

Project title: Elusive dreams in Egoli: Pathways To Light
Presented by: Afrikan Freedom Principle
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In the second iteration of the ARA Research Conference we aim to present how the Afrikan Freedom Principle as a community centred arts based practice has set on course to find ways to collaborate with arts practitioners, musicians, funding bodies and various institutions and entities within Johannesburg as a means of bringing artists closer to community music programs. The Afrikan Freedom Principle has carried out its objectives as an umbrella movement that understands the importance of a musical archive in South Africa. Its collaborators have changed over time, but the core purpose remains intact: a belief in a free and easy access to local music practices that foster a positive relationship and development within various communities of South Africa.

The Elusive dreams in Jozi: Pathways To Light project is a series of multimedia presentations featuring the last five years of the Afrikan Freedom Principle's social and musical research. This will include our *Composers Workshop*, which was set in 2017 with the intention of creating an opportunity for both younger and established musicians to engage in dialogue and music making, and our *Oratorio for a Forgotten Youth*, which premiered at the National Arts Festival 2021.

Through the *Composers Workshop* we facilitated interactions with students from the Morris Isaacson Centre for Music, Wits School of Music, Sacred Heart College, and Pace Community College, amongst other institutions. Our 'workshopped' material was then performed with the students in the form of several concerts. We further expanded the program with the inclusion of the Wits Music students who performed at a variety of established venues in Johannesburg. In 2020 and 2021, the Afrikan Freedom Principle continued with the *Composers Workshop*, and organized in partnership with The Market Theatre Foundation and Gallery MOMO a series of performances and conversations in a context where musicians were the primary drivers of setting up the events. Other successful and interdisciplinary partnerships in 2021 have included performances at Tin Town Theatre with poet Natalia Molebatsi and singer and songwriter Pilani Bubu. Our expansive archive includes all of these performances, together with master classes by several acclaimed musicians.

The Oratorio of a Forgotten Youth's libretto was written by South African poet Lesego Rampolokeng -who has carried the legacy of Black Consciousness poetry forward for more than three decades- deals with a broken future, and speaks of a collective hopelessness that was and continues to be experienced by black South Africans during the post-apartheid era.

For the ARA Research Conference, the Afrikan Freedom Principle will present segments of our archive in the form of a short film with the intension to articulate a visual and musical accompaniment to a tradition of black activism as well as socio-political topics that are extremely contentious in the present day.

Mandla Mlangeni

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