made by Mandela. Another imitative duet follows as the two men come close to each other, this time in a low-dynamic staccato. The reason for this, as indicated in the score, is to affect a quasi-whispering repetition of their positions of power (van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 1, 32). The multi-part singing that occurs at this stage of the opera seems to be of interest, as it is a familiar musical aspect in the Nguni tradition according to Rycroft (1967:88). Rycroft (1967:88 & 90) elaborates that in choral songs, for instance, you find at least two voice parts singing different texts. Monson (2000:48) speaks of the "responsorial relationship" between the leader and the chorus. This can also be seen as the composer conveying sociological attributes pertaining to cooperation.

The duet is in E major, and the piano, oboe, piccolo and clarinet are playing *staccatissimo* arpeggios (a IV7 chord in first inversion) (see Figure 7). The strings accompany this section with the tonic in long lines, bowing freely. The voice parts are sung staccato, which may be interpreted as expressive of a heated verbal discussion, and the orchestra and the duet is marked *piano* (soft). The *quasi sotto voce* singing also creates more tension whilst also conveying to the audience a sense of control.

223 Più presto e sotto voce $\text{♩} = 96$

Cl. *p*

Pno. *p*

White. *p quasi sotto voce*

Man. *p quasi sotto voce*

(The two men move uncomfortably close to each and smilingly, quasi-whisper' their positions once again)

The "so-called free-dom" that you want is quite im-pos-si-ble, my friend, not in South Af-ri-ca!

Well, I hate white su-pre-ma-cy... and will fight it, I shall fight it,

Figure 7 Prologue, orchestral score, bars 223-232 (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014:Act1, 32)

The prisoners stand up as the duet continues, and they proclaim that they will fight and agree with Mandela that this may all be worth it. Even if it means violence, they will liberate those oppressed by the laws that were put in place during the apartheid era. The duet concludes as the two men look closely into each other's eyes, and Jimmy Kruger shrugs and moves away from Mandela. He then asks Mandela if he does not wish to go back to his home in the Transkei. The character in the recitativo changes to a near-pastoral one when Jimmy Kruger says "home". A solo harp enters, leading to Mandela's response of how he would love to go home, but will not, considering the current state of the country⁹. It is evident that the composer considered 'western' aesthetics when using the harp to emphasize Mandela's reminiscing about his home. Jimmy Kruger seems to have given up, as he disappears after saying that he hears that the Transkei is beautiful. Mandela sternly answers by saying that Jimmy Kruger knows nothing about the Transkei and what it means to him. As he turns and thinks about the Transkei, the composer leads us into a transition during which Mandela 3 sees and feels the Transkei, and then starts to reminisce about his childhood. The feeling here is again pastoral¹⁰ (reminiscent of middle-twentieth century works by Vaughan Williams), characterized by a three-note upwards-moving motif (a semitone followed by a perfect fifth, played by the woodwinds and strings (including the strings setting on the electronic keyboard). This signals the beginning of Act 1.

Digression 1 The romanticized homeland

In her analysis of the "master performer of AmaXhosa indigenous instruments" and "dynamic singer" Madosini's rural-urban migration, Claudia Jansen van Rensburg (2017:140-141) quotes Veit Erlmann (1996:107) where he states,

[...] the lives that millions of black South Africans are forced to live in the insecure interstices between wage employment and other forms of production, in the language of anthropology could perhaps be better described as an all-pervasive state of off-centeredness, of fractured identities, and of perpetual displacement. It

⁹"With all my heart, but not in support of your Bantustan policy" (van Dijk and Campbell, 2017:28)

¹⁰Saylor (2008:41-42) takes Gifford's argument of 20th century English pastoralism having to do with shepherds, with an "overarching theme of departure and return (usually from an urban to a rural setting)". The idea of the urban can be described "implicitly" or "explicitly" in order to be distinguished from the rural. He further says that this pastoralism is not restricted to "a" time or "a" place or even one approach, be it an artistic concept or even a literary trope.

is a whole social microcosm in itself, a complete way of life with its own sets of rules, symbols and meanings.

If the context outlined in this quote is applied to Mandela's rural-urban migration, one could say that the partly-fantasized portrayal of his earlier life in Qunu is perhaps *not* merely the fantasy of a director, choreographer or composer for the sake of entertainment, but a historically correct (if not literal) portrayal of Mandela's fantasy of an imagined, romanticized rural homeland – and here again I use Erlmann's (1996) words, where a state of off-centredness, a fractured identity and a sense of perpetual displacement are *stabilized*. It is then, as Jansen van Rensburg (2017:151) suggests (albeit with regard to Madosini's music), "not an untouched past [in the music and on stage in the case of *Mandela trilogy*], but a past touched in very painful ways by settlement and migrancy".

4.3 A boy in Qunu

This narrative starts with Mandela 3 exploring the beauty of his homeland, imagining that he was there. He goes to the cleansing steel tubs to touch the water in this imaginary scene, momentarily crossing two realities. All this happens as he reminisces about the days when he was younger. He looks around as the scene unfolds and the men and women take their place, preparing the stage for the sacred event about to take place. He moves to the side as the singing begins, and he disappears as we see the young Mandela (Mandela 1) coming on stage to cleanse himself after his return from the initiation school. The women are wearing IsiXhosa attire. Some of them wear headscarves called *Isiqhova*, a symbol that they are married. The younger girls have beads on their heads called *Ipasi*. The women are wearing *Umbaco*, which are the traditional clothes that came after that which was called *Isikhakha*. *Isikhakha* is the original clothing which was made of animal skin. *Umbaco* is the material which came into use when fabric was introduced to AmaXhosa people. *Umbaco* are dresses that are normally white with black stripes towards the tips. Magubane (1998:25) describes *Umbaco* (see Figure 8) as what AmaXhosa women regard as traditional wear in the 20th century. The women walk in with lit candles to celebrate the right of passage of the boys (boys becoming men through initiation).



Figure 8 Act 1, A depiction of women wearing Umbaco (Cape Town Opera, 2014)

Kepe *et al.* (2015:92) suggest that this ritual, which “[enacts the] separation between men and women” encourages “masculine virility, [serves as] marriage preparation, [...] [and hardens] boys for warfare”. The boys who have not gone through initiation, which also includes circumcision, are not allowed to do certain things according to AmaXhosa culture. For example, the right to marry is reserved, they are not allowed to make ancestral sacrifices or even address the males of their age group on a first-name basis. The elder responsible for cutting the foreskin during circumcision is called *Ingcibi*, while the one nursing the wound until it has healed is called *Ikhankatha*. *Ikhankatha* is also responsible for teaching them about being ‘a man’. During the time the boys get back to their homesteads from where they have been held in solitude for a month to three months, their blankets are taken away and they are ordered to go and wash the clay off their bodies in the river (Carstens, 1982:510). They would then return to the ‘lodge’ and they will be given new blankets and sticks. From there they will return to their village, where they will be welcomed back by their families and women. Mandela (2013:34) confirmed that the period of initiation was a time of “quietude” for him that indeed prepared him for manhood. In reality, men are not supposed to be seen by women during the initiation period. The processions of this ritual as portrayed on stage have been adapted whereby

the stage director incorporated the cross-cutting technique¹¹ for the purposes of theatrical storytelling¹². It seems like the women are at another place waiting for their children to return home from where they are standing and the men are with the boys at the ritual.

Digression 2 Historical correctness in the depiction of previously-oppressed persons and cultures

Despite my view that it is not an opera house's inherent responsibility to showcase the exact historical, socio-political/cultural realities in artistic productions, I *would* however like to suggest that it seems inappropriate when a story that carries a considerable, recent historical weight is told without due attention to historical correctness. I therefore agree with Mareli Stolp (2017:150) where she states that *Mandela trilogy's* intention could have been to simplify (i.e. make accessible), entertaining and understandable the story by diluting the seriousness of the events that unfolded in South Africa and Mandela's life.

Many operas have been modified by, for example, changing or expanding their names, adapting or translating the libretto, or by changing the geographical or socio-historical/cultural setting. Take for instance Bizet's *Carmen*, which was remade into *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* (2005) and Puccini's *La Bohème*, which was remade into *La Bohème in District Six* (2016). Many such remakes are produced by Umculo Opera Incubator¹³, managed by Shirley Apthorp (the productions are directed by Kobie van Rensburg). In the case of *Mandela trilogy*, the opera is not presented as a 'reworking'.

¹¹Farmer (2014) refers to cross-cutting as a dramatic technique whereby two scenes are taking place at the same time.

¹²Recent polemics on initiation rituals are evident in the film *Inxeba*; a secret love affair of Xhosa men during male initiation. According to Head (2018), some of the issues included that of men believing that the film takes from the value of the initiation space by demonstrating a homosexual love affair, and also because *Ukweluka* is supposed to be private ceremony. Mortlock (2018) wrote in an article that the film's reclassification request from the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa together with the Men and Boy Foundation (of changing the rating of 16 LS to X18), came about because they felt the film was not educational or carrying an artistic value, that those who are 16 are not yet exposed to practices that come with the initiation and sexual demonstrations may harm them, and also the fact that the film is offensive to women at large as it undermines them in society.

¹³This organization offers opportunities to young upcoming South African artists to perform operatic works to communities, with the intention of making the works relevant to the communities through school workshops facilitated by myself (Lebona Sello), prior to seeing the show. In this way school children learn about the art form and get actively involved in understanding and facing their circumstances. Umculo Opera Incubator "explores the full potential of opera as means of social development" (Umculo, 2013).

Where recent, sensitive histories as well as historical traditions, such as IsiXhosa cultural practices, are depicted, I would like to argue that there is an expectation that these depictions should be historically accurate in paying respect to the previously-oppressed persons or cultures. This is especially the case where the target audience is a foreign one.

The orchestra introduces the scene with more quasi-pastoral music; this time the motif is more tonal (a perfect fourth, followed by a whole tone), played by the woodwinds: where the oboe plays a melody, the flute responds to it and the clarinet to that of the flute. Drops of water (possibly a recorded sound, as it cannot be identified in the orchestral score) are echoed as though they are falling in the bathtub. Men join the scene in white clothes called *Ibayi*, and are wearing beads called *Uvulakabini*.



Figure 9 Act 1, A depiction of Ibayi and Uvulakabini (Cape Town Opera, 2014)

Both men and women immediately take their positions when the music changes to a traditional folk song, as they welcome the men who came back from the mountain (*Ulwaluko*¹⁴). The lyrics of the song follow:

Solo:

He, somagwaza somgwaza ngalomkhonto
Iyo ho ho ho

Men:

Haye! Haye!

Women:

Hmm Hmm Hmm Hmm Hmm

“He Somagwaza sa Mugwaza nga lo Mkhondo”, which translates to “We stabbed him, we stabbed him with this spear” (Mandela trilogy notes: 2016:13), referring to circumcision (my translation). The language used is more IsiZulu than it is IsiXhosa but is often heard in AmaXhosa tribes and clans. For this ceremony it means we will cut his foreskin with this weapon as to show and signify that he is now a man. Although this description of circumcision may sound violent, it actually pertains to the general ideology that I myself grew up with; that which is “Monna ha alle ke nku”, which is a Sesotho proverb (*Leele*) that translates to “a man does not cry, he is like a sheep” (translated by the present author). Therefore, the act of cutting the foreskin may be painful but a ‘real’ man should endure the pain because it’s through that endurance that his manhood is tested.

A group of men in the front are wrapped in *Abakhwetha* blankets – it is white with a touch of red (a stripe) near the one edge of the blanket. The men behind them are wearing *Ingcawa* dresses, holding sticks and dancing. The one who may be seen as the praise singer, the *Izimbongi*, is wearing a hat and an animal skin on his upper body, as well as an *Ingcawa*. He is also holding a cow-tail whisk called an *Itshoba*; it is normally infused in traditional medicine called *Umuthi*, which helps him to attain and do his job in a trustworthy manner. He is the only person, whilst praising, who is allowed to comment on anything about the King.

¹⁴The initiation school.

The two boys (Nelson and Justice – the *Umkhetha*¹⁵) climb into the bathtubs and wash the clay off their bodies. The men hold their sticks, called *Induku*, which they use when dancing and stick fighting. The women sing and dance to the words “EsoMagwaza” (van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 1, 7) as they praise the men.

Mandela 3 appears again, still wearing his prison clothes, as though he is remembering the *Imbongi* from his younger years, as indicated in the score (van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 1, 7). The dream-like nature of the scene is announced with a rather conventional device: the striking of the Glockenspiel. While they are washing their bodies in the tubs, the women start to sing another folksong (“Inkwekwe”) in three-part harmony (SSA) (van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 1, 16), and dancing to the song while the men watch them (see Figures 10 and 11). The tune is a familiar one, although in this instance it is sung by classically trained voices. The soloist leading the song also sings in a manner unconventional to the way it would be sung in the culture; these ‘unconventionalities’ concern vowel adjustment and alignment, and forward resonance.

77 — Andante ♩ = 80

Glock. *p*

MANDELA 3 watches as the praise singer he remembers so well, an *imbongi*, a guardian of the boys, emerges from the shadows to help the two young men wash off the red ochre.

S. *f* SOLO *ALL*

In - kwe-nkwe, In - kwe-nkwe, In - kwe-nkwe, In - kwe-nkwe, In - kwe-nkwe ya - ma-tha-f-a - se M -tha - tha, M -

A. *f*

In - kwe-nkwe, In - kwe-nkwe, In - kwe-nkwe, ya - ma-tha-f-a - se M -tha - tha, M -

Figure 10 Act 1, orchestral score, bars 77-84 (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: 16)

¹⁵The boys who transition to being men after the initiation school.

85 17

Glock.

Djembe (Orch).

[mp]

SOLO *p* *f*

S. *p* *f*

tha - tha Em - fe - sa - ne ya - yo i - se - M - ve - zo, M - ve - zo, M - ve - zo, M - ve - zo.

A. *p* *f*

tha - tha Em - fe - sa - ne ya - yo, Em - fe - sa - ne ya - yo i - se - M - ve - zo, M - ve - zo, M - ve - zo, M - ve - zo.

S. *f* *(mp)* *f*

Si - hle i - si - za - lo si - ka - N - ko - si u - Ga - Aa

A. *f* *(mp)* *f*

Si - hle i - si - za - lo si - ka - N - ko - si u - Ga - dla Si - hle i - si - za - lo

Figure 11 Act 1, orchestral score, bars 85-99 (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: 17-18)

Digression 3 Post-blackface

The concept of blackface started with minstrel traditions in the 19th century. Johnson (2012:3) explains it as when white people would dress up (through, among other things, applying coal to their faces) and would try to act like African-Americans. Lott (1995:5) describes it as the “theatrical practice organized around the quite explicit ‘borrowing’ of black cultural materials [...] in which white men caricatured black people for sport and profit”¹⁶.

In Act 1, two white women form part of the female ensemble who are singing in the background as Mandela and Justice are washing the clay off their bodies. They are

¹⁶See Froneman (2012:49-76) for a detailed account of the origins of blackface in a South African context, specifically that of *boeremusiek*.

wearing the same traditional dresses as the black women, and appear to be part of the group. In my opinion, no transgression has been committed here. They did not paint their faces black or wore any other bodily feature-changing costumes in order to mock or create comic relief. I believe that singers should be given the right to sing whatever they want without any restrictions to their skin colour or body shape, and without their costumes and makeup having to be changed. This stance may appear to go against the point I made earlier with regard to historical correctness in the depiction of previously-oppressed persons or cultures. I would therefore like to suggest that it is an issue of *believability*: a slightly-altered account of recent, sensitive histories and historical “traditions” is believable to an audience who may not be highly informed; white women living within AmaXhosa culture in a rural setting is not, and their presence is therefore inconsequential. With that said I am aware that the presence of the two women opens up meanings presumably not intended by the librettist and composer. First, the audience arguably very well understands that the opera is an artistic *representation*, and secondly, the presence of the women engages the current reconstruction of relations. But the current reconstruction of relations in my opinion should not dilute the developing history in the act because in act two we are introduced to white people who also lived in Sophiatown and that retells a progressive reconstruction of relations that were also apparent in those times.

The praise singer uses his whisk to flog the young Mandela and Justice, blessing them and welcoming them to manhood. The men are then covered in their blankets and the stage is cleared as Mandela 3 narrates a biography of his younger years (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014:20):

MANDELA 3 (*spoken*) I grew up in Transkei, in a small village called Qunu. After my father died we were poor and so my dear mother arranged for me to become part of the royal household of Chief Dalindyebo, the regent of Thembu people. I arrived at the Great Place as a nine-year old boy wearing an old shirt and khaki shorts cut from my father’s breeches, with a piece of string as a belt.

The regent became my guardian and his wife raised me as if I were her own child, and Justice, their only son, became my best friend. My first schoolteacher gave me the name Nelson – I cannot tell you why, but in those days every mission-educated child had to have a name of a British imperial hero.

When I was sixteen the regent decided that it was time for me and Justice to undergo initiation. As AmaXhosa we count our years as men from the date of circumcision. It is a sacred time: we are shaved from head to foot, secluded in the bush, covered in the white chalk of purity, until it cracks on our bodies. But when I return to my village I walk straighter, taller, firmer, hopeful about my future.

All of this is happening as the women are placing props and decorations on the stage. They look busy, sweeping and grinding, possibly wheat or corn. A beautiful picture of green-grassed mountains is projected, creating the scene of a homestead. The women start to ululate as the men approach them with a song, “Qula Kwedini” (van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 1, 22), which means “sing man” (my translation). There is IsiXhosa instrument Dizo Plaatjies (2017) calls *Ibompolo*, which can be heard on the first beats of each bar of the song, lending to it a dance-like quality. It is a pipe with two open ends that can produce one note; in this case the note sounds like an F over the song in G major. We can assume that the scene is at the chief’s place/palace in his Kraal, because there is a decorated big chair that is also placed on stage. Mandela and Justice are now dressed like the other men. The women now flaunt their voices by ululating and shouting. They mock-flirt with the new men as they sing, throwing their bodies at them. The men clap on the first beat of every bar as the ladies sing/say “Uyi ndoda sibonise sitsho sonke mfondi”¹⁷ (van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 1, 25). Nelson and Justice then take their positions to stick-fight each other. Stick-fighting is a convention among AmaXhosa men. They each hold two sticks that, according to Kaschula (1996:33), serve the following purposes: the one on the left is to block the opponent’s attack, while the right-hand one is to attack or hit the opponent. The women are yelling and spurring on the fight. The piano introduces a three semi-quaver ‘urgent’ motif as the carefully choreographed stick-fight commences (see Figure 122). This sequence brings about cross-rhythmic patterns between the dance steps, the stick banging and the accompaniment. Cross-rhythms are common in IsiXhosa music, according to Levine (2005:88). The oscillating, repetitive, staccato B-D-B-D accompaniment is in D major, and where the complete B-D-F# chord appears in the 3/16-time bars, the notes are also accented. The time signature is unstable, as it moves between 2/8 and 3/16. This instability is compensated for by the

¹⁷ It translates as “You are a man we all say so, so show us” (translated by the present author).

simplicity of the rhythms themselves. The tempo marking is *energico*. The instruments of the orchestra (nearly the entire ensemble) are playing mostly in unison or octaves.

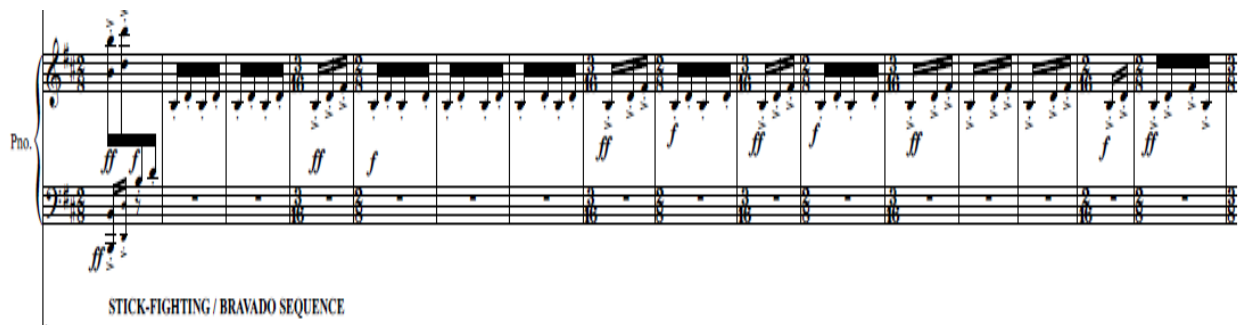


Figure 12 Act 1, orchestral score, bars 216-231 (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 1, 28)

The young Mandela (Mandela 1, baritone) sings that he is a man, and is then joined by Justice (tenor) in a duet to the words “I am a man, my journey has begun/I know the pain of an assegai” (van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 1, 28). The piece’s time signature is 3/8 and the key is still D major. Above bar 232, the following indication is given:

The Stick-Fighting possibly dwindles to a slow-mo or a freeze; the focus is primarily on MANDELA 1, who perhaps directs the words at himself. As the stage slowly unfreezes, JUSTICE, MOTHER, and CHORUS join in” (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 1, 29).

In Mandela’s part in the score it is suggested that the singing should be “unhurried, and with sudden self-awareness” as he sings “I am a man, my journey has begun” (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014:29). When Justice joins Mandela in singing “I am a man, I know the pain of an assegai” (van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 1, 28), the music changes to the dominant (A major) of D major as they start saying to each other “you are a man” this time. The other men now join in, confirming that the ceremony has been completed, and it means that they have made the transition. This suggests a link between the tonal shift and the social transition.

The women now also refer to them as men. Where ensemble singing is concerned, the composer in this section let the men (tenors and basses) introduce the motif (see Figure 123). They are followed by the altos, and then the sopranos. All the voices meet in singing “just begun”, to prepare for the climax of the song where everyone sings “begun the journey” (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014:35). There is no need to explain why these words are symbolically significant in the context of the opera as a whole.

The MOTHER observes from some distance away.

MOTHER (not at this point in the score)

Just. done. a man now the ce - re - mo - ny is done, my jour - ney has just be - gun, the jour - ney

Man. I done. a man now the ce - re - mo - ny is done, my jour - ney has just be - gun, my jour - ney

S. Here, your path your jour - ney has be - gun, be -

A. Here is your path Your jour - ney Your jour - ney has be - gun, be -

T. I am a man now the ce - re - mo - ny is done, my jour - ney has just be - gun, the jour - ney

B. I am a man now the ce - re - mo - ny is done, my jour - ney has just be - gun, the jour - ney

Figure 13 Act 1, orchestral score, bars 297-310 (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: 28)

The libretto where Justice and Mandela sing together that they are walking tall, strong and proud may also be read as them explaining to themselves why conforming to a certain type of masculinity is justifiable. The women then get a chance to serve food and beer to the excited men – another symbol that confirms the crossover to manhood. After another self-declaration of manhood, they are joined by the male section; then in unison the whole chorus joins in a display of especially western classical-style singing. The reason for this western style could be that the composer wanted a more solid and resonating sound that is placed forward with vibrato to strengthen his intention with the unison singing. This unison singing could be the composer’s way to emphasise unity in the community, and everyone’s involvement meant understanding gender performance (especially that of being a man) within the social surrounding or community.

“No more will I play games of the children”, declare the excited Justice and Mandela in a recitative that lists all the things they will not be doing anymore. The music changes to show their excitement: the rhythmic groupings become sometimes irregular and syncopated (which can also superficially be related to traditional music; see Figure 144) as they start dancing a ‘cow dance’ in bar 422, which could be the *Umxhentso*.

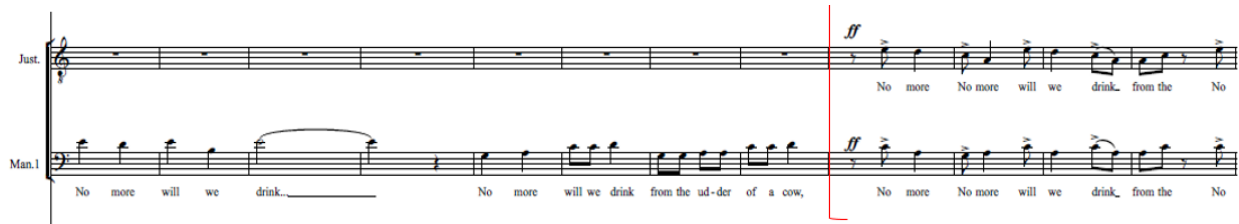


Figure 14 Act 1, orchestral score, bars 416-427 (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 1, 46)

Nelson goes on dancing as Justice, who is gripped by a new vision, disturbs him, mentioning that they will drink *Umqombothi* (African beer). Nelson approaches him as they drink the beer. Nelson's mother joins the scene with her hands on her waist and then hugs her son as a way to show both pride and sadness (the latter because she will not be able to treat Mandela like a child anymore). Mandela then addresses everyone, saying "Ndiyindoda" ("I am a man") once again, and once more everyone joins in with "Uyi indoda" ("You are a man") (my translations) (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: 55). Mandela's mother carries on saying these words as the men exit the stage and she is left with the other women. She sings a song simply titled "Lullaby", a song about Nelson Mandela's younger years and how she will not be taking care of him anymore since he is now a man. Although a lullaby is usually sung to children, in this instance it is as though the mother is singing one for herself to make herself feel better. The women get closer to her as they listen and sympathize with her. This maternal utterance again reminds of traditional music through its descending melodic slopes, and parallel third and fourth chords. The theme of this song is hummed¹⁸ in bar 582, and we hear it again in Act 3 as the men are sentenced and the women are singing it in despair. The connection between the two instances we hear this theme is that in both cases a mother loses her child, be it through initiation and/or by going to prison – both represent loss.

The men now join backstage, singing. The whole choir sings in IsiXhosa *Istibili* choral singing style. *Istibili* is a choral genre that combines singing and dancing. The men enter on stage with the Chief, Nelson and Justice. The women and men start dancing as the chief is seated. The men now also get a chance to show off their traditional, although choreographed, dancing skills by themselves.

¹⁸Humming in the Xhosa culture is referred to as *Ukumbombozela* or *Imbuyo*, according to Levine (2005:87).

Chief Jongintaba Dalindyebo stands up to address Nelson and Justice as everyone clears the stage. The focus is on the chief, Mandela and Justice, as well as the Chief's right-hand men. There are two women who are sitting with djembes between their legs, which they use to accompany the *Istibili* along with the orchestra. The chief gives them words of wisdom and tells them about the country's current state. Going through the initiation school means that you are old enough to be informed about the life contexts of your community. The Chief explains this to them by proclaiming that even though they are now men, they are still "slaves in their own land" (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014:76). This means that they were not free to truly exercise their manhood in their land, because they had to work and provide wealth for white people. Mandela (2013:35), in *Long walk to freedom*, says he was not happy to hear this as it seemed as though the Chief was ungrateful for the educational values and other benefits that white people had afforded black people. Mandela, in this source, speaks as though people at the ceremony were angry about what the chief was talking about, but in the opera, with a powerful chorus, they seem to be supporting what the chief is saying.

He points at them with a *kierie* (the Afrikaans word for a walking stick, used in many South African languages) or what Amaxhosa call *Induku*. The chief speaks of Makhanda, who was one of the first political fighters. Makhanda was Xhosa and was imprisoned on Robben Island. From what the Chief is singing we can conclude that he is referring to Makhanda's possible drowning whilst trying to escape (Buntman, 2003:71).

A praise singer comes on stage with the other men. The women take their places on an elevated stand. The men dance with shields and spears, which appears to symbolize warfare. The chorus sings "Izwi lashu Kum' Ah Daka ka Makhanda" ("a voice said to me Ah Daka ka Makhanda", which is a praise call to one's clan), (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014:80-81) (my translation) praising the fallen hero Makhanda, and the chief stands up again. Justice and Nelson are on their knees. The praise singer proclaims "Arise Amaxhosa" (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014:83) (referring to all black South Africans, not just the Amaxhosa) as the chorus supports him, with the rest of the men dancing. The praise singer speaks (in the first person) about how the land has been stolen by the British and how he, as a black man, was sent to prison. This suggests that he is speaking on behalf of Makhanda. The chief begins to sing again, telling the boys about the circumstances they are faced with. "Arise Amaxhosa" (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014:89)

is heard again. The chief goes to take his seat once more. Everyone is positioned left-stage from the audience's perspective, except the praise singer who is on the right-hand side. Makhanda, in bar 703, is mentioned by the Chief. The praise singer is wearing a blanket, possibly imitating Makhanda. The men pick up their shields and spears again. They get into position to use their shields to create waves. The Chief's narration of Makhanda's story is then followed by "Arise Amaxhosa" (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: 98), sung by the praise singer. The men bow down (either to the chief, or in response to the praise singer's words.) The men jump up quickly in sync with the orchestra's rhythm, and they take up their shields and spears again, raising it upwards. They all sing in unison, and kneel down as the chief approaches them in order to make way for him. They then go off-stage, leaving Justice and Nelson, who are still being addressed by the chief. As he finishes his speech, the two men also leave the stage. The women remain on the left-hand stairs, and the older Mandela 1 on the right-hand elevated stand.

After entering on stage again, Mandela 3 speaks about the great Makhanda while the women sing "Asikwaz' uku hamba kweli lizwe lokhokho bethu" (an old folk song) which translates to: "we cannot go from this land of our ancestors, we cannot go away from earth" (translated by the present author).

MANDELA 3 (*spoken*) I often think of the great warrior-prophet Makhanda, and how I ended up imprisoned on the very same island where he was kept all those years ago. He was a hero of mine, one of the first men who fought against white domination. This island should be called Makhanda in honour of our first freedom fighter, who died trying to escape. There's one thing you must know, however, when I leave Robben Island, I have no intention of drowning. I remember how cross I was with the regent on my special day. To me his words sounded like those of an uneducated man who did not appreciate the benefits that the white man had brought to our country. And yet his words did sow a seed that would eventually grow strong within me. After I graduated from high school I was admitted to the South African Native College of Fort Hare - the pinnacle of higher education for black South Africans. But after only a year of study I learned a painful lesson brought about by my own stubbornness...

The Chief appears, and with disappointment, (because neither men finished their studies) he engages in a spoken, unaccompanied dialogue with Mandela and Justice. On stage

we find Justice and Mandela 1, who are now wearing cream-coloured, formal trousers, suspenders over a white, formal shirt, and black shoes. Justice is wearing formal khaki-coloured trousers, also suspenders over a white, formal shirt, and dark brown shoes. The Chief's order that they should get married puts them in a predicament. In AmaXhosa culture arranged marriages are part of their heritage. Jones and Ellis (2016:301) add that even though arranged marriages may have been normal, sometimes some individuals chose who they wanted to marry. Before Justice suggests that they should leave, they sing a duet, in unison, about marriage, in which it is suggested that they are not interested. Justice proposes that they should go to Johannesburg. The orchestra creates urgency and suspense as two notes, in a minor third interval, are played repeatedly. Nelson folds his arms, with his one hand across his mouth, as Justice puts his hand on Mandela's shoulder, convincing him that going to Johannesburg is a good idea. Justice goes off-stage after saying "we have to leave" (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014:109) He leaves the confused Nelson on stage, who sings a reflection on his life thus far; how he was a great scholar, the favourite son of the Chief, a man of honour. He proclaims how an arranged marriage is too hard for him to bare. This aria alludes to a theme from the "Embroidery aria" from Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes*. Other than the lyrics sharing a reminiscent quality (see the lyrics below), one can see and hear the melodic slope that is slightly similar (see Figure 155 and Figure 166 below).

<p>Embroidery in the childhood was a luxury of idleness. A coil of silken thread giving dreams... of a silk and satin life. Now my broidery affords the clue whose meaning we avoid! My hands remembered its old skill Those stitches tell a curious tale. I remember I was brooding On the fantasies of children... And dreamt that only wishing I could bring some silk into their lives... Now... my broidery affords the clue... whose Meaning we avoid. (Britten, 1945:439 – 443)</p>	<p>How swift has been my fall from grace One moment I was a dedicated scholar, a man of honour, the favourite son The favoured son of a chief, a man of honour, But an arranged marriage is too hard to face and now, and now I run away like a thief, like a common thief. How swift my fall how... (van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 1, 91-92)</p>
--	--

Man. I

the fa - voured son of a chief, a man of hon - our. But an arr-anged mar-riage is too hard to face - and now, and now I run

Strings
K-brd

Just.

Bar 188

Man. I

way like a thief like a com-mon thief. How swift my fall how. Nel - son! Nel - son!

Strings
K-brd

Figure 15 Act 1, orchestral score bars 988-990 (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 1, 177)

E.

Now my broi - de - ry af - fords the clue

VI. I

senza sord.

VI. II

senza sord.

Vla.

senza sord.

Ve.

senza sord.

Figure 16 Act 1, orchestral score excerpt (Britten, 1945:440)

Digression 4 Eclecticism

Erçetin and Bağcı's (2016:24) definition of eclecticism suggests that it means different styles are incorporated into one, rather than a work or song imitating one style, as is the case with pastiche (I will discuss this in the next chapter). Both the Prologue, as well as the Rivonia Trial scene in Act 3, are strongly reminiscent of the opening court scene in Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes* in terms of its focus on a 'prosecuted outsider', or 'outsiders' in the case of the latter. This confirmed my noticing stylistic similarities between moments in van Dijk's music and that of Britten. Compare, for example, the use of the octatonic scale in crotchet triplets in the brass section just before the beginning of Act 1 in Britten's *Peter Grimes* (see

Figure 18 *Peter Grimes*, end of the prologue (no bar numbers) (1945:32) to those in the string sections in Act 1, bars 484-490 in *Mandela trilogy* (see

Figure 7) In addition to this, a link can tentatively be drawn between the theme of the 'elder statesman', in the case of this opera Nelson Mandela, and moments in van Dijk's music that reminds me of John Adams's opera *Nixon in China*. Compare, for example, the repeated minor arpeggios in Act 1, bars 220-224 in the piano part of the vocal score of *Nixon in China* (see Figure 179) to those in the percussion, piano, keyboard and strings parts in Act 1, bars 907-909 in *Mandela trilogy* (see Figure 20). These statements contribute to my interpretation of van Dijk's music as stylistically eclectic, a significant issue to which I will return in the concluding chapter.

Figure 17 shows an orchestral score for *Mandela trilogy*, Act 1, bars 484-490. The score is for Violins 1 and 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The time signature is 4/4. The score includes dynamic markings (*f*, *p*, *mp*, *fff*) and articulation (*legato*, *non div.*). A box with the number 28 is present above the Violin 1 staff.

Figure 17 *Mandela trilogy*, Act 1, orchestral score, bars 484-490 (Van Dijk van Williams, 2014: Act 1, 52)

Figure 18 shows an orchestral score for *Peter Grimes*, end of the prologue (no bar numbers) (1945:32). The score is for Horns in F, Trumpets in C, Trombones, and Tuba. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature is 4/4. The score includes dynamic markings (*cresc. molto*, *ff*, *dim.*) and articulation (*3*).

Figure 18 *Peter Grimes*, end of the prologue (no bar numbers) (1945:32)

The musical score is for Act 1, bars 220-224 of *Nixon in China*. It consists of four staves. The top three staves are for vocal parts: Soprano (S), Alto (A), and Bass (B). The lyrics for all three parts are: "he - moth pulls the peas - ant's plow." The piano accompaniment is on the bottom staff, featuring a complex, rhythmic melody in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4.

Figure 17 *Nixon in China*, Act 1, bars 220-224 (Adams, 1987: n.p.)

Figure 18 shows a page from an orchestral score for *Mandela trilogy*, Act 1, bars 899-914. The score is for a full orchestra and includes a vocal part. The instruments listed are Timp., Glock., Xyl., Pno., Just., Strings K-brd., Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., Vc., and Db. The music is in 2/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The score features dynamic markings such as *ff*, *f*, *p*, and *pizz.* (pizzicato). The vocal part (Just.) has lyrics: "We have to leave we have to go to the ci - ty of lights We must es-cape this ru-ral life for some fun - filled". A tempo change is indicated: "L'istesso Tempo ♩ = 76 (♩ = 152)".

Figure 18 *Mandela trilogy*, Act 1, orchestral score, bars 899-914 (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2014:Act 1, 109)

4.4 Masculinities

4.4.1 Masculinity: Militarism Time

At the beginning of the Prologue, in the scene where Kruger and Mandela converse, the snare drum is used as part of the orchestra to bring about urgency (in the dialogue between Mandela and Jimmy Kruger – see the discussion below) that heightens an expectation of confrontation. Aspects of Mandela's masculinity can also be understood in

the context of certain group masculinities, in this case monotonous, militaristic obedience (in the group of prisoners, as mentioned, and by extension by Mandela). The snare drum is often associated with military marching bands (O'Brien, 201:47). Carroll (2003:325), in turn, states that the military was associated with masculine music in the 19th century. During this time folk tunes were performed by men who formed brass bands and combined them with dance moves. Military music composers such as John Philip Sousa were influential (Carroll, 2003:326) in this regard. The brass bands were considered masculine because they were different from those western classical traditions that were considered feminine. There is also a deeper connection here with colonialism. Brass bands, for instance, commonly paraded in Cape Town during the British occupation (Gollom, 2000:294). In giving a 20th-century example, Carroll (2003:326) mentions that Charles Ives were prompted to compose music that was masculine. Ives's music was loud, with clashing brass melodies that were energized with dissonance. Carroll also states that "Ives was personally determined to make music that spoke with a masculine voice". This type of music, Carroll (2003:32) affirms, can be linked to "masculinity with patriotism". I would therefore like to contend that the use of militaristic music here signifies two apparently (although not necessarily) contradictory strands of Mandela's masculinity: militaristic group obedience (even if only at a surface level, in playing the role of strategic peacekeeper), and that of an outwardly staunch leader. Snare drum, according to Ferrara (2016:39), may figuratively imply machine guns firing.

4.4.2 Masculinity: The Thembu regent

The manner in which Mandela is sitting on the chair as Jimmy Kruger addresses him can be seen as relating to what AmaXhosa people, and specifically the Thembu tribe, considered to be masculine. He is sitting upright, with his hands placed on his knees. The stage director may have considered how the regent would sit, or an ordinary husband in a Xhosa household where the women would be sitting on the floor¹⁹. Mandela (2013:25) admits that his principles were influenced by the regent. Some of these traits include the regent listening to everyone before he spoke, and allowing those present to reach a consensus with him. The 'regent' Mandela also shares the view that despite being

¹⁹Mandela says that women were regarded as "second class citizens" (Mandela, 2013:24).

criticized by many for it, he would listen and not let his emotions cloud his judgement. The conversation between Kruger and Mandela displays these qualities.

4.4.3 Masculinity: men in relation to women

As mentioned before, aspects of Mandela's masculinity can also be understood in the context of certain group masculinities. See for example the initiation cleansing scene. Traditional relations between men and women are often embodied by the music. See, for example, Figure 21 below. The rhythmic and melodic patterns that the men and women are singing are different, though complementary to each other; see the counterpoint between the men's and women's parts. The women are humming a wailing melody, characterized by downward major second and minor seventh leaps, in irregularly-grouped rhythmic patterns, in 2/2 time, whilst the men are singing "Eso Magwaza" in a narrower-ranged melody, in regularly-grouped rhythmic patterns. The women are singing in parallel perfect 5ths, which can, at least superficially, be related to traditional music. The descending melodic contour of the melodies can also be attributed to traditional singing.

The orchestral accompaniment – which consists of strings at that moment – can also be divided into two parts: both the first and second violins are playing the women's voice parts (*divisi*), whilst the violas, cellos and double basses are sustaining an open fifth (G-D), which serves as a pedal point to the men's singing. A solo tenor joins in bar 43, in counterpoint to the other material.

Although this type of texture is hardly unique, it *can* be read as reinforcing cultural norms concerning gender roles – "separateness" in this case. In *Long walk to freedom*, Mandela (2013:24) says women (in the Xhosa culture) were traditionally considered to be lower class citizens. This meant that they were, for example, not allowed to attend meetings or have a voice in the community. This example speaks directly to the patriarchy²⁰ of men as dominant figures whose presence translates to their masculinity. This is therefore about men asserting their position as the head of the household (protector). This is why

²⁰Gennrich (2017:6) defines patriarchy in the following manner: "a social system which gives men power over women and other men. It does not have to mean the control of individual men over individual women but it defines men as dominant in a society, and organises society in such a way as to maintain men's dominance over women."

they did things separately from men; something that became apparent during the 1956 Women's March²¹ or even the emergence of the ANC Women's League.

The musical score for Act 1, bars 28-33, is presented in a standard orchestral format. The vocal parts include Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). The instrumental parts include Flutes (Fls.), Oboes (Obs.), Clarinets (Cls.), Bassoons (Bsns.), Violins (Vlns.), Violas (Vlas.), Cellos (Vcs.), and Double Basses (Dbs.).

Vocal Parts:

- Soprano (S.):** The part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on a whole note G4, moving to F#4, E4, D4, and C4. The lyrics "THEMBU WOMEN (Sopranos & Altos) *pp sempre* Hmm." are written below the staff.
- Alto (A.):** The part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on a whole note G4, moving to F#4, E4, D4, and C4. The lyrics "He, so - ma - gwa - za som - gwa - za - nga - lom - khon" are written below the staff.
- Tenor (T.):** The part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on a whole note G4, moving to F#4, E4, D4, and C4. The lyrics "He, so - ma - gwa - za som - gwa - za - nga - lom - khon" are written below the staff.
- Bass (B.):** The part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on a whole note G4, moving to F#4, E4, D4, and C4. The lyrics "He, so - ma - gwa - za som - gwa - za - nga - lom - khon" are written below the staff.

Instrumental Parts:

- Flutes (Fls.):** The part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on a whole note G4, moving to F#4, E4, D4, and C4.
- Oboes (Obs.):** The part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on a whole note G4, moving to F#4, E4, D4, and C4.
- Clarinet (Cl.):** The part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on a whole note G4, moving to F#4, E4, D4, and C4.
- Bassoon (Bsn.):** The part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on a whole note G4, moving to F#4, E4, D4, and C4.
- Violins (Vlns.):** The part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on a whole note G4, moving to F#4, E4, D4, and C4.
- Viola (Vla.):** The part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on a whole note G4, moving to F#4, E4, D4, and C4.
- Cello (Vc.):** The part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on a whole note G4, moving to F#4, E4, D4, and C4.
- Double Bass (Db.):** The part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on a whole note G4, moving to F#4, E4, D4, and C4.

Figure 19 Act 1, orchestral score, bars 28-33 (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: 6-7)

²¹On 9 August 1956 twenty-thousand women marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest against the application of pass laws to women (Jadoo, 2015).

4.4.4 Masculinity: self-assertion

Take the scene where the praise poet (singer) presents accolades to Mandela. Suttner (2015:5) also refers to its importance in showing bravery and courage to endure pain; in other words, that which “emphasises qualities of manhood in manifestation of toughness”. Suttner (2014:342) also refers to Mandela’s constant reference to himself being a man, or to qualities he possesses that can be associated with manhood when he was growing up. The composer uses the same thematic material or what seems to be a leitmotif on the words “Uyindonda” (that women would use to tell men that they are men) than on “Ndindoda” (that men would use to tell themselves that they are men) in order to emphasise the grandness of the words. In summary, this leitmotif addresses verbal concepts that are linked to specific melodic designs.

The image displays a page from an orchestral score, specifically Act 1, bars 297-309. The score is written for a vocal ensemble and a full orchestra. The vocal parts include Mother, Just, Man, 1, S, A, T, and B. The instrumental parts include Strings, K-brd, Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla, and Vc. The score features a complex arrangement of notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The lyrics "Ndi-yi- ndo - da!" and "U - yi - ndo - da!" are repeated throughout the vocal parts. The score includes a tempo change from "Pesante ♩ = 52" to "Largo ♩ = 48" with the instruction "accel. poco a poco". The page number 21 is visible in the bottom left corner.

Figure 20 Act 1, orchestral score, bars 297-309 (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: 35)

4.4.5 Masculinity: cameraderie

The construction of masculinity in sports, of which the stick-fighting scene serves as an example often comprises, among other things, aggression and 'toughness', notably in those that require physical engagement (Scott, 2008:36). One's reflexes and agility develop, and as a result endorse excellence and enforce teamwork. Any emotions that manifest weakness or softness are discouraged. Scott (2008:36-37) also mentions that male sports provide a platform for "non-destructive aggression". This is evident in the Thembu clan's stick fighting custom.

4.5 Transition to Act 2

Justice returns with packed luggage, a hat on, and a folded jacket on his arm. He calls Nelson, saying again that they have to go to Johannesburg, and Mandela wears the jacket and hat Justice hands to him. Justice had stolen the Chief's cattle and sold them for money; enough to get by with in Johannesburg. They shake hands and hug, and once more proudly proclaim, "Ndiy' ndoda". This concludes Act 1.

The old Nelson Mandela (Mandela 3) reappears and talks us through how it was when they got to Johannesburg, his marriage to Evelyn Mase (his first wife), and how he realized how black South Africans were treated.

CHAPTER 5 A LAWYER IN SOPHIATOWN

5.1 Introduction

In Act 1 generally we found orchestrated traditional-inspired music; in this act a fusion of different musical genres and styles is utilized. In the 1950s jazz was a musical style that was popular in Sophiatown. I will discuss it in terms of being a discursive space for the emerging (politicised) African urban population, as well as it being a symbol of exile. Negro spiritual influences and musical dialogues (especially vocal forms like call and response) will also be explored. Gospel as a tool used to uplift those oppressed (like Negro spirituals) will be discussed. Fashion and dance styles, such as *pantsula*, form part of articulating life contexts during the 1950s, as will be mentioned in this chapter. Historical correctness in the depiction of previously oppressed persons and cultures through the use of existing music (like that from the musical *King Kong*) will be explored. Lastly, aspects that play into Mandela's masculinities, such as leadership, 'smart-cool/bravado', and womanizing and gender division will be discussed.

5.2 A lawyer in Sophiatown

The scene starts with Mandela 3 narrating a reflection on his past, accompanied by woodwinds and brass, Glockenspiel and piano, playing a slow, 1950s-jazz style tune. The music starts in 6/8-time, with a tempo indication of *con moto* dotted crotched equals 102. The key is D major, and open fifths (G-D-A) are heard in the strings, keyboard and electric piano (the latter set to 'accordion'), reprising a musical device from Act 1. This accompaniment serves as a musical backdrop whose function is to firstly confirm the musical style change from Act 1 to Act 2, and secondly as a means of filling in silence between the conversation with an ambience of jazz to emulate what could have been heard in the setting when this was happening. There are people who are facing in the same direction as the audience, watching a film from a projector. They are seated on wooden seats. The cinema in question could possibly be the *Odin*. The *Odin*, according to Mandela (2013:180), was a venue in Sophiatown where a resistance group consisting of members of the African National Congress (ANC), the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC) and the local Ratepayers' Association assembled. The cinema audience members are from the black working class: maids, 'garden boys' and possibly miners. A woman walks

down from the elevated stand onto the stage. They are all dressed up in the fashion of the 50s.

Digression 5 Jazz in an urban African population and jazz as a symbol of exile

Jazz was a space for the emerging (politicized) African urban population. Coplan (2008:183) mentioned that although African jazz drew on middle and working-class sponsors and supporters, most of the urban African people were not as 'westernized' as its performers. Coplan (2008) says that those that followed *marabi* were also interested in American jazz and the meaning of the lifestyle that came with it (for example, the clothes that supporters of this music would wear). However, there was still a need for music that they could relate to and recognize as theirs.

In Sophiatown entertainment contributed to the "emerging spaces of urban Africans in a sense that the partying and shebeen areas offered a "new proletarian identity" (Coplan, 2008:183). New styles that were based on the *tsaba-tsaba* dance rhythm, were influenced by *marabi* and African jazz. *Tsaba-tsaba* is a combination of African melodies with American swing and jazz. It was dance music, often favoured by the working class. Although it was not broadcasted on radio, one spoke of it because it had what Ballantine (1993:154) refers to as "the spirit of Africa in it". *Tsaba-tsaba* eventually evolved to become Kwêla.

Marabi (its name was possibly derived from 'Marabastad', a township in Pretoria) was a reflection of life of people living in slums (South African History Online, 2011b). The music was original and improvisational. Gwangwa and Aurich (South African History Online, n.d.) attested that Marabi employed a familiar rhythm with African polyphonic principles. This music served as protest against exploitation and an escape from daily problems: "Marabi was more than music, much more the expression of a new cultural development among the growing urban proletariat".

Demands (on matters like *marabi* as essential to their progress) by the middle class black people were rejected by the whites. Shebeens embrace the middle-class black people's demands for the development of African jazz as a symbol of cultural and economic development. Coplan (2008:112) attests that alcohol was an economic and social

currency “used to thank, reward, reconcile, ritually cleanse, honour, entertain, and generally bind people together”.

South African jazz has been influenced by traditional music, with a common indigenous harmonic style. Characteristics of missionary hymnody and rhythmic attributes of traditional music are present in the style (Malinga, Thobejane, *et al.*, 2014:59). Although South African jazz became more and more American, Mthembu-Salter (2001:92) adds that even so the style “took hold of the trends towards indigenization”. Ballantine (2001:93) says that Mbaqanga, also known as African jive, came to be known as African jazz in the 1940s. According to Coplan (2008:166) “the internationalism of African jazz became part of the struggle against cultural isolation and segregation and expressed the aspirations of the majority of urban Africans”. Vos (2009:8) defines exile as a term that is politically driven and conditioned, also secretly allowing those who don’t support a particular political mandate (in apartheid South Africa) to escape from the country. Exiled musicians like Abdullah Ibrahim, Hugh Masekela, Jonas Gwangwa amongst many others took South African jazz to an international audience.

Mandela, who is wearing a brown suit and a white shirt, and the Major (a member of the then all-white South African police force), who is wearing more or less the same clothes as Mandela (other than for a brown hat), are welcomed onto stage by the piano and strings playing a jazz-style introduction with a complex, compound rhythm – a local influence. Mandela is in the company of Father Huddleston when the policemen stop him because of the resistance movement being banned in the area. The stubborn Mandela argues with them about the fact that he would not have been there if that was the case. The Major orders the policemen to arrest Mandela as Father Huddleston²², who is holding a Bible, interjects and tries to reason with the Major. The Major and his companions leave and tell Mandela that they are watching him. The repeated chord accompaniment mentioned earlier persists until the conversation concludes. The reprimanded Mandela runs up the elevated stand, stands in front of the projected film and addresses the people.

²² According to Harrison (2004:47), Father Huddleston was born in London and moved to Johannesburg in 1943 where he spent his time between Sophiatown and St. Peter’s Seminary in Rosettenville. Harrison, in Mandela (2013: 179) refers to Father Trevor Huddleston as Sophiatown’s “greatest friend”. Harrison (2004: 47) mentioned that Father Huddleston was the priest-in-charge at the Christ the King Anglican Church. He was a member of the international Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM).

He tells the cinema audience, who we now know are the citizens of Sophiatown²³, that Prime Minister Malan²⁴ has ordered their removal from the area. Some of the cinema audience members are now also standing still and listening attentively. Mandela consoles them by singing a song entitled “Freedom in our time” (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2014²⁵), applying his voice in a manner that reminds of Gospel music. Gospel songs not only carry religious messages, but also speak of sorrows, woes and lamentations (Boyer, 1973:47). As is evident in this song, Gospel songs often contain syncopated rhythms, and simple major or minor triads, which in both instances are often diminished like in local jazz (symbolic and significant to Gospels’ relation to local jazz). Embellishments and improvisation on the melodic line, also present, are a must in this type of music. The music could be in responsorial form, homophonic or antiphonal. Like Blacking’s (1980:42) example of *Nkosi sikele’l Afrika*, which we know as the first part of the national anthem of South Africa, “Freedom in our time” draws on freedom songs and religion. Blacking (1980:42) further connects the topics of sermons and hymns in black Christian church services, such as “rising up again” and Christ “living on the earth again”, as figurative of the situations black South Africans faced during the apartheid regime. This connection is also found between Negro spirituals and the situation enslaved African-Americans faced, where they used singing to “escape the heart of slavery” even if only for a short while (Alexander, 2014:114). Lawrence-McIntyre (1987:382) says that “The music form of Black Americans parallels the African form, including incremental leading lines with choral iterations”. Alexander (2014:114) agrees with that statement by mentioning that Negro spirituals’ intonation, rhyme and melody amongst many other characteristics can be related to African customs. As they sing the song the group sway their firmly folded fists in the air, making the sign of ‘power to the people’ – Amandla²⁶ ngawethu. He addresses

²³Many ethnic and racial groups were attracted to the area. This included white liberals, especially missionaries, who also played a role in its development. The people of Sophiatown lived around shebeen queens, pimps and other members of the working class (Coplan, 2008:170-174). According to Pirie and Hart (1984: 40) Sophiatown was over-populated and looked untidy, showing traits of poverty as well.

²⁴Dr Malan, as he was popularly referred to, was the leader of the National Party, former minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, and a newspaper editor (Mandela, 2013:127). Mandela (2013:127) said Malan was bitter towards the English, who had made the Afrikaners feel like their subordinates.

²⁵Take note that every song in the score of this act is numbered individually. For example, “Freedom in our time” will be page 1 to page 6 and the next song, “Woza ANC”, will be numbered 1 to 3.

²⁶According to Stewart (2011: 65-65) “Amandla” is a Zulu and a Xhosa word that means “power”, and was used by the African National Congress members during the apartheid struggle. This was a struggle cry used to encourage and empower people at rallies and meetings.

them further as he walks towards them, explaining that the old methods of resistance are no longer working. Mandela encourages them to stand together as one of the men shouts “Amandla” (see Figure 213) (which means “power”) (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2014:5). The crowd responds by shouting “Ngawethu” (which means “is ours”) (on the video, but not indicated in the score). Buthelezi (2002:257) defines Amandla ngawethu as a war cry that loses its meaning through translation. The reason for the distortion when translated to English is because it is words drawn from Nguni languages that are tonal. He says that the “emphasis is on –dla which is a fricative that does not exist in English, [and] is onomatopoeic”.



Figure 21 Act 3, Three Mandelas in court showing the Amandla sign (Cape Town Opera, 2014)

The second time he sings the song, the crowd responds by imitating (what may be heard as call and response) the tune in three-part harmony. Agawu (2016:252) describes call and response as not merely being boring or merely a device for backing up the soloist. Its significance lies in the mutual overlapping of parts to create one concrete phrase. He says that it has a deeply rooted meaning in social and ethnic norms that recognize one within a “group setting”. The call-and-response pattern between Mandela and the cinema audience members reinforces the power of patriotic leadership as well. The Gospel-like execution, the style of “Freedom in our time” (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 2, 1) can

best be described in reference to patriotic songs in the musical *Les Misérables*, such as “Look down” (the opening number) and “Do you hear the people sing”. They are both driven by political contexts and contain patriotic messages of encouragement.

A black, male journalist walks up to Mandela. The response to the questions Mandela are asked elevates the crowd’s mood (they are listening to the interview). Mandela reassures them that they will not be leaving Sophiatown. The journalist, who is now excited by Mandela’s reassuring speech, is arrested by the police. As he is being arrested, Mandela watches from a distance and starts singing “Woza ANC” (“come ANC”) (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014), and is joined by the singing and dancing crowd. Their synchronized movements, a sign of unity in their struggle, exude power and strength. Peart (1994:21) argues that most of South African township music was driven by a political agenda and that forced the government to watch them closely. Vershbow (2010) said “throughout every stage of the struggle the liberation music both fuelled and united the movement. Song was a communal act of expression that shed light on the injustices of apartheid, therefore playing a major role in the eventual reform of the South African government”. As was the case with the previous song, “Woza ANC” is executed in a Gospel-like fashion, although this time the compositional characteristics can also be related to jazz in its compound time signature, syncopations and strong emphasis on the drum set, with brass section prominent as well. In “Woza ANC” there are responsorial and homophonic sections. Other Gospel music qualities that are mentioned by Boyer (1973:47) and found in “Woza ANC” include perpetual motion, with heavy accentuation on the off-beats. Letta Mbulu’s “AmakhaMandela”, also known as “Not yet uhuru” (1998) (meaning “Not yet free” in Swahili) (my translation) contains a similar message of sorrow and a need for immediate realization of the required changes in South Africa, within a similar musical context. Mandela is standing on one of the benches as he is singing in counterpoint with the chorus. The composer structured the piece first in call and response and then later the soloist switches with the chorus by taking on the ‘response’ to layer the texture. The crowd takes the lead melody from the soloist, and the soloist sings in counterpoint with them (rather than in response, which means ‘one after another’) as a tool to emphasise the intricacy of fighting for their land back. The spotlight is shown on him, and people are squatting around him, showing an Amandla sign. The scene concludes with Mandela again shouting “Amandla” and the crowd responding with “Ngawethu”.

Scene 2 begins with women coming on stage, swaying their colourful dresses to the piece “Baby ntshware ka ditsebe”²⁷ (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014). Everyone, including the men who were standing at the back, is now dancing to a band on stage. There is a sign up saying *Back o’ the Moon*. This was the name of an actual nightclub in Sophiatown (Kruger, 2013:83), as well as the title of a song called “Back o’ the moon” from the musical *King Kong*. In *Mandela trilogy* the name of the song has been changed to “Come to Kofifi” (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014) (Sophiatown was also known as “Kofifi”), and it is with this song that Dolly Rathebe, played by Gloria Bosman in the 2014 production, introduces and welcomes people to the club.

Digression 6 *King Kong*

King Kong is a musical composed by Todd Matshikiza that premiered in 1959 at the Great Hall of the University of the Witwatersrand (Coplan, 2008:214-215). The role of *King* was played by Nathan ‘Dambuza’ Mdledle, along with Miriam Makeba who played Joyce (a ‘shebeen queen’²⁸). The music fused the pennywhistle sound of Kwela with Big Band. Coplan (2008:214) states that *King Kong* was based on the story of Ezekiel ‘King Kong’ Dlamini who was a heavyweight boxing champion. Dalamba (2013:77) says that the musical carried content that was potentially problematic to the South African state at that time. Bloom (1961), quoted by Coplan (2013:215), states:

The play did not make a strong political statement, but it did show something of the hardships, violence, and frustration of African township life. The show infused African musical and dramatic stage traditions into a narrative structure, and presented a mixture of African and Western song and dance. There was jazz, a tsotsi’s knife dance based on Sotho Mokorolo war dancing, and a celebration of King Kong’s release from prison, which echoed the traditional Zulu welcome for a returning hero.

The producer, Leon Gluckman, had hoped the musical may instil sympathy in white people to change their attitude towards blacks. *King Kong* to black South Africans in the

²⁷A song Miriam Makeba recorded with the Manhattan Brothers in 1954.

²⁸As a cultural tradition, women were expected to brew alcohol for their husbands (I know this in my culture too) and they discovered that they could buy and sell even stronger brewed brands. It was for that reason that the ‘shebeen queen’ concept in Johannesburg emerged as means for social constructions (Coplan, 2008:112).

50s-60s meant 'temporary' liberation, especially to most of the black cast, like Abigail Kubheka and Miriam Makeba. The latter was exiled during her campaigns to make the world aware of the apartheid government and how it oppressed black people in South Africa. Giving an opportunity for black South African performing artists to participate in theatre, *King Kong*, as the first all-black South African musical, served as a representative token of hope (South African History online, 2017). Trehwela (2017) considers the role of Joyce as powerful in its symbolic portrayal of women in the liberation struggle; women like Lilian Ngoyi, Gertrude Shope and Makhosi Khoza.

Dolly Rathebe (1930-2004) was a South African musician and actress born in Randfontein. Mojapelo (2008:85) claims that she was the first known African star to feature in a film, namely *Jim comes to Joburg* (1949), where she starred in a role as a nightclub singer. Because of her looks she was also the first black woman to be featured on the cover of *Drum* magazine. Mandela and Dolly, who was ten years his junior, had an affair and hoped they would be together after Mandela's release in 1990 (Smith, 2010: n.p.). A spotlight is thrown on Dolly who is standing on the right-hand elevated stand, wearing a tight red dress. The choir starts to sing the song "Baby Ntshware"²⁹; which is the first time a Sotho song is heard in the opera. "Baby ntshware ka ditsebe" means "Baby hold me with ears", usually said to babies when you would like them to kiss you (my translation). The choir dances in couples in a dance style familiar in Sophiatown during those times (possibly *Marabi*). As Dolly sings the solo over a microphone, there is a man behind her playing the trombone. Mandela appears in this scene smoking a cigarette, holding his suit blazer in his right hand – this fashion can best be described as '50s rat-pack smart-cool' (see Figure 24).

She approaches Mandela whom she tells she is happy to see, but Mandela realizes she feels sad (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 2, 3) about the impending evacuation of Sophiatown. Mandela tells her not to worry, as the ANC will take care of her. She uses the opportunity to try and see if she and Mandela could be together, but he dismisses her promptly. The choir starts singing again, and Mandela, along with Dolly, dances and flirts on the side. It is as if Mandela is trying to shift Dolly's focus to the dance, away from

²⁹This is a traditional folksong that was arranged by Joseph Mokgotsi and recorded by the Manhattan Brothers, featuring Miriam Makeba (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PfoHToL3wK8>)

discussing their relationship. A deliberate musical pause and a percussive rhythmic pattern is heard on the drums (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 2, 5) at bar 64 as a man shows off his dancing skills in what looks like *Pantsula* style. *Pantsula* style as a sub-culture incorporates language, dancing, dress-code and music. Dance is not just a musical behaviour, but also a social one and as a result dance can be seen as a space for social construction as well. Dance's function is connected to its role as an instrument for change (Giurchescu, 2001:110). When one dances, it helps one to remove oneself from the outside world in order to express feelings, ideas and experiences that may not necessarily be transmittable verbally. Blacking's statement further articulates dance as a tool for social construction:

The power of dance rests in acts of performance by dancers and spectators alike, in the process of making sense of dance rather than in the cultural products of those processes, and in linking dance experiences to other sets of ideas and social experiences (Blacking, 1984:20).

Pantsula came into existence in the late 1950s and was influenced by American jazz, and dance traditions of the Sophiatown era, those Farber (2015:115) identifies as *Marabi* and *Kofifi*. Dolly goes to her microphone and sings the closing cadence on the words “ka ditsebe”.



Figure 22 Act 2, Ladies dancing and swaying their dresses to music of the 50s (Cape Town Opera, 2014)

Digression 7 Historical correctness in the depiction of previously-oppressed persons and cultures: the use of existing music

The composer's intention with the integration of pre-existing music in his score was perhaps to strengthen the bond between the music and the historical reality of the era. Another possible reason could be simply that Campbell thought it would increase the popular appeal of the opera. His application of pastiche characterizes the act. Music pastiche has taken on a somewhat negative connotation amongst some musicologists.

Jameson (1991:17) regards pastiche as an "imitation" of particularly different styles (compare this with my definition of eclecticism in Act 1). Erlmann (1996:468) elaborates on Jameson's point by referring to world music pastiche as "an attempt at coating the sounds of the fully commodified present with the patina of use value in some other time and space." Colbley (2002:193) quotes Jameson (1993:74) where the latter refers to pastiche as being a "socially unmotivated 'imitation' of 'dead styles'". Hoesterey (2001: 82) further refers to the negative connotation this term had in the eighteenth century, where he says that some scholars believed that it opens possibilities to a lack of originality.

Mareli Stolp (2016: 150) writes the following about the use of existing music in Act 2 of *Mandela trilogy* (translated from the original Afrikaans by Chris van Rhyn):

Campbell's use of music from the historic South African light music canon possibly aims to connect the *Mandela trilogy* with the South African struggle history; although this technique may possibly have impacted on South African audiences, it is difficult to determine whether international audiences would have been able to grasp the historical importance of these musical references, especially since there is no explicit reference to it in marketing materials or programme notes³⁰.

Although I agree with Stolp's sentiments, I think it is necessary to consider the necessity of including these existing songs in order to affect historical correctness, for the reasons stated in the previous chapter (see page 35 and 36).

³⁰"Campbell se gebruik van musiek uit die historiese Suid-Afrikaanse ligtemusiek- en jazzkanon het moontlik ten doel om The Mandela trilogy met die Suid-Afrikaanse struggle-geskiedenis te verbind; alhoewel hierdie tegniek dalk wel 'n impak op Suid-Afrikaanse gehore kon hê, is dit moeilik om te bepaal of internasionale gehore die historiese belang van hierdie musikale verwysings sou kon begryp, veral omdat daar nie eksplisiet in die bemarkingsmateriaal of programnotas daarna verwys is nie" (Stolp, 2016: 150).

The men in the club approach Mandela one by one, with regard to their evacuation notices. Mandela (2013:179), in *Long walk to freedom*, says that the government wanted to be in control of the movement of all Africans (meaning black people), and they wanted to move them to Meadowlands, which was about 21 km from Johannesburg. It meant that residents of Sophiatown would also travel a longer distance than they used to in order to get to work. Although the pass system³¹ was already in place, one did not need it when entering Sophiatown, and that meant the government could not control black people's movements. Mandela reads the letters and the "Over our dead bodies" (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014), a South African jive song (much in the style of Dorothy Masuka³²'s music), starts as the men tell him they will fight the white government. In the 1950s African jazz or jive (Coplan, 2008:440) filled the social-political gaps in a sense that people had to beat the early morning hours because of curfew restrictions for black people and the need for transport (Coplan, 2008:126), so instead they would stay at these shows until the morning. The ladies sway their dresses aggressively and the men show strong fists to symbolise their determination to fight the government.

³¹ It refers to the 'native' pass that had to be carried by all black people. It stated which ethnic group a person 'belonged' to, where they are from and whether they paid poll tax that was required from them. Failure to show this document to an employer, police office or civil servant meant prosecution. This document had to be signed every month by every black person's employer (Mandela, 2013:27).

³² The Zimbabwean singer Masuka, born in 1935, was the first Southern African women to have a career as a recording artist. She received her schooling in both South Africa and Zimbabwe, and toured in these countries in the 1950s. One of her biggest hits was *Hamba Notsokolo*. Her music was influenced by American blues, jazz and swing (Allen, 2016:564-570).

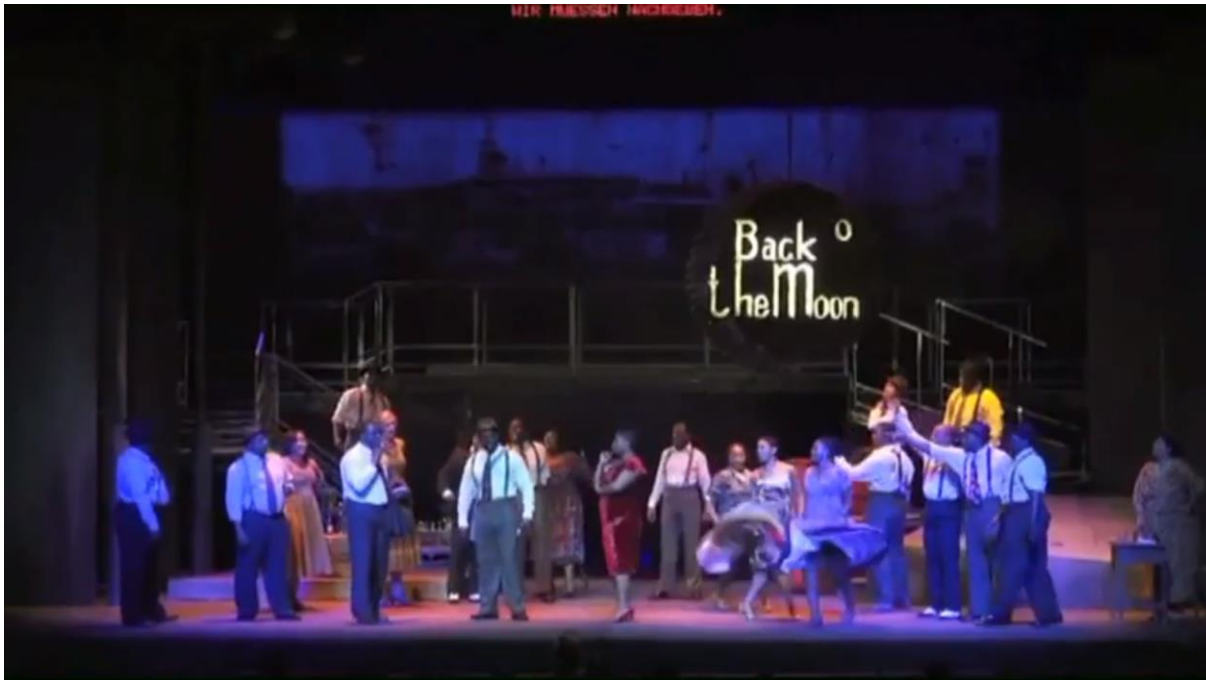


Figure 23 Act 2, Comrades confronting Mandela about fighting the government (Cape Town Opera, 2014)

The song asks questions about what it is that they can do, and Mandela sings back “seeing it is not the right time to fight because proper planning firstly needs to be done” (van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 2, 2). In this dialogue between the people and Mandela, they remind him of some of the statements he made when saying that the “weapon to destroy apartheid is violence” (van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 2, 2), and he acknowledges his mistake and tells them that he spoke impulsively because they are not ready yet. The people at the back are rumbling and the men tell Mandela they will fight the oppressive regime to death. They are just not agreeing with each other and Mandela lights another cigarette as the people disperse and go back to their drinking tables. Dolly asks if there is anything they could do, but Mandela is still distracted by the people who are moving.

Dolly was however talking about their relationship and not the evacuation situation, and still Mandela dismisses her quickly. He tells Dolly that all the efforts made seem to have fallen on deaf ears and that they will therefore start fighting the new government soon. Dolly walks away, saying in the meantime they will pretend as if they are not going to be moved and “this place we call Kofifi [Sophiatown] will always be our home.” (van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 2, 16) She starts singing “Come to Kofifi” (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014), which, as mentioned, is the tune of “Back o’ the moon”.

Dolly takes her time singing the interlude of the song, as it is in the original. A spotlight follows Dolly as she sings and everyone turns to watch and listen to her. She moves around and interacts with the men. As the song gets upbeat, the ladies get closer and they start dancing behind Dolly. The dance moves are in a 50s/60s Broadway style. This Broadway style, like *marabi*, can attest to group awareness or membership; the dancing and swaying dresses, for example, allude to the emerging culture (also we have seen in “Over our dead bodies”). It can be seen as being expressive of an emerging society, both in terms of political and economic contexts. Coplan (2008:112) says that music and stage performance were weapons of overcoming hardships during the apartheid era. Where Dolly sings alone, women dance behind her, and when Mandela 2 sings the second verse of the song, the men dance behind him – this is typical in terms of dividing genders in an African socio-cultural context. They sing the third verse together (Mandela incorporates improvisation in his singing), and the entire ensemble sings together towards the end of the song. Although improvisation is an obvious theme in jazz, Solis and Netti (2009:122) refer to Blacking’s (1973) belief that “music is in the body” and as a result improvisation may be led by one’s feelings at that given time. Blacking (1967:166-171) affirms that within a call and response setting, the soloist may alter the words and melody – a practice familiar in the traditional African music; this was done to enhance feeling through expression (Blacking, 1980:54).

The furious Evelyn shouts Mandela’s name and asks him if he is coming home, as the reprise of “Kofifi” is heard in the background. The puzzled Mandela asks Evelyn what she is doing there, and she tells him that she is looking for her husband who has not been home in three nights. Everyone is looking at them as Mandela tries to silence her, but they continue arguing. Mandela, in this scene, is portrayed from an angle that differs from his public persona in later years as an almost entirely docile-natured statesman. The scene shows an angry Mandela, with a sense of entitled importance in the household. He points and pushes Evelyn as they speak, which can be seen as a sign of oppression or even abuse. This pertains to what Suttner (2015:349) refers to as masculine heroism. Masculine heroism is referred to as someone who is revered in the eyes of the public; meanwhile the wife is perceived or expected to be home taking care of household activities. There have been some accusations of Nelson Mandela physically abusing Evelyn, although he denied these (Cilliers, 2017). Southall (2011:355) added that Evelyn stated that Mandela had assaulted her, leaving her with facial injuries. This also speaks

to Mandela's ambiguities; where he is seen in the public eye as hero, but possibly not so at home.

Dolly reappears, ready to sing another song, "Pata pata"³³ (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014). This is another existing song (i.e. not composed for the opera), originally sung by Miriam Makeba. The people are dancing and Mandela is seated with Evelyn, watching the 'show'. The heated conversation between Mandela and Evelyn partly takes place during an interlude in this song, deviating from the original's easy-going nature. Strong percussive rhythmic emphasis further contributes to this atmosphere; as a result the emotional intensity of the moment is expressed rhythmically. This conversation also distracts Dolly while she is singing. Evelyn tells Mandela that he does not touch her like he used to, and accuses her of cheating. Mandela tells Evelyn to let him be.

The arrival of the police at the club detracts from Dolly's singing. They chase everyone out, and before she knows it she is left alone on an empty stage (the club scenery has also vanished), with only the two policemen patrolling what are presumably the streets of Sophiatown. The sad Dolly looks around and starts singing another existing song, "Meadowlands" (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014): "Otlwa utlwa makgowa are ha re yeng ko Meadowlands³⁴, Meadowlands sithandwa sam", which translates to "You will hear whites say that we must go to Meadowlands, Meadowlands, my love" (my translation). The song is in a Gospel style; appropriate to the style, she belts, improvises and produces a hauling sound in her yearning for a higher power to save them from their troubles. Mandela reappears and joins Dolly in singing. They console each other as everyone moves across the stage with their belongings, depicting the evacuation of Sophiatown. There is an emotional shift from the previous scene and its music.

The orchestra takes over the melody, and we hear Dolly singing improvised melodies sounding like weeping. The stage is then dimmed. A song entitled "Hearts and minds" (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014) begins, with Dolly singing the first verse. The song is set in a typical 50s "slow swing [with] ballad feel" (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 2, 1).

³³It translates as "touch touch" (translation by the present author).

³⁴The song "Meadowlands" was written and composed by Strike David Vilakazi in 1955 for the singer Nancy Jacobs. It became a protest song against the evacuation of black residents in the area (Copland, 2008:176).

The song contains testimonies from the women in Mandela's life – what they know and have heard about him. Dolly, for example, sings about her hearing that Mandela was seeing a twenty-one year-old who calls him "Tata", and that she does not know him as well as she thought she did. She continues by saying Mandela will come back to her, although he said that she will never be his wife, and that winning hearts and minds was all that mattered in life. Evelyn, who has packed her luggage, sings about how winning hearts and minds was all that mattered in life. She further sings about how she heard that Mandela was seeing a social worker whom she thought would be discarded for the sake of their family, but to her he has lost his family. The happy Winnie Madikizela-Mandela (Mandela's second wife) appears on stage and talks us through their days together, during which he opened up to her. Winnie starts singing about how winning hearts and minds is the reason she will marry him. The three women then sing together and agree that "Winning hearts and minds is why the women in his life need only but to set him free to love and serve the ANC" (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 2, 6-7), and the stage is dimmed.

5.3 Masculinities

5.3.1 Masculinity: leadership

Although the concept of leadership in modern society is not necessarily indicative of masculinity, I am refereeing to it in this instance in the context of AmaXhosa cultural values and believes.

In the scene where Mandela addresses the major and they sing in call and response, we see many leadership traits in his persona. Many would come to Mandela with complaints about their living conditions, with the hope that he could resolve their problems. He knew how to manipulate and make people listen to him, as shown in the opera: The structure of "There will be freedom in our time" allows Mandela to assert his leadership position. The composer uses call and response to emphasize the unanimous belief in Mandela and his mandates through their repetition of his words. The people raise their hands with their fists folded to symbolize power. Mandela (2013:181) describes the real-life events at the Odin Cinema, during which people were arrested, as follows:

The crowd began yelling and booing, and I saw that matters could turn extremely ugly if the crowd did not control itself. I jumped to the podium and started singing

a well-known protest song, and as soon as I pronounced the first few words the crowd joined in. I feared that the police might have opened fire if the crowd had become too unruly.

5.3.2 Masculinity: smart-cool/bravado

Mandela's manner in which he carried himself and dressed contributed to an impression of bravado as part of his masculinity. In the 1950s men regularly wore suits even in less formal social settings, and smoking also added to the 'smart-cool' look. The opera captures Mandela in this light. The director employs, for example, the manner in which the actor is asked to stand – tall and with a proper posture – to contribute to this impression of Mandela. Suttner (2014:348) described Mandela as wearing tailor-made suits with a tie that would match the look (which was markedly different from his comrades Oliver Tambo and Walter Sisulu); he would exercise on a regular basis to keep fit.

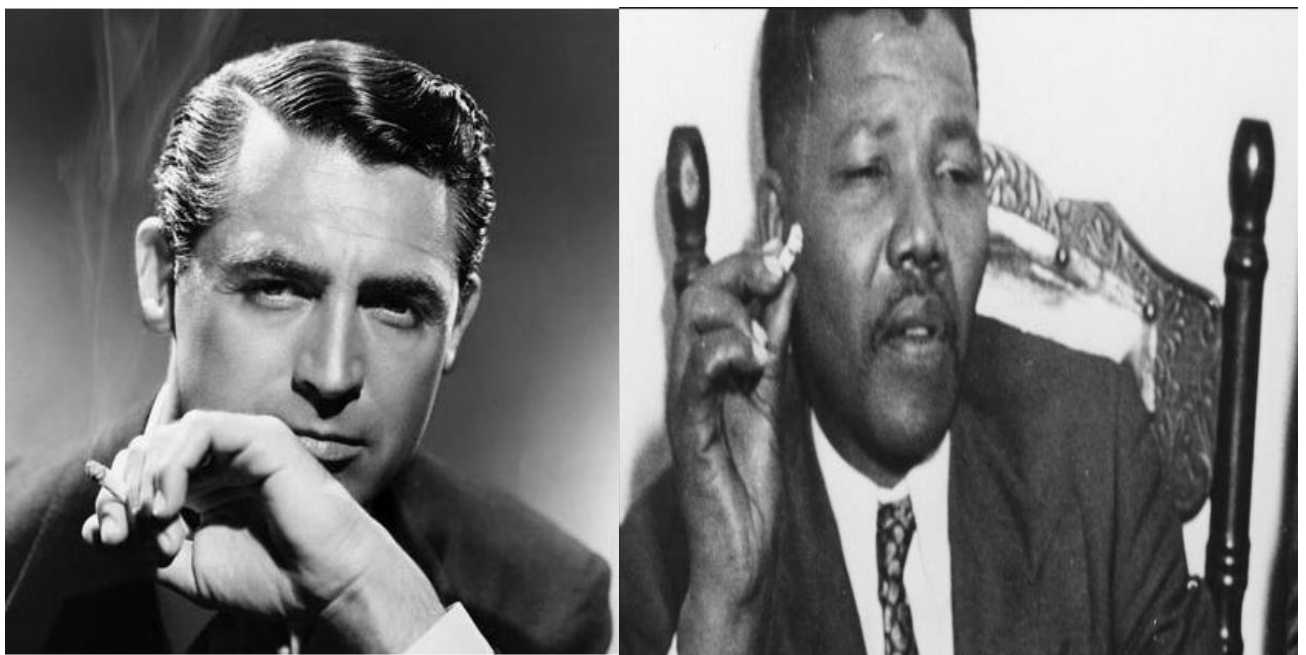


Figure 24 Smart-cool: Cary Grant and Nelson Mandela (BBC 2013, Flickr, 2007)

5.3.3 Masculinity: womanizing and gender division

Mandela's flirtatious womanizing ways are portrayed on several occasions in this act. First, he speaks to Dolly in a tender manner and tells her that she is the "heart and soul of Sophiatown" (Campbell & Williams, 2017: Act 2, 7). In the trio "Hearts and minds" (Campbell & Williams, 2017: Act 2, 1) Winnie Mandela speaks about how he won her over. According to Sampson, quoted in Suttner (2008:111), Walter Sisulu said that one

could easily underestimate Mandela when he is nice because his willfulness is not apparent and one may perceive him as not aggressive and not wild. Suttner (2015:354) also says that he was “passionate” and “emotional” when it came to his children and Winnie Mandela, through the letters he would write to them while he was in prison.

Evelyn’s entry into “Back o’ the moon” is not a pleasant one: she arrives in a foul mood and prepared to tell Mandela off. She tells Mandela that he should be home with his children, but Mandela is clear about his political agenda being his priority. This clearly suggests that the marriage is broken. Mandela (2013:239) explains that problems in their marriage were impacted by Evelyn’s commitment to the “Watchtower organization” that fell under the Jehovah’s Witness Church, and his devotion to politics. Evelyn regards her absence while training as a midwife in Durban as resulting in the final breakdown of the marriage.

As suggested before, aspects of Mandela’s masculinity can be understood in the context of certain group masculinities: A section in “Come to Kofifi”, when Dolly sings and the ladies dance and sway their dresses from side to side (in the second verse where Mandela sings), the women make way for the men to dance, emphasizing gender division and roles. When the women dance, they use their hips and hands to emphasize their curves, and when the men dance the gestures are sharp and hard, suggesting assertiveness and perhaps man as a warrior.

5.4 Transition to Act 3

The last, short scene starts with toyi-toying³⁵; people are holding ANC flags and protest placards. The choir is singing “Let us speak/Anthem” (van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 2), once again the first part of it is in a South African jive style. This song is followed by the singing of a hymn-style, a cappella, shortened setting of the introduction of the South African Freedom Charter, symbolic of patriotism and communalism.

We the people of South Africa,
Declare for all our country, and the world to know
That South Africa belongs to all of those who live in it,

³⁵Simpson (2009:512) loosely describes toyi-toyi as a “muscular march” that’s masses used to imitate the Mk (Mkhondo weSizwe) Guerrillas’ movements when they were training. It is for that reason that this song is filled with political meanings of liberation (Matsinhe, 2011:xiv).

Black and white, and no government my rule lest they hear the voice of the people³⁶ (van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 2, 13).

Anthems in the style of hymns are not unusual, the first section/stanza of the South African national anthem, *Nkosi sikelela I-Afrika*, composed by Enoch Sontonga, was adapted from church songs that could be traced back to 1897 (Groenewald, 2005:128). While “Let us speak of freedom” concludes, a police van (also known as a pick-up) siren is heard approaching the gathering. Mandela is then arrested and the police officer declares that “this so called congress of the people is over” (Cape Town Opera, 2014) and orders the other officers to search those who were gathered and confiscate all illegal documents. A reprise of “Freedom in our time” (van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 2) – with the purpose to give people hope even under such desperate conditions – is sung as the police search and push them around. The song ends as the stage lights go off.

³⁶The Freedom Charter was concluded at the Congress of the People in Kliptown in 1955. The apartheid government was threatened by the Charter and saw it as a revolution to overthrow the state. Anyone found with the Charter was prosecuted for treason. Gottschalk (2015) says that that “For the great majority of ANC members and sympathisers, the Freedom Charter grew to have iconic status. Throughout the three decades during which the ANC was banned it was circulated clandestinely as an inspirational and aspirational document. It was widely used to attract supporters and mobilise people to back the ANC and the liberation struggle”.

CHAPTER 6 A MAN ON TRIAL

6.1 A man on trial

This chapter is about the last act of the opera. First, the composer's intention to bring the three Mandelas metaphorically to stage in the Rivonia Trial scene, and how the music negotiates between western and African aesthetics are examined. Followed by this is an explication of the accused's adaptation to life in prison in the opera, and how Peter Louis van Dijk utilised music to bring their loneliness, weariness and helplessness to light. Different from collective loneliness, Mandela's loneliness is personal, almost inward, but apparent on stage through the director's choice of space, time and context, which I also explore. I also discuss how Winnie Mandela's direct and indirect defiance of Mandela plays out in the opera, as we observe/sense both love and distrust in their marriage. Like in previous chapters, matters concerning Mandela's masculinities are discussed in a separate section.

On the final day of the Rivonia Trial, a thunderstorm breaks out over Johannesburg. A large crowd has gathered and there is a heavy police presence. Mandelas 1, 2 and 3 all enter the courtroom, metaphorically suggesting that his entire life history and all his experiences have led to this climactic moment. Seated in the court's public gallery are six Rivonia Trialists: Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Denis Goldberg, Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada and Raymond Mhlaba, as well as Winnie Mandela and Mandela's mother, Nonqaphi Fanny Nosekeni. (In reality there were thirteen Trialists.)

As the music starts, with the timpani representing the rumbling of thunder, we hear the rest of the orchestra repeating an insistent rhythmic motif consisting of a dotted quaver followed by three semi-quavers in 6/8 time; the only notes played are e and g. This could be the composer's way of suggesting the Trialists', their families' and uMkonto we Sizwe supporters' anxiety and distress in anticipation of the outcome of the trial.

Those who are protesting the gathering enter the courtroom with their placards. People are dressed in different styles. Women are wearing the fashion of the time, with colourful three-piece outfits. Others are wearing AmaXhosa, Indian and Basotho traditional attire. This could be the director's way of emphasising the different cultures and backgrounds of the supporters in the courtroom. The camera flashes of journalists taking photos can

also be seen. Pictures of past statesmen, including prime ministers such as DF Malan (1948-1958), JG Strijdom (1954-1958), HF Verwoerd (1958-1966) and J Vorster (1978-1979), can be seen hanging above those who came to watch the court proceedings.

The judge's podium is placed centre-stage and he is wearing a red gown with a thick white stripe over his shoulders. He stands up as the courtroom audience utters these words: "Uzokuthini? Kuzo kwenzeka ntoni? Sine dyudyu?" (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 3, 4). It can be translated as: "Will he speak? What will he say? What is going to happen now? We are fearful of what is going to happen" (my translation). This text is mostly sung in unison and octave parallels. Unisons and octave parallels are significant in this instance because, while they can be seen as non-harmonic (i.e. 'the same'), Agawu (2016:282) says their complexity lies in "actual realization". Parallels have to do, among other things, with the inflections of the different vocal textures that force this trait (Agawu, 2016:282). As this author suggests: "As 'harmonies', then, unisons and octaves may be understood as realized differences resulting from intended sameness" (Agawu, 2016: 282). In symbolic terms, the audience members intend to express the same fears about the Trialists' fate, but their fears are also different and of a more private nature: the fates of family members – fathers, husbands, and sons – that depend on the outcome of the trial. This fear can also be extended to the marginalization of the culture each represents, as well as continuing to deny them civil rights.

The three Mandelas stand before the judge: Mandela 1 is wearing AmaXhosa traditional attire, and the other two Mandelas are clothed in suits, with Mandela 3 standing in the middle. Suddenly the judge screams "Silence!" (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 3, 8) and the audience settles down. The Mandelas take a step forward and the judge addresses them: Mandela 3 answers "not guilty" to the question "How do you plead?" (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 3, 8), and states that it is the government that should be on trial and not them. A rhythmic pattern of three semiquavers followed by an accentuated quaver in the orchestral accompaniment creates an appropriately ominous mood. The soprano and alto *tutti* start again with "Uzokuthini? Kuzo kwenzeka ntoni?" They are joined by the tenors and the basses. The composer uses the same rhythmic pattern with a crescendo of voices coming in at different times to make the texture denser. The crescendo ends in an anti-climax when the build-up is interrupted by the shouting judge. In other words, contestation is verbal (musical and non-musical), and the judge is

exercising his authority to silence the joint opposing voices. Mandela shouts “Amandla!” (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 3, 11) and the audience responds with “Nga wethu”, twice. The judge stands up, tells the audience to be silent, and gives Mandela the opportunity to make his case (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 15):

Mandela 1 (*Spoken*) Many years ago, when I was a boy brought up in my village in the Transkei, I listened to the elders of the tribe telling stories about the good old days...

Mandela 2...before the arrival of the white man. Then our people lived peacefully, under the democratic rule of their kings...

Mandela 3...and they moved freely and confidently up and down the country without let or hindrance. Then the country was ours, in our own name and right...

The Mandelas then sing a trio together (“Treason trial aria”) (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 3, 14). The composer refers to this trio as an aria (which we conventionally know as an accompanied song for solo voice) to articulate that these three Mandelas are one, embodying a “communal ethos”, or that which Agawu (2016:292) describes as “suggest[ing] togetherness”. Not only ethos, but also the unification of what each Mandela brings to the event. Sometimes solo lines move between voices, and in other places the three Mandelas sing in unison or in parallel three-part harmony. Where close harmonic singing between the three Mandelas occur, it also speaks to this “communal ethnos” (“I am because we are”) (Agawu, 2016:267) that speak to the three Mandelas as one, or Mandela as a whole. The different textures can be read as symbols of the relationships between different stages of Mandela’s life: teleological events, unchanging stances, and different yet related events. The second part of this trio is set to the following words (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 3, 17-21):

I have dedicated myself to the struggle of African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal for which I hope to live for but if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.

This is arguably one of the best-known speeches in the world, along with those made by other political figures such as Martin Luther King. The judge stands and sentences the Trialists to life in prison. It is worth mentioning their sad facial expressions as they are sentenced, since in other dramatic depictions of this scene, such as in the film “Mandela and de Klerk” (1997), the Rivonia Trialists are happy with the sentence because it is better

than a death sentence. The court audience sings as the ‘treason trial ensemble’ and the Mandelas are being sentenced; they sing “Siyambula U Thixo”, which means “We thank God” (my translation) (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 3, 25).

The librettist wrote in the score: “All unfreeze slowly. Disbelief – as if waking from a dream. Some cry softly” (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 3, 25). Then suddenly the chorus sings “Siyambulela”, fortissimo, this time in harmony rather than unison (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 3, 26)³⁷. As was the case when singing in unison and parallel octaves, singing in harmony is also a way of “simultaneous doing”, and thereby suggesting a “communal ethos” (Agawu, 2016:266). Harmony, in traditional African societies is seen as “the sounding together of different but complementary lines, [which] is at once a material repository and an expression of ethics”. The change from unison and parallel octaves to singing in harmony could be seen as the opposite of the intended sameness that resulted in differences earlier: different voices complement each other in symbolizing community acceptance of the prisoners’ fate.

The policemen clear the stage and take the judge’s podium away. The Trialists, Winnie Mandela, Mandela’s mother and the court audience remain on stage. The singing of “Siyambulela” carries on and we therefore hear the Trialists finding consolation in these words. The Mandelas turn around and signal the Amandla sign as the chorus proclaims “Lovuyo” (“Rejoice”) (my translation) (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 3, 29). The Trialists sing “We live” in three-part harmony, followed by “A lifetime in jail”. The three Mandelas then face the other Trialists whilst singing “We live” again (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 3, 30).

The musical characters of the first “We live” and the one after “A lifetime in jail” are different. The major chords in the first version could signal hope and happiness that the sentence is a lifetime in jail and not death, as opposed to the discomfort and anxiety brought about by the dissonance in the second version, characterized by its use of a major seventh chord (F-A-C-E, in third inversion, placing emphasis on the 7th), The

³⁷This style mirrors the “Makwaya” genre, which uses an “African folk heritage” influenced by exoticism or in this case western harmonic conventions (neofolk music) is employed. Aguwu (2016: 295) says that “Makwaya” is a “SATB texture” that has been introduced to Africa through hymns.

sentenced appear helpless, as if they are dead anyway. Mandela's mother sings a melody in isiXhosa, with a clear indication by the composer that it should be *colla voce*, meaning that it should be sung in a free manner. This could be the composer's way of trying to offer the mother the opportunity to lament her son by giving her the freedom to express herself in a non-confined manner.

Winnie and Mandela 3 think about their dream for their family. The Trialists also sing about their family and those they should be taking care of, and the courtroom audience reassures them that "the people will rise up and their fists will face the sky until justice prevails as tyrants die" (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 3, 35). Then after the Mandelas shout "Amandla" again and the people respond with "Ngawetu" once more, the crowd exits the courtroom (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 3, 42).

The men are taken away. Winnie tries to catch a moment with Mandela, but he is led away too quickly. The women say farewell to their men and remove the men's coats as they are taken as prisoners to Robben Island. Women are left onstage and they start singing about Mandela and the darkness that may overshadow their lives from now onwards. These women are presumably thinking of their families and do not know how they are going to raise their children as single parents. The song, "Storm clouds are gathering" (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 3, 44), starts with a soloist singing a hymn-like tune. The other women come in gradually until the entire congregation is singing, perhaps in order to encourage themselves and exhort their men.

Marie Jorritsma (2017:66), in reference to *koortjies*³⁸ (Afrikaans for "choruses"), regards this as a variation of the standard call and response structure, prevalent in African music. Parallel chords, also prevalent in African choral music, can be heard in this song. To provide a comparative example, "Storm clouds are gathering" shares some qualities with a song called "Senzenina", referred to by Jorritsma (2017:65), which is the name of a song often sung by black people during the apartheid era. Both songs have the type of

³⁸Jorritsma (2017:57), via Dargie (1997:325), describes *koortjies* ('little choruses'), a hymn-singing tradition of so-called Coloured people in the Karoo, as hymn songs that are similar to those sung in Xhosa missionary congregations. These songs have one line of text or a verse that is easy and are "more closely related to the cyclic songs of African music as compared to the hymns that are Western" (Jorritsma, 2017:57). These songs are accompanied by the "beating of hymn-books (and also, the beating of cushions held in hand)" (Dargie, 1997:325).

call and response structure mentioned (a lead singer with members of the congregation joining in a few at a time), both are set in three- to four-part harmony, and both carry a strong feeling of mourning. A parallel can be drawn between the text of “Storm clouds are gathering” and that of a hymn praying to or calling on Jesus for help (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 3, 44-48):

Storms clouds are gathering,
Speak out Mandela's son
Speak fearlessly o Thembu
Lead us, prepare us
Speak out Mandela's son
O rise up! Power will be ours!
Hear the people calling you...
Mandela, Mandela

As the song reaches the final cadence, instead of ending on a tonic triad, the composer omits the third. The act of omission itself could symbolize the instability of what lies ahead, without the protection and support of men: The women would have to support each other during these tough times without the perceived necessity or notion of needing men. Although the absence of a third may simply be seen as a technique to approximate ‘traditional’ harmony it also leaves room for a minor or major resolution, symbolizing the women’s uncertainty about being able to survive without men

In the next scene, on Robben Island, prisoners are breaking rocks with hammers in the background; it is clearly hot outside. The guard calls Mandela, who is behind the organization of a hunger strike by the prisoners, in protest of the poor prison conditions. A siren is heard. The men, who are now standing in lines, sit down in that formation as one guard explains to the audience his duties at the prison. He speaks about how polite the prisoners are and how they take really good care of themselves. He is the one who cuts out the passages from prisoners’ letters that may be seen as provoking revolt against the state.

As the guard finishes his explanation, Mandela’s cell, where he is writing in a notebook, can be seen. There are shelved books and photos of Winnie in the background. The guards are not happy with him because of the hunger strike. They start calling him names like “swartgat [...] terrorist [...] Kaffir!” (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 3, 52-53). Mandela then asks them what they expected, since he tried to communicate with their minister regarding the issue of prison conditions. They respond by saying that Mandela

must speak to the men so that they can eat, or he will face the consequences. Mandela is unfazed by their demand. As they leave his cell, the wary prisoners, thinking of their families (see figure 25) and freedom, start singing in harmony while they are working. This can be significant in the sense that even though they are wary and *lonely*, they are not going through this struggle *alone*; they have each other. It is a trait that can be traced to Negro spirituals or even instances of men working in laborious jobs in mines or the railway; struggle or hard work can be mediated temporarily by singing, but even more through supportive singing in harmony.



Figure 25 Act 3, Prisoners on Robben Island, singing “Do you remember” (Cape Town Opera, 2014)

The stage lights are turned off as a prison visitation booth with a telephone is placed on stage. Mandela speaks to the visiting Winnie; she reassures Mandela that their children are well, but that she is being watched and has lost her job. Mandela encourages her to be careful. The composer uses this opportunity to employ the orchestra in giving urgency to the dialogue through its fast tempo and insistent, repetitive character: The composer indicates the tempo as *Allegro* (crotchet=116), and the strings play repeated quaver staccato triplets on e and g#, followed by a quaver rest and three quavers playing e-d-c, legato. The cello is playing long notes; meanwhile the contrabass repeats a pizzicato figure as given below (see Figure 26).



Figure 26 Act 3, orchestral score, bars 400-405 (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 63)

Mandela becomes unsettled as Winnie tells him that she will be continuing his work outside. They are interrupted by the guard who shouts that their time is up.

The men sing again, *pianissimo*, and Mandela goes to his cell where he receives a letter about the death of his son, Madiba “Thembi” Thembekile (25 years old), who died in a car accident in 1969 (South African History Online, 2012). The sad Mandela, still in his cell, is weeping. His mind and emotions overwhelm him, and he is faced with only his thoughts to gain strength from. Mandela is sitting as he sings his aria “Ghosts” (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 3, 70). First, he reminisces about his son growing up and how he has failed him as a father. He sings about the young Thembi who would wear his clothes when he was young, and uses that memory to recollect his emotions and grieve for his son. He also sings about Winnie, who he says is young and looks worried and scared. As he becomes sadder, he sings about his mother who is old and alone. He clings to a blanket as he sings this. Mandela sums up all of this by proclaiming that he has failed as a father, son and soldier. An interesting compositional innuendo in this aria is that of a lullaby which, as is commonly known, is used to calm crying babies and put them to sleep. Grove Dictionary of Music (2013) describes a lullaby as follows: “Typically they [lullabies] display musical characteristics of a descending melodic line, *portamento* effects and stylised representations of sighing and weeping [...]” (descending melodic lines are typical in African music).

As can be seen in Figure 27, these compositional devices are present in the aria (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 3, 73). Mandela uses these *portamenti* to carry vocal weight that can represent the struggle to comprehend that his son has gone. In other sections, the singer sings descending melodic lines note for note to represent breath-takes in order to narrate his memories. The singing is heavy, possibly to try to convince himself that his son is gone and that’s all the memories he will ever have of him. His audible breath-takes before singing each new line supports the effect of recreating weeping. Like in “Do you remember our loneliness”, the composer utilizes long notes in the orchestra to offer

473

Man. (The soloist weeps as this point) I re - mem - ber... My lit - tle boy wear - ing my

col canto a tempo

Accompanist follow soloist

Str. keybrd

478

Man. big man's suit, the Man of the House when I left you for good - for Free - dom and The Cause when all you want - ed was my love,

33

Str. keybrd

While Mandela is down and crying, a female chorus sings the melody of “Storm clouds are gathering”, which we heard earlier. It is sung in the background, sotto voce, and he draws his strength and confidence again from it as he proclaims to be the master of his destiny. Individual foregrounding and communal backgrounding are therefore expressed in singing. The guard comes and tells Mandela to pack up as they are being transferred to Pollsmoor prison. The guard narrates again what had happened between then and their arrival at Pollsmoor prison. While he is talking, the prisoners are standing in a straight line upstage, neatly-folded blankets in hand. Mandela also has a box of his photos and books packed in a wooden crate. In *Long walk to freedom* (Mandela, 2013:531) he writes:

³⁹We discover in the aria that she was sick.

In a portrayal of the Soweto uprising that took place in 1976, the stage is lit red⁴⁰, which perhaps is symbolic of danger and bloodshed, as toyi-toying people wearing school uniforms enter the stage with guns and placards on which are written “no *Afrikaans education*”. The Soweto uprising was an event during which about fifteen thousand Sowetan school learners protested against Afrikaans being at least fifty percent of the medium of instruction in schools. This protest led to the massacre of up to 700 learners by the police force, including the thirteen year-old Hector Pieterse (Mandela, 2013:575). The movements are not choreographed to suit the orchestrated music, creating a momentary cognitive dissonance that embody chaos, or convey disorder. It is as if the composer created a musical backdrop to inform the audience of events that took place in the townships during the imprisonment of the Trialists. The snare drum is heard again in the orchestra, with its reference to violence, as mentioned in the first act. He sits down again, feeling helpless, and then gets the message that Winnie has arrived.

In the next scene, in Pollsmoor Prison, Mandela is attending to a garden on a rooftop, assisted by the Rivonia Trialists. As the garden is being prepared for the scene, a blue light⁴¹ is shone on stage and it brightens up as they sing together. Mandela is wearing gardening gloves and a straw hat. Procumbent plants are being grown in oil tanks that had been cut in half. They are growing on support structures that looks like an ‘A’. A blue light appears as the men sing about what has happened in Soweto; they are happy that people stood up for themselves. In this case, the blue light could symbolize serenity.

The Trialists present a newspaper and share the news about the massacre with Mandela. The melody starts in unison, then breaks in two parts and after that into three, as the excitement builds. A sense of relief could be implied by that, not only due to its major quality and lack of density, but also because no chromatic notes that create instability or tension are present. The relief is not about the massacre per se, but about the fact that a

⁴⁰Marshall (2008) states that red light symbolizes “anger, passion, rage, desire, excitement, energy, speed, strength, power, heat, love, aggression, danger, fire, blood, war and violence” – most of which are apparent in this scene.

⁴¹Although the blue light may be just for the practical reason of simply announcing a new scene, you may also see it as being symbolic of what Marshall (2018) describes as symbols of “faith, spirituality, contentment, loyalty, fulfilment peace, tranquillity, calm, stability, harmony, unity, trust, confidence, conservatism, security, cleanliness, order, sky, water, cold, technology, depression” or perhaps recalling the police colour.

resistance movement has come into being. The score asks for it to be performed “with dance and whistles” (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 3, 99).

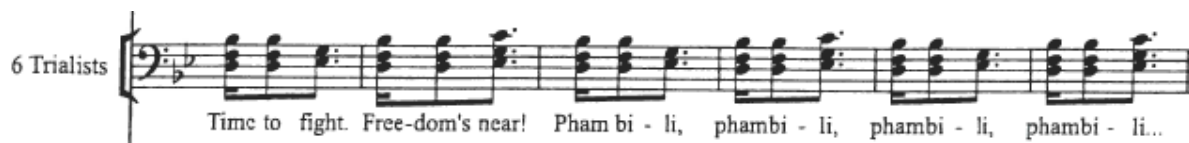


Figure 28 Act 3, orchestral score, bars 473-484 (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 73)

For about three bars the section is sung mostly a cappella (there’s only a B-flat pedal note in the strings). The rhythmic pattern (semi-quaver followed by a quaver, then a dotted quaver), in 2/4 time, can be described as ‘folk-like’, as they sing “time to fight and freedom is near”. The rhythm and melody are very simple and repeat a short motif (see Figure 28), alluding to nursery rhyme tunes such as that of *Three blind mice* or *Senannapo*, The latter is a particularly famous folk song known by all Sesotho-speaking people and is a story about a murder and sometimes redemption, according to Ebewo (2017:72). Peter Louis van Dijk arranged and orchestrated it for a mixed choir (*Alla turca* programme notes, 2016:19). Nursery rhymes serve to teach young children phonology, amongst many things; in this instance the composer uses it to retell a story or incident that the prisoners are excited to tell Mandela about. The prisoners are excited by this because even though they are in prison, the youth of Soweto has risen to fight the government. This excitement is juvenile, and because they speak of children (youth), the music’s connection to nursery rhymes is particularly fitting.

Mandela who is holding a watering can interrupts the other prisoners by suggesting they should speak to the government. They ask Mandela if he trusts the government, and if that’s the case, they should not go and talk to the government but they (the government) should come to them. Mandela responds, arguing that they want to live in a land of freedom and not war. The composer doubles Mandela’s melody with that of the flute, oboe, clarinet, violin 1 and electronic keyboard in order to thicken the texture, thereby further emphasising the statement by giving the voice more authority. The key is B-flat major, even though the tonic is only established later in the phrase; the composer’s intention with delaying the tonic could be his way of suggesting patience and that there is light at the end of the tunnel. The men quote Winnie and other Comrades’ words from the newspaper: “There will be freedom in our time” (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 103). – words Mandela had said before in Act 2 (Campbell, 2014). They repeat the song they sang when they were reading the newspaper, with excitement: “At last Soweto

wakes” (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 105). Mandela is left in the garden, reading the newspaper in awe. He is sitting on a wheelbarrow when the guard (who for the first time in the score is referred to as Gregory) alerts him (spoken) of the visitor who has come to see him. Whereas on Robben Island they were not given the freedom to converse comfortably with their loved ones, in Pollsmoor they were given the ‘privilege’ of having privacy to talk to their visitors as they wished.

Mandela and Winnie run and hug each other tightly, and a resolution is heard in the orchestral chords as they take deep breaths in each other’s company. The excited Mandela proclaims how good it is to hold her, and Winnie touches on the point about the wars in the streets. The two speak about the conditions of the country: Mandela believes they should talk to their enemies (the government), but Winnie is not agreeing. She walks away, with a hand gesture implying disagreement, as the “Dream duet” begins (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3,107).

Winnie tells Mandela about how her dreams play out in reality: “My dreams these days are policed by a million eyes that baton charge my sleep and frog march me into a shaken morning (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 697-706).” Mandela also speaks about his dreams: “My dreams are flooded with you searching a river, endless churning rivers of your loss and all my love swept away (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 712-723).” Winnie believes in serving their comrades, and Mandela in building a nation. Winnie says that she is called “Mother of the nation” by comrades (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 726-727). Bridger (2015:447) says many women in Soweto and the youth adored her and referred to her as “mother of the nation”. Simpson (1985:36), as quoted by Horwitz and Squires (2011:84), also suggests that *Time Press* referred to Winnie as “mother of the nation” as she was about to give her first (illegal) speech in twenty-five years.

Nelson and Winnie only agree about that fact that a new nation should be built, but not on how it should be achieved. Winnie tells Mandela that people call him Tata (which means “father” in isiXhosa; in this instance “father of the nation”). Because he is old, Winnie uses the term to convey the point that he is old now and does not know how things are and work out there, rather than using it to refer to him as a leader. Gilbey (1993:41-47) confirms that the age difference between Winnie and Nelson Mandela was big and Mandela made most decisions towards their wedding, which led to Winnie’s fear of losing her independence. For the first time the opera reveals Winnie as being a confident and

strong woman, as she says that “no one tells her what to do” (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 141). Matangira (2018) refers to Winnie as an outspoken feminist.

Mandela once again blames himself for the way Winnie has turned out. There is a prominent rhythmic pattern of a quaver followed by three semi-quavers on the electronic keyboard (set to the strings sound), and a semi-quaver figure in the violins, repeating a tonic e minor 2nd inversion chord. This is strongly reminiscent of the style of Philip Glass, who uses similar dramatic devices (see Figure 29) to create a sense of urgency and tension in, among other works, his opera *Nixon in China*⁴².



Figure 29 Act 3, orchestral score, bars 792-794 (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 112)

Also, just like Mao’s wife Jiang Qing (also known as Lan Ping) in the opera *Nixon in China*, Winnie emerges as a strong political revolutionary.

Mandela and Winnie also agree to be on each other’s side through it all. Mandela softly and tenderly (as suggested by the composer) tells Winnie he’ll always be there for her as he sings the same note, almost sounding like a recitativo, that reassures his support of her. At this point the dramatic device or this insistent rhythm we saw/heard in figure 29 is interrupted by a melodic motif similar to that of “Time has come” that you will also see/hear in Figure 38. This motif almost serves to signify peace and overcoming differences. After the guard comes to tell them they don’t have enough time left, Mandela reprimands Winnie about what had been written in the newspaper: she denies the accusations that she beat people with *sjamboks* and set others alight when it became known that they betrayed their comrades in the struggle movement through espionage, or not being loyal

⁴²Although the scope of this dissertation does not allow for an in-depth investigation in this regard, the symbolism in both operas being about statesmen may be of interest.

to the comrades in other ways. With this section marked *animato*, and clarinet and strings marked *en dehors* (meaning played prominently or emphasised) playing the recurring septuplets, contribute to the preceding conversation of the uncomfortable and suspicious Mandela and reluctant Winnie. Mandela asks Winnie to stop associating with certain people (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 872-874). Although not mentioned in the opera, I suspect these 'people' to be the Mandela United Football Club (MUFC)⁴³. Winnie tells Mandela that he is old and that they are doing things differently out there. After warning him that no one can tell her what to do, she walks off stage. The composer uses Winnie's last note to imply anger or irritation, by placing the last note on the B-natural just below C6.

After this visit, a restless Mandela recites (spoken) the letters he had written to her. He wonders whether he should blame himself for the decisions that Winnie had taken. He blames himself perhaps because he should have been by Winnie's side all those years, rather than going to jail. It is as if he is speaking or serenading to the Winnie who's not there; he wants to ease her pain and free her from the trouble he thinks she is in. The composer uses the descending major scale-like melody in the flute part and what Mandela is singing in bar 949 (see Figure 30) to emphasize the feelings of uncertainty that he is experiencing. This is demonstrated by the composer through incompleteness of the scale: the voice entering before the flute is finished, and the scale in the voice part not being finished before it starts over again.

⁴³The Mandela United Football Club was established in 1986 under Winnie Mandela's patronage. Bridger (2015: 454) mentions that Winnie claimed that the existence of the club was to get the youth off the streets and away from the security forces. Their first appearance in the newspaper was already with regard to notorious events. People in Soweto were afraid of them because they were implicated in a number of killings, abductions, arson and rape (Bridger, 2015:447). In 1990 the club, along with their 'coach', Jerry Richardson, forgone trial for the murder of the fourteen year-old Stompie Moeketsi, also known as James Seipei, who disappeared in December 1988 and was found dead at a morgue in January 1989. Stompie Seipei was a fourteen-year-old boy activist from Tumahole (Parys). Tau (2018) explains that his mother had become used to not seeing Stompie often. According to Vollenhoven and Els (2013:264) Stompie was a member of the Mandela Football Club and he was caught in Soweto where he was taken to Winnie Mandela's house where he was 'sjamboked', bounced on the floor and killed. He was killed for allegedly having sexual relations with a Methodist reverend called Paul Verryin, and also for being a police informer (spy).

949 66

Fl. *mf* to pice.

Guard

Man. *più f* I should have... I should have been...

Figure 30 Act 3, orchestral score, bars 949-950 (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 149)

Mandela is sitting on a small bench next to a wheelbarrow with his hands between his legs. His posture is that of a broken man. The guard approaches Mandela and asks him if he would like to see the city (Cape Town) and leaves as the stage is cleared for the next scene. A picture of Table Mountain is projected. A spotlight is focused on Mandela, who is on stage with his hands in his pockets. He walks forward and turns towards a projected video of a moving car. He looks forward and appreciates watching the simple things happening on the streets (also a video projection), from an old man sitting, to a woman doing her shopping. He seems to regard himself as a curious tourist. The orchestra plays music that can be described as being in the style of Gershwin's *An American in Paris*. In other words, music that is popularly related to 'going to the city with excitement'; a tourist who is fascinated by the lifestyle of people and how things are or may be different from what he is used to. That fascination in Mandela's case is of excitement about seeing South Africa after so many years – how things could be different from when he was still a free man. *An American in Paris* can also be described as so-called New York 'lounge music'. Lounge music, according to Sfetcu (2014), was popular during the 1950s and 1960s, and typically familiar with an older target market. According to Cook and Pople (2004:308), this music used *bossa* and *samba* rhythms that are evident in the opera as well, while carrying tunes in the style of The Beatles and an orchestral film score atmosphere in the style of composers like James Barry and Ennio Morricone. The purpose of this style was aimed at creating music with which people could relax and drink. The use of tambourine and triangle on percussion also alludes to Cape

Town carnival⁴⁴ or what is known today as the Cape Town Street Parade. Collison (2016) describes this festival as being significant to the Cape Malay people; other than being a mere festival, it is also a remembrance of their oppression as slaves, where they were offered a day off only on the 2nd of January. On this day, which they call *tweede nuwejaar* ('second new year'), they celebrate their freedom in remembrance of their past. In the context of the scene, it could allude to the bitter-sweet freedom Mandela has for only one day.

The guard stops the car⁴⁵ in front of the shop and asks Mandela if he would like a cold drink⁴⁶. It may imply that some white people felt entitled to pay or buy black people things as a grossly insulting gesture of reconciliation; it can also be argued they were asserting their social status by indicating that they are able to afford things. Seeing that Mandela was a prisoner, the guard should not have offered him a refreshment. The gesture could also reflect that Mandela was never an ordinary prisoner, and that history had already told of the fact that he was respected by and had a good relationship with some of his guards. The guard walks away and Mandela is left alone, unguarded. As he was about to jump out of the car, the Colonel came back with two cans in his hand. As the colonel appears, the snare drum is heard as though it is used to identify with him (refer back to this instrument's military connections discussed in Chapter 4) Mandela says he became relieved because that small freedom could have been used against him. As Mandela sips his cola, a backdrop of what appears to be a kitchen area is placed on stage. This is the third place where Mandela was transferred to. This time it was not a prison, but a house with guards. In this house he was allowed to have visitors.

In what is called "Conversation 3 (FINALE)" between Jimmy Kruger and Mandela (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 175), a melodic and text imitation between the two is

⁴⁴For extensive discussion of the Cape Town Carnival Festival previously known as the Coon Carnival, see (for example) Denis Constant Martin's *Coon carnival: New Year in Cape Town* (1999).

⁴⁵One could see the back window of the car projected to create an illusion or an idea of Mandela being in the car as things move further from the window on the projection.

⁴⁶In my experience growing up, these were emerging social behavioural patterns that I started to notice in the late 1990s when I was at school, in addition to older (yet persisting) practices such as black person sitting at the back of a van while his boss drove and let his dogs take the front seat.

heard (see Figure 31). This possibly suggests that for the first time they are agreeing, finding a common ground or working towards that.

The image shows a musical score for two voices, White and Man, in Act 3, bars 1164-1168. The tempo is marked 'Adagio' with a metronome marking of 66 (♩=66). The mood is 'poco mf tranquillo ma animato'. The lyrics are: 'So here we are, we are a gain, talk-ing, talk-ing to each o-ther as we've done for so'. The score is written in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The White part is in the treble clef and the Man part is in the bass clef. Both parts have a melodic line with some triplets and a steady accompaniment.

Figure 31 Act 3, orchestral score, bars 1164-1168 (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 73)

They are looking at each other and Kruger explains that it is Mandela's new home (Victor Verster prison), which Mandela regards as "half-way between prison and freedom" (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 178). Kruger says he will cook for Mandela, and agrees with Mandela about time having been wasted in prison. Mandela has his hands in his pocket and his face is showing a little bit of excitement as well as arrogance. They refer to the time wasted as "ten thousand days gone" (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 182) for which Mandela is being compensated by "a five-star room service". He takes his prison jacket off as Kruger approaches him; Kruger ties Mandela's tie and gives him his jacket. Kruger helps Mandela change from his prison clothes into a suit as the backdrop is removed, and they sing together about the time that has come for peace and reconciliation. As they agree about this, they sing in unison. Where they were initially imitating each other, they are now singing in unison, maybe to enforce that they now fully agree with each other. Kruger and Mandela also agree that they have a lot of work to do together, implying that white and black people should work together towards building a peaceful nation for all.

6.2 Masculinities

As was mentioned before, the three Mandelas are standing together in court on the last day of the Rivonia Trial, each wearing different attire. In addition to the interpretation given at the beginning of this chapter, one could also see this as being symbolic of his many masculinities. This supports Suttner's (2014:343) statement about the vast contrasts between different stages of Mandela's life having influenced the development of his many masculinities. I intend to elaborate on Suttner's argument in Chapter 7. Mandela 1 is standing on the audience's left-hand side, wearing AmaXhosa attire that incorporates a

net weaved necklace called *iqgesha*. According to Shoup (2011: 204), this is normally worn by men. Mandela (2013: 384), on the first day of his case in 1962, was wearing IsiXhosa skin *kaross*. He elaborates on the reason for this where he states the following:

I had chosen to wear traditional dress to emphasise the symbolism that I was a black African walking into a white man's court. I was literally carrying on my back the history, culture and heritage of my people (Mandela, 2013:385).

Although it is in the first instance an assertion of a more generic cultural identity, it is not possible to separate gender performance from it. This Mandela is symbolic of the traditional man who has gone through initiation and prides himself in his identity as a Thembu, Xhosa man.

Aspects of the Robben Island prison scene highlight masculine fragility vis-à-vis loneliness and hopelessness. At the beginning of the Robben Island scene, the prisoners enter the stage wearing their uniforms. They walk in lines, and as soon as they hear the warden blow a whistle, they stop walking and stand in formation. They sit down and start using hammers to cut stones. The men start to sing a reminiscent song about their families. They are singing about their freedom, and their children and wives they had to leave behind as sacrifice for the struggle. I am struck by the section where they sing "do you remember our loneliness" in bar 374 (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 59). This could refer to the fact that in prison they are lonely because they are removed from their families and unable to move and go wherever they want, whenever they want.

The song sounds like a struggle to the ear, especially as the tenors approach their high registers. The howling/wailing sound achieved through scooping up to the notes contributes to the heaviness of struggling to push/sing through the phrases, which could symbolize forced labour (see Figure 32). This musical trait can also be found in the Negro spirituals that were sung during the time of slavery in America. The composer uses the rest and score indication of *Adagio sospirando* (meaning slowly, with a sigh) to create the breath stop that the singers could manipulate by dropping the sound before starting a new syllable, also symbolizing forced labour and sadness. The rectangle in Figure 32 refers to the accentuated c in the piano heard on the rests almost seeming as though it is completing the bass part of men singing the c as well. Its placement on the rest alludes the hammering of breaking stones as they work; they sing and hammer where they don't sing. The pianissimo also plays a role in emphasising this, as well as suggesting the

passivity with which they accepted these conditions – they were most likely beaten and weary. Their conditions emasculate them – they are robbed of their masculinity.

58

360 **Adagio sospirando** $\text{♩} = 54$ 25

Pno. 8^{va} *pp*

CHORUS OF PRISONERS *pp*

T. *pp*

B. *pp*

Do you re - mem - ber our free - dom, our lives? _____ Do you re - mem - ber our homes and our wives? Hold - ing our

Do you re - mem - ber our free - dom, our lives? _____ Do you re - mem - ber our homes and our wives? Hold - ing our

Do you re - mem - ber our free - dom, our lives? _____ Do you re - mem - ber our homes and our wives? Hold - ing our

Do you re - mem - ber our free - dom, our lives? _____ Do you re - mem - ber our homes and our wives? Hold - ing our

Figure 32 Act 3, orchestral score, bars 360-368 (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 58)

However, one short conversation between Mandela and the prison guard in the Robben Island prison scene depicts Mandela as an assertive and principled, yet gentle and patient leader. The guard lashes out at Mandela regarding the fact that prisoners have pledged to a hunger strike. Together with his counterpart he calls Mandela a terrorist, *kaffir*⁴⁷ and *swartgat*, as mentioned before. Mandela addresses them politely and in a controlled manner⁴⁸. The orchestra supports this conversation by carrying *staccato* quavers throughout a section indicated *agitato*. In this G major section the guard is given syncopations, dotted rhythms and intentional accents to indicate aggravation. Mandela seems in control of the outcome of this situation, even if it means he and his comrades have to make sacrifices and endure hardship. Suttner (2018) believes that Mandela was arrested with the “image of a military leader, unrepentant and ready to fight”.

⁴⁷Onishi (2016) describes the word as a derogatory term used by white people to refer to black people in South Africa.

⁴⁸This is indicated in the score (Mandela trilogy, Act 3:53).

Mandela's assertion of traditional gender roles, including a measure of male dominance over women, can be seen in the 'phone booth prison visit' scene. After that scene, Mandela comments to himself that Winnie should be careful of taking up his cause, since she is so young. I believe it went much deeper than that: it also had to do with the possibility of Mandela believing Winnie was unable to face the struggle directly, because she is a woman who has suffered already, and given his experience with Evelyn who was not interested in politics. We learned in Act 2 that Evelyn was far removed from political debacles, and when she would appear in such an incident, Mandela would quickly dismiss her by telling her to go back home. Suttner (2008:118) speaks of women who were left behind to take care of children and domestic duties, while the men would "embark on courageous deeds, war and other activities". Winnie, on the other hand, is described by Suttner (2008:118) as different, in a sense that she did not conform to the idea of the dutiful wife and mother, but was directly involved in politics.

We are introduced to the 'vulnerable' Mandela in the scene where he gets the letter about the death of his 25-year-old son Thembekile Mandela. The singer Aubrey Lodewyk's (playing Mandela) weeping conveys the emotions that Mandela could have felt about losing a child, and everything that was happening around him. The singing, as he describes moments he shared with his son, is heavy and emotionally draining through the way he drags it out in time, starting with a straight tone, then moving into vibrato (a common practice in classical singing, in order to not let long notes stay static, but to allow them to develop). The drawing out of this minor 6th interval emphasizes its minor quality, and the composer suggests a slow arpeggio on the celeste, signifying the act of reflection or remembering. According to the Vienna Symphonic Library (2018), the celeste, harp and glockenspiel produce a "crystalline, gossamer-like, ethereal effect" in order to create a dream-like ambiance in opera, ballet or film music.

Two aspects allude to his dependence on women for drawing strength. In the aria "Ghosts", Mandela also speaks of his young wife and uses a short motif to encourage her to stay strong through all her fears. The recurrence of this motif also emphasises Mandela's will to receive encouragement from it, almost as though he hopes if he says it enough, Winnie will hear it somehow. This motif (see Figure 33) also occurs in a few instruments, including the piccolo, oboe, and the clarinet.



Figure 33 Act 3, orchestral score, bars 523-531 (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 79)

As the aria continues he clings to his blanket, and all of a sudden the women sing in the background the melody of “Storms, clouds are gathering” (see Figure 34) in the background. This could be the composer’s way of conveying the collective feeling of women without husbands at home, and who depend on their male leaders to liberate them for a better life. When Mandela hears this melody he throws the blanket away and stands up as though he is taking strength from the women’s plea and refers to himself as the “master of his destiny”. (In other words, he is dependent on their display of dependence on men.) This patriotic gesture is made as he remembers why he is in jail, and that endurance is key to the liberation struggle at that point.

FX - loud, clanging
prison gates can be
heard from about here

251

Mother

O, rise up! Man-de-la the peo-ple cal-ling you... Man-de-la.

Win.

pre-pare us Po-er Power will be ours! Hear the peo-ple cal-ling you... Man-de-la.

S.

O, rise up! Man-de-la the peo-ple cal-ling you... Man-de-la.

A.

pre-pare us Po-er Power will be ours! Hear the peo-ple cal-ling you... Man-de-la.

B.

pre-pare us Po-er Power will be ours! Hear the peo-ple cal-ling you... Man-de-la.

C# is omitted

Figure 34 Act 3, orchestral score, bars 251-257 (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 44)

Mandela's assertion of traditional gender roles, as discussed before, is apparent again in the scene after Winnie's visit to him in Pollsmoor prison. As mentioned before, after she had left the stage Mandela wonders out loud whether his absence led to Winnie's recent actions, because maybe if he was there he could have protected and guided her instead of having bodyguards to do his job on his behalf. In this regard, Jackson (2001:168) says the following:

Nelson Mandela, despite his general warmth for the women's protest is much less wholehearted in his enthusiasm regarding his own wife's role in these demonstrations.

The descending melodic motif in Figure 35 below is heard first in the oboe, then taken over by the flute before Mandela sings it. This close imitation between the instruments and voice could signify Mandela's frustration about his absence in Winnie's life that has somehow resulted in a lack of dominance over his wife.

941 [65] Rit. Adagio $\text{♩} = 60$

Fl. f

Ob. f $p dolce$

Bn.

949 [66] to picc. col canto a tempo

Fl. mf

Guard

Man. $piu f$

I should have... I should have been... at your side...

WARDEN enters. Pauses to give MANDELA time to recover

Figure 35 Act 3, orchestral score, bars 941-954 (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 148)

In “12 conversation III”, Mandela asserts his position as leader through a display of masculinity not yet discussed. Mandela and Kruger speak of peace and agree that it is necessary as he helps Mandela to dress up. He shakes Mandela's hand as though he regards Mandela as his equal.

In the book *Black masculinity and sexual politics*, Lemelle (2010:40) says the following:

For example, we can rely upon the handshake as a form of masculine bonding; this means handshakes communicate something important, they are regular patterned and institutionalized behaviors – in short, expected lines of action. In many ways, they do not take on a life of their own. This is so because communication is a dialogic. Nonetheless, representations also help to clarify value orientations of groups at any given moment of history. Imagine for example, certain groups of men who refused to shake hands with certain other groups of

men. Such exclusion, isolation, and shunning would be important for our understanding of hierarchy. Since a handshake is an encoded representation, it is 'text', a figure of speech – or, a representation.

A portrayal of Mandela as a gentle and reasonable leader follows the above. A rhythmic chant⁴⁹, as noted by composer (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2017: Act 3, 171), supports the people singing and celebrating Mandela's release from prison. The melody sung by Mandela, where he addresses the crowd, does not strictly adhere to the notation in the score; he glides through some notes and adds conventional embellishments such as neighbour notes before the last note of every phrase.

Mandela sings in a light manner between operatic and contemporary singing; this could possibly be the director's way of alluding to inclusivity, a characteristic embodied by the speech Mandela made. This is to make people understand him better and relate to him, without compromising the deeper meanings embedded in the speech. Aubrey Lodewyk adds inflections (see Figure 36 and 37) to the written vocal part in order to let it reflect a more popular singing style. The following extract is a comparison between the score and the way Aubrey Lodewyk sings it.

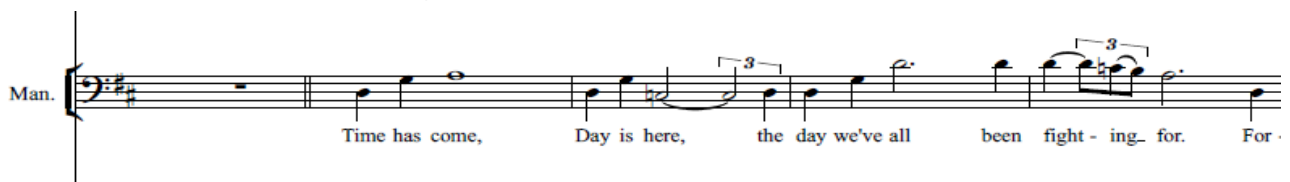


Figure 36 Act 3, orchestral score, bars 1291-1295(van Dijk and Campbell, 2014:195)



Figure 37 Act 3, modified transcription by the current author, (Sello, 2018)

The composer also uses primary chords to enhance the simplicity of the music, in line with an anthem's need to be simple to understand and sing. Inclusivity is also reflected in the audience's participation in Mandela's speech. This is in line with Ebewo's (2017:72) interpretation of African audiences being "polaroid"; in this case the audience gives

⁴⁹Can also be heard as a rhythmic ostinato characterized by a constant repeat of a rhythmic pattern.

In the score the composer only indicates that he wants “a chant” to be sung (van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 73), but did not specify which song or chant. The orchestra is playing in the background against the march as though it intends to manifest the chaos of this scene. A smoke machine blows smoke to recreate the dust blown up from the stamping of people marching. They look towards a backdrop podium (City Hall) where Mandela appears with his fist clenched (the Amandla sign referred to earlier), symbolizing power. As they settle down, Mandela addresses them (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 194):

MANDELA (speaks) Friends, comrades, fellow South Africans, I greet you all in the name of peace, democracy and freedom for all. I stand before you not as a prophet, but as a humble servant of you, the people. Your tireless and heroic sacrifices have made it possible for me to be here today... The need to unite the people of our country is as important a task now as it always has been... We have waited too long for our freedom. We can no longer wait...

The chorus is humming as Mandela addresses them with a lyric tune, possibly symbolic of tenderness. This tenderness allows accessibility and ability to communicate a message with crowds in a manner that will be subtle but direct. One by one the members of the crowd turn to the audience and they sing the melody in unison to symbolize unity, and they split into harmony on the last note to conclude with the words “we are one!” (Van Dijk and Campbell, 2014: Act 3, 198).

CHAPTER 7 DISCUSSION

The mediation of realities has been discussed in detail throughout this dissertation. In this final chapter, I will offer a concise summary of my findings in each act. After this, I will further my discussion on the mediation (or non-mediation) of realities. A section that focuses specifically on the performance of Nelson Mandela's masculinities in the opera then follows. Lastly, I will deliberate the nature and function of contemporary opera in South Africa today in the light of the preceding discussions.

7.1 Summaries

Significant technical aspects of the music, musical styles, orchestration, textual content and structure (libretto), staging, costumes, choreography, acting, the locations depicted, and singing were described in detail in chapters 4-6. In addition to this, a number of important issues, presented as 'digressions' from these descriptions, were highlighted.

Chapter 4 offers an extensive exploration of Mandela's life in his younger years in Qunu. We are introduced to Mandela's mother and his cousin Justice as being of almost equal importance in Mandela's upbringing; Justice, who was not only a cousin, but also a friend and companion, and Mandela's mother as the emotional and concerned parent. A display of masculine attributes and practices of the AbaThembu (and more so the AmaXhosa) are used to confirm gender roles. In the music, Peter Louis van Dijk uses this as an opportunity to employ folk-like songs. In a nutshell, this act reflects the power of the Amaxhosa, AbaThembu and AboMandela⁵⁰. The three scenes have three themes, respectively; first, Mandela's rite of passage is presented as an important source of pride; the second scene is directed towards his doubts about fulfilling the masculine requirements for being a Thembu man, and if it even means anything while black people are subjected to oppression; the last scene focuses on his feelings of disappointment as he is about to flee to Johannesburg.

In Act 1 we see a fantasized pastoralism or romanticized homeland, which may also be seen as an accurate representation of Mandela's fantasies about his childhood. This is

⁵⁰Like the collective terms 'Amaxhosa' and 'AbaThembu', 'AboMandela' contains an article used to describe 'a people' who do not only belong together, but have an identity that perpetuate the culture and the traditions of the family name.

accompanied by a certain level of historic accuracy in the manner in which Mandela and his culture is portrayed. 'Post-blackface' was presented as a concept that relates to the progressive reconstruction of relations in South Africa. Under the heading of eclecticism, the styles of Benjamin Britten and John Adams were respectively suggested to be symbolic of Mandela as the 'elder statesman' and the 'prosecuted outsider'.

In Act 2 we are introduced to Mandela as a man who is powerful and adored by the crowds during that time. The act is set in real-life locations like the *Odin* and *Back of the moon* in Sophiatown that are symbolic of the struggle of black South Africans. Together with that, existing songs of the 1950s and '60s are reused to reinforce a measure of historic accuracy. Dolly Rathebe, as the 'darling' of Sophiatown, triangulates the act in the sense that we see Mandela as a political figure who engages with the masses, Mandela who engages with women in a tender and gentle way, and Mandela who is dismissive of his wife.

In Chapter 5 there was a discussion of jazz, the most prevalent style of the music in Act 2, as a symbol of exile and as a space for an emerging, politicized African urbanism. Historical correctness in the depiction of previously-oppressed persons and cultures (a matter that was first discussed in Chapter 4) was related to the use of existing music in this act.

Where masculinities are concerned, leadership qualities Mandela acquired were displayed through dance and music. The idea of 'smart-cool/bravado' was linked to womanizing and gender-division as a display of masculinity.

The last act, discussed in Chapter 6, focuses on the use of more 'conventional' operatic devices to portray the prosecution and imprisonment of the Rivonia Trialists. The separation of men and women takes on musical significance as women become a tool for strength and endurance for those jailed. In this act, Mandela is first seen as vulnerable, and later as a token of hope.

In terms of masculinity, militarism, rather than being a symbol of power (like before), is connected to loneliness, weariness, helplessness and endurance; this was especially evident in the military-like routine the prisoners were subjected to, as displayed in this act.

7.2 The mediation of socio-political and life contexts

According to Nzewi and Nzewi (2007:7), African music in general has been understood and accepted as being integrated in the lives of Africans. This can be connected to the use of traditional folk music in Act 1. The use of these folk tunes pertains to the reality of AmaXhosa (Thembu) in terms of the appropriateness of the songs that are sung during certain ceremonies. We will never know for sure the specific songs sung during Mandela's time, but it is likely to be the ones sang in the act.

In real life rural people experience hardship; in the opera the idea of some of these hardships are made to look idyllic through the use of pastoral music, the people's lifestyle etc. Traditional (aboriginal) life is depicted as perfect, perhaps in order to emphasise the 'evils' of colonialism. Multi-part singing, a common African musical practice, as well as dancing have large presences in the act. Dancing and singing are integral realities in the lives of Africans – music in an African context does not exist without dancing.

The composer's intention with the style of music was probably to offer the audience music that is fairly close to that of AmaXhosa, and could be recognised as such. Orchestration is not a medium familiar to African music. Music of AmaXhosa is traditionally accompanied by rattles, handclapping and drumming, to give only a few examples (Xhosa Culture, 2013). *Uhadi* and *Umrhubhe*⁵¹ (with their repetitive oscillating whole tones), according to Dargie (2011:37), are musical bow instruments that are also used as accompaniment in IsiXhosa music. The westernization of traditional music serves to make it somewhat familiar to cultural 'outsiders', such as international audiences; it also makes it less challenging to such audiences (see my discussion further on).

Act 2 offers a different perspective as far as mediation is concerned. Generally the manner in which they sing seems happy, which perhaps accurately portrays the role music would have played at the time, namely to serve as a means of temporarily escaping their harsh realities. Limb (2008:26) attests to this point where he states,

⁵¹*Uhadi* is a musical gourd-bow usually played by women. Even though the instrument sometimes produces the melodic line, it usually accompanies voice. It uses the calabash for resonance and varying harmonics (Levine, 2005:93). Dargie (in Ansell, 2005:6) describes *Umrhubhe* as a mouth bow that employs overtones in playing the melody of a lead singer, at the same time whistling the melody of the responding singers.

[d]espite their poverty, Africans had their music. In the impoverished black townships, music was a vital outlet of expression and could reflect both the frustrations of life and the hope of change.

The mediation in this act is less than in the first one: serious political events are portrayed accurately to the extent that it affords respect for these events, albeit without challenging the audience too much. What I mean is that it is possible that the director did not want to wear out the audience with an opera that focuses exclusively on the sadness of these times; he therefore took advantage of the characters' escapism in order to balance out the darkness and heaviness of Act 3. As mentioned, there are some elements that were not mediated in the act, such as the use of existing music. This 'real' music is not presented as a musical backdrop that merely creates ambience, but offers a piece of the history of that time. These types of 'jams' the people of Sophiatown enjoyed reminds me of the everyday question my mother or father would ask when an old song would play on the radio and they would say: "waar was djy", meaning "where were you", which is symbolic of their nostalgia for the music of those times. (Their selective memory of those times is further evidence of the escapism they must have engaged in.) The fashion of the time (that of the 1950s and '60s) is almost entirely non-mediated. However, Sampson (1999:33) speaks of Mandela having been humiliated by the way he dressed, and having been envious of the other lads with American clothes that entailed "sharp suits with wide hats and flashy watches". Mandela's fashion on stage reflects the latter, after he had adopted the style of his peers, which in turn reflects the success he had achieved by this time. A measure of mediation can therefore be seen in skipping over his struggle at the beginning of his time in Johannesburg, as well as his humiliation. (The reason for this is most likely again providing a period of relative 'relief' for the audience before Act 3.)

Sophiatown is central in Act 2, as it was an area where people would gather at shebeens like *Back of the Moon*, *the Thirty-nine Steps*, or *Battleship*. Inhabitants would stay there for hours, as long as there was someone buying alcohol (Hannerz, 1996:164). These places were not filled with just 'boozers', but were also packed with people who would talk about things that bothered them, what scared them, and their hopes. Ultimately politicians would gather there to share their views, and those who did not agree with a mandate were suspected of being informers. One can therefore see the role of such venues (which also includes the *Odin* cinema, mentioned before) as negotiating between being spaces for escapism, being safe spaces for sharing hopes and fears, and ironically,

spaces of danger. All of these roles of spaces are evident in the opera. The use of songs in more contemporary musical theatre styles are undoubtedly a mediation of the reality of the times, serving purely as a means of popularising the opera.

Act 3 offers the audience an intimate portrait of Mandela, almost allowing them to get to know him 'one-on-one'. There seems to be no pretence in the act; it rather exposes all facets of Mandela. His sadness, vulnerability and helplessness are evident. The relative unfamiliarity of certain aspects of Mandela's being, such as those mentioned above, serves to draw in the audience. Barton (2016) states that this act "recalled Leonard Bernstein's Mass, not so much in musical terms but emotive force, as the imprisoned Mandela sang of the value of simple things".

In the courtroom, where all three Mandelas are concurrently on stage, we see a metaphorical display of Mandela outside the constraints of time, emphasising his *development* as a person who had not achieved the status of revered idol independent of such a process, as some may like to believe. This is another unmediated display of a perhaps uncomfortable reality. Another example of metaphor is that of women singing on stage while Mandela is lamenting in the aria "Ghosts" – a spatial displacement of the women, as mentioned, serves as a source of strength for Mandela. The choice of a lullaby as a style for the aria is also worth mentioning. Lullabies are usually sung by women (Owomoyela, 1993:313), and in this instance it represents him being in touch with his feminine side. It can also be seen as an instance of so-called 'soft masculinity', which Ngubane (2018) describes as an expression of maleness that stands in opposition to the traditionalist view of men having to be hard, strong or conforming to the 'men don't cry' phenomenon. Western classical operas are no stranger to the symbolism of metaphors (Kotnik, 2016:7). The audience will not mistake the symbolism/metaphors for reality – i.e. it is mediations of realities, but they will know this. Everyone sees Mandela as a symbol of something – the nature of opera as genre allows Mandela to be symbolised in *Mandela trilogy*. So this act both addresses Mandela as a normal human being and him as a symbol of reconciliation and peace.

7.3 The performance of Nelson Mandela's masculinities in the opera

During the course of my investigation it became clear that Mandela's masculinity is not static, which is why I refer to Mandela's masculinities.

Masculinities that came to light in act 1 included 'militarism', the display of which was reflected in the music through the use of the snare drum. Militaristic traits can also be seen in the way he strategizes and plans political events (in the *Odin* in Act 2), and in the way he negotiates (with Jimmy Kruger). The influence of the Thembu regent on Mandela's masculine development was presented as being significant, as well as seminal in shaping Mandela's gender performance amongst Thembu people. The self-assertion of Mandela's masculinity came to light in a number of ways, including his participation in activities that served to strengthen male camaraderie.

To expand on this particular discussion, I need to refer to certain biographical/historical events in order to provide contexts for the discussion of performances of Mandela's masculinities in the opera. In line with Suttner (2014:343), for the young Mandela it was clear what being a man meant in his culture. His development from being a boy into a man is also clear to him from being allowed to herd cattle, which was particularly a man's job that was not meant for women. In the opera we are presented with a Mandela who has gone through the processes of rite of passage, and there are men singing and directly surrounding this cleansing ritual. The women are elevated, as the director's way of showing women to be separated from the ritual and probably watching/imagining from far. This attests to the indirect formulation of Mandela's masculinity through cultural indoctrination; to see women possibly being very different to men.

As in the literature on Mandela, Suttner (2014:343) speaks of Mandela's model of manhood at a young age being based on courage and muscular strength. Even Suttner's example of Mandela stick fighting to affirm this strength and courage is evident in the opera where the audience is introduced to this choreographed display of masculinity. This scene could attest to his determination not to disappoint those around him, as Mandela himself confirms (Mandela, 1994: 25). In the opera, the first scene after the prologue, Mandela and Justice are placed centre-stage, washing off the clay after their initiation or rite of passage. This cleansing (as well as their circumcision, which is for obvious reasons not part of the dramatization), determines that they are now men according to the customs of the Amaxhosa.

As was mentioned in Chapter 2 (2.3), Suttner (2014:344) points out that the affirmation of being a man was not only brought about by social interactions between men or boys only, but in some cases mothers deliberately interacted with boys differently from girls.

The “Lullaby” aria sung by Mandela’s mother confirms this to an extent, because she does say that she used to tell him stories of chiefs and kings, possibly to inspire him through their power and heroic gestures. Also, her referral to him as a lion that is walking alone can be seen as symbolic of strength, courage and muscular power.

Mandela’s ‘cowardice’ and withdrawal from his ‘sense of duty’ (at that age) come to light in the trilogy, albeit in a different example than the one Suttner (2014:347) uses, referred to in Chapter 2 (2.3). In my analysis, these characteristics are evident in the opera where Mandela and Justice prepare to run away for Johannesburg. Mandela sings a short aria in which his sense of duty is brought into question as he reminisces about being the favourite child of the chief and how he has disappointed him by being kicked out of Fort Hare. The evasion of his duty to get married and play the role he was groomed for – to become councillor of the Thembu people – can be interpreted as cowardice.

The “masculinity of the party” (Suttner, 2014:348) manifests in his passionate demeanour, and the manner in which he dressed and his composure – that of a straight-backed, tall, handsome man – all of which we are introduced to in Act 2. Mandela is portrayed as someone who cared about his appearance; he exercised every day to keep his body in shape. The way the people of Sophiatown flocked to him in the opera correlates to the male leadership embodied by the ANC Youth League: that of the “heroic masculine project” (Suttner, 2014:348).

Act 2 introduces Mandela as a successful lawyer, meaning that we do not get to see his life before being active in politics, and his gentle side towards Evelyn and his family back then or at home. In the opera we see Mandela who is gentle with other women, but not with his wife Evelyn – at least in the public domain. His gentleness with Winnie is portrayed especially in Act 3, where he has a conversation with her in the garden at Pollsmoor prison. Winnie’s reluctance to listen to Mandela, as shown in the opera, reflects a Mandela who is vulnerable and wishes he could be in control to protect Winnie. Suttner (2014: 353) supports the views of Meer (1988) and Sampson (1999) by stating the following:

The Mandela that emerges in his letters to Winnie and his children is a man who is sometimes passionate and emotional, who was very much in love with Winnie, recalling their moments of intimacy, tortured by their separation. He is also pained

by the harassment she experienced and the abuses in which she later became involved.

As discussed in Chapter 2 (2.3), there is an instance Suttner (2014:352) refers to where Mandela wanted to fight, but had to be aware and careful about when to fight. In Act 2 this trait already emerges as he calms the crowds and withdraws his words that they are not ready yet to fight, in the song “Over our dead bodies”. Suttner (2014:352) refers to the prisoners’ rights not being flexible – one had to know when to challenge the authorities. In Act 3, in the prison scene that begins with the police officer reprimanding Mandela about the hunger strike (which is an example of courage and patience, during which one would need to not eat for days in order to get what you want), he seemed calm and had mastered his ability to control his impulses (Suttner, 2044: 353). These traits are also evident in the Prologue, where Mandela and Jimmy Kruger would be in confrontation, and he would control or contain his anger though at times he wanted to retaliate.

As was mentioned in Chapter 2 (2.3), Mandela’s state of tranquillity comes through in his family episodes that took place while he was in prison. He would isolate himself and wrap himself with a blanket during this period. Because act 3 is mostly very direct and personal to his emotional and vulnerable imagery, we get to share the journey with the singer who articulates Mandela’s pain during the time. It is only in Act 3 that there is a much stronger focus on the negative aspects of his masculinity; aggression (of which we see only once for example in Act 2), vulnerability, being weary and not being in control.

In Chapter 2 (2.3) I referred to Suttner’s belief that Mandela’s gestures were never arbitrary and extemporaneous. He knew that how he represented himself and how he was understood by others were important, bearing symbolic importance”. In Mandela’s last aria in the opera, “Time has come”, where we witness the moment of his release from prison, he sings to the audience, encouraging them to indulge in their liberation and embrace peace. This gesture is symbolic of inclusivity, as I mentioned in Chapter 6, and the more patient leadership style that he developed after his release from prison. In conclusion, the creators did the best they could to offer both a showcase and celebration of Mandela, as well as a more balanced view of his character/being as a whole, in terms of masculinities.

7.4 General concluding remarks

Where the relevance of opera in South Africa is concerned, Stolp (2017:3) states that opera can be related to “African cultural practice[s]”, which is confirmed by Agawu (2001: 196) where he refers to opera as a “voice” and therefore being “compatible with African modes of expression”. Stolp (2016:142) also offers the possibility of opera in South Africa still being seen as an elitist western art form, rather than as accessible and of importance for the general public. In terms of subject matter, opera in general – as is the case in South Africa – has been a platform of tackling controversial subjects, often in the ‘in-your-face’ way it is showcased, and its impenitence in challenging contentious matters. André et al. (2016:2) describes opera in South Africa as being either traditional canonical works, those based on South African stories by “black and non-black South African composers and mythical ones [stories]”. Stolp (2016:143) mentions that in the opera *Five: 20*⁵², Van Dijk’s work comments on racism and xenophobia, which is the type of subject matter on which the *Mandela trilogy* comments as well. She (Stolp, 2016:145) quotes Michael Williams, who was the director of Cape Town Opera, where the manner in which he advertised *Five: 20* is concerned:

Five: 20 hopes to entice new audiences into theatres to see opera in short bites – musical sandwiches rather than a full course. It is an opportunity to extend the reach of African-made music and give a taste of the work of five seasoned South African composers and adept storytellers. (GIPCA, 2010)

Stolp (2016:145) says the following in turn:

Williams ‘sells’ these works as accessible (“opera in short bites”) rather than challenging; it is implied that operas are typically long and tiring works, but that in the case of *Five:20* the general public would find the works easily comprehensible. I read this statement in a negative light: in the first place, it is insinuated that South African audiences are not capable of appreciating challenging musical material; further, complexity, deep meaning and intensity are juxtaposed with accessibility, which is aligned with simplicity and naivety. As mentioned earlier, music can be accessible without being detrimental to dramatic content⁵³ (translation by Chris van Rhyn).

⁵² This is an opera commissioned by Cape Town Opera, composed by Bongani Ndodana-Breen, Peter Klatzow, Martin Watt, Hendrik Hofmey and Peter Louis van Dijk.

⁵³ Williams ‘verkoop’ hierdie werke as toeganklik (“opera in short bites”) eerder as uitdagend; daar word geïmpliseer dat operas tipies lang en vermoeiende werke is, maar dat in die geval van *Five: 20* die algemene publiek die werke maklik verstaanbaar sal vind. Ek lees hierdie stelling in ’n negatiewe lig: in die

To a certain extent I agree with Stolp's argument. South Africa has had, and still has, initiatives that promote the inclusion of South Africans within the space of opera. The South African Schools Choral Eisteddfod (formally known as Tirisano Schools Choral Eisteddfod and at present known as the ABC Motsepe Schools Choral Eisteddfod) has served as a space to develop the talents of young black South African opera singers, including Pretty Yende, who performs regularly at La Scala (Milan) and the New York Metropolitan Opera; Siyabonga Maqungo, who was employed by the Meiningen Staatstheater and now the Chemnitz Opernhaus; and Kelebogile Besong, who is freelancing internationally. The Old Mutual National Choir Festival and the Melting Pot Choral Festival have included grand opera extracts for community choirs to perform, and church choir competitions have also followed this trend. Those few examples show that there is indeed an interest in canonical opera. This interest is not only shown by the participants, but also by those who buy tickets. Umculo Opera Incubator serves to educate audiences (usually school learners) by offering music workshops that inform them about the story at hand, by sharing artists' experiences as far as interpretations of the works are concerned, to name only a few aspects. The project took the staged version of St John's Passion to the community of Soweto Meadowlands to bridge that gap of access. Seats for the three performances in the church in which it was showcased were sold out, and the venue was packed with people of different ethnicities and cultures.

Muyanga (2015), on the other hand, believes that opera in South Africa should identify with its people; not just in lived experiences, but also in aesthetic terms:

To achieve that aim, opera must once again be made to change. Just as it had to be transformed from what was once a lyrical and passionate Italian preoccupation into a grand French obsession, then, much later, into a symbol of German intellectual distinction, it now has to be maskanda-rised through a kind of harmonic alchemy into a black musical celebration.

Muyanga makes a valid point, seeing that in this era in our country where we are striving to decolonise aesthetics (among many other things), operas that closely relate to

eerste plek word geïnsinueer dat Suid-Afrikaanse gehore nie in staat is om uitdagende musikale materiaal te waardeer nie; verder word kompleksiteit, diepgaande betekenis en intensiteit in 'n soort jukstaposisie geplaas teenoor toeganklikheid, wat as eweknie vir eenvoud en naïwiteit geskets word. Soos vroeër opgemerk, kan musiek toeganklik wees sonder dat afbreuk aan dramatiese inhoud gedoen word (Stolp, 2016:145).

previously undervalued, traditional musical practices – independent of colonial musical heritage – can serve as a means of redressing injustices and instilling cultural pride in those who identify with it. And it is for this reason that we need to constantly create material that speaks directly to black lives as well. Stolp (2015:154) takes Pallo Jordan's⁵⁴ point to add to Muyanga's statement:

There is nothing wrong with someone from Soweto wanting to sing Verdi, but it's a bit like exporting spaghetti to Italy [...]. What the Italians want to see is not someone imitating an Italian composer. They want to see someone from Africa doing something African (in Jacobson, 2005).

That being said, transformation does not only concern aesthetic change, but also inclusion and choice. Mhlambi (2016:58) makes an observation about the lack of support for black opera and the on-going dismissal of black voices (physically and metaphorically) in the opera space in America. Parallels between the American and South African contexts can be drawn. I do believe in the value – in terms of making opera accessible and inclusive – of re-appropriating canonical operas (like those composed by Mozart, Verdi or Puccini etc.), flavouring them with a taste of South Africa. We have seen this in productions such as *La Bohème in District Six*, as mentioned in Chapter 4. Not only does this allow for cultivating audiences from a familiar aesthetic point of departure (the familiarity stemming from the repertoire sung in community choirs and at competitions, such as those mentioned earlier), but the stories have also proven to be relevant to the contexts of South Africans. Living in a country where diseases are prevalent, we can empathise and sympathise with some of the themes in operas such as *La Bohème* and *La Traviata* (both operas' central theme being tuberculosis). Another example can be that of *Carmen*, where a strong belief in a higher power (which could be ancestors in African contexts) can be related to traditional African healers and witchcraft; the relatability of crime (specifically murder) to the South African context needs no explanation.

Mhlambi (2016) presents another argument in his discussion on *Winnie: the opera*, where he refers to the retelling of important stories through a musical aesthetic that functions symbolically within the story (regardless of whether this aesthetic represents a complete transformation or not). *Winnie: The opera* is a biographical opera in which the life of Winnie Mandela plays out. It utilises “indigenous or emerging idioms” of IsiXhosa culture,

⁵⁴Former South African minister of Culture.

incorporating it with a western style so as to “play on tensions and contrasting worldviews embedded in them” (Mhlambi, 2016:38). Mhlambi (2016:59) finds *Winnie: the Opera* to be important, because he believes that the reciting of “old material” [the retelling of important historical events] is significant”, and that, in this case, the musical narrative becomes part of the analysis of the biographical subject (“questioning, historicising, familiarising and negating prevailing notions about who Winnie may have been and what she identified with”). To take an American example again, Headlee (2008) states that contemporary genres like blues, gospel, spirituals, soul and jazz (genres of which most can be found in *Mandela trilogy*) played a role in the amplification of African-American-specific “historic and socio-political concerns”; if so, then there is no reason why it should not be a platform for retelling the stories of those who identified with the music and culture. Where the employment of indigenous musical elements in *Winnie: the opera* is concerned, I agree with Mhlambi’s (2016:51) statement where he says that:

The isiXhosa language and idioms from which the opera has lavishly drawn and the African musicality and lyricism on which the opera orchestrations are based comment on the injustices that not only she suffered from, but which also have been experienced by the subjugated masses for which she is representative.

I would like to take Mhlambi’s arguments with regard to *Winnie: the opera* outlined here and draw it back to the *Mandela trilogy* by suggesting that the combination of musical platforms from which Mandela’s story was told was necessary in sketching the almost complete picture of him we encounter in the opera. As a result, it is important to understand that he was a person with faults like everyone else – he is ‘real’ and not just an icon; we need to deal with reality and not the fantasy of Mandela: his ideals have not played out.

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ANNEXURE



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Title of study: A perspective on the nature and function of contemporary opera in South Africa
through the lens of the opera *Mandela trilogy*

Dear Mr. Williams

This is a letter of request to use visual (pictures and video), audio and score material as they are the basis of my study. These resources will be used for examination submission and not for commercial purposes.

The purpose of this hermeneutic study is to interpret the mediation of socio-political realities and the performance of Nelson Mandela's masculinities in the opera *Mandela trilogy*, with the aim to gain a deeper understanding of the nature and function of contemporary opera in South Africa today. Visual recordings of the opera will be used to capture relevant moments and events in the opera as they happened. This will include the identification of aspects of stage design, choreography, and smaller gestures made during singing

There are no known risks associated with this study. This study will contribute to the dearth of research on new South African "art music" – it aims to make a small contribution in closing the large gap in the knowledge on a newer generation of South African compositions through a study that will be based on a strong empirical foundation. This study may contribute towards a better understanding of the nature and function of art in the socio-political contexts of South Africa today

Please sign your consent with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of the procedures. A copy of this consent form will be given to you to keep.

Signature (Mr. M Williams)

20 February 2018

Signature (researcher)

10 February 2018