

Preface to the
Andrew Mellon
Michael Mosoeu Moerane
Critical Edition
in Four Volumes

Cape Town
African Composers Edition
2020

Dedication

This Edition is respectfully dedicated to the memory of
Thuso Majalla Moerane (1935-2020)

in profound gratitude for his loving curatorship of his father's music



Moea oa hae o phomole ka khotso

Wanga umphefumlo wakhe ungaphumla ngoxolo

May his soul rest in peace

Contents of the Moerane Critical Edition in Four Volumes

Dedication	v
Preface and Acknowledgments	x
General introduction to the Moerane Critical Edition	xiii
Catalogue of works by Michael Mosoeu Moerane	xxxi
List of References to the Moerane Critical Edition Front Matter	xl
<i>Fatše La Heso (My Country)</i> Symphonic poem for orchestra	1
<i>'Mankokotsane (The Rain Game)</i> for SATB choir	66
<i>'Mitsa-Mahosi (A Call To Kings)</i> for SATB choir	83
<i>Alina (Alina)</i> for SATB choir	97
<i>Barali Ba Jerusalema (Daughters of Jerusalem)</i> for SATB choir	114
<i>Della (Della)</i> for SATB choir	129
<i>Ea Hlohang (The Triumphant One)</i> for SATB choir	151
<i>Ha Ke Balahē (Who Says I'm Running Away?)</i> for SATB choir	164
<i>Hoja Ke Nonyana (If I Were A Bird)</i> for SATB choir	173
<i>Jehova Oa Busa (Jehova Reigns)</i> for SATB choir	184
<i>Khati (Skipping Game)</i> for SATB choir	197
<i>Lebili (Wheel)</i> for SATB choir	209
<i>Leseli La Hao (Your Light)</i> for SATB choir	216
<i>Letsatsi (The Sun)</i> for SATB choir	230
<i>Likhohlo (Gorges)</i> for SATB choir	240
<i>Liphala (Whistles)</i> for SATB choir	247
<i>Mahakoe (Jewels)</i> for SATB choir	262
<i>Matlala (Matlala)</i> for SA(A)TB choir	273
<i>Monyaka Oa Pelo (A Joyful Heart)</i> for SATB choir	294
<i>Morena Tlake King Vulture)</i> for SAATB choir	308
<i>Naleli Ka 'Ngoe (One Star At A Time)</i> for SATB choir	336
<i>Ngokuba Sizalelwe Umtwana (For Unto Us A Child Is Born)</i> for SATB choir	347
<i>Ntate Ea Mohau (Lord Of Mercy)</i> for SATB choir	358
<i>Paki Ha Li Eo (No Witnesses)</i> for SATB choir	366
<i>Ruri! (Truly!)</i> for SATB choir	376
<i>Satane A Tseha (The Devil Laughed)</i> for SATB choir	393
<i>Seotsanyana (Rock Kestrel)</i> for SATB choir	403
<i>Sylvia (Sylvia)</i> for SATB choir	415
<i>Vumani KuYehova (Sing To Jehova)</i> for SATB choir	432
<i>'Mankholikholi (Yellow-billed Kite)</i> for SAA choir	442
<i>Bonukunyana (My Little Baby!)</i> fragment for SAA choir	456
<i>Lia Qhomaqhoma (They Frolic)</i> for SAA choir	460
<i>Ma-Homemakers (Homemakers)</i> for SAA choir	469
<i>Mohokare (The Caledon River)</i> for SAA choir	479
<i>Mosele (Mosele)</i> for SAA choir	492
<i>Ngeloi La Me (My Angel)</i> for SAA choir	503
<i>Ntsoaki (Ntsoaki)</i> for SAA choir	517
<i>Paka-Mahlomola (Creator Of Sorrow)</i> for SAA choir	524
<i>Sa 'Mokotsane (Wailing)</i> for SAA choir	536
<i>Sekolo Se Koetsoe (School's Out)</i> for SAA choir	544
<i>Tsatsi La Pallo (Judgment Day)</i> for SAA choir	557

Contents contd.

<i>Nonyana Tse Nile</i> (Beautiful Birds) for SA choir	570
<i>Pelo Le Moea</i> (Heart And Soul) for SA choir	575
<i>By An' By</i> (arr.) for SATB choir	580
<i>Go Tell It On The Mountains</i> (arr.) for SATB choir and SATB soloists	588
<i>I Got A Home In-a Dat Rock</i> (arr.) for SATB choir	597
<i>I Stood On De Ribber</i> (arr.) for SAATB choir	609
<i>It's Me, O Lord</i> (arr.) for SATB choir	616
<i>Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen</i> (arr.) for SAA choir	627
<i>Shenandoah</i> (arr.) for SATB choir	635
<i>Witness</i> (arr.) for SATB choir	645

Preface and Acknowledgments

Preface

This is the first published edition of all the extant compositions by South African-born Sotho composer Michael Mosoeu Moerane (1904-1980). Moerane may have composed as many as 87 works between the 1930s and the 1970s, the majority of them for unaccompanied choir to Sesotho, isiXhosa or English texts. Manuscripts or typescripts of only 51 of his compositions have survived, however, and these are the works published here, most of them for the first time, by African Composers Edition (ACE). ACE has prepared a *Catalogue of Works by Michael Mosoeu Moerane*, which follows the *General Introduction to the Moerane Critical Edition* below. The *Catalogue* gives information about missing works, while an article recently published in the journal, *Fontes Artis Musicae*, ‘Michael Mosoeu Moerane in the Museum’ (Lucia 2020) provides an account of how scores were collected.

Each score is presented here in dual staff-solfa notation together with a translation of the non-English texts, a brief historical introduction to the work, a list of sources used in preparing the score, and a critical commentary. The *General Introduction to the Moerane Critical Edition* below gives an overview of Moerane’s life and his music, and individual scores supply further information. All 51 works are available for sale individually or in volumes on ACE’s website <https://african-composers-edition.co.za/edition/michael-mosoeu-moerane-scholarly-edition>, which also has audio and visual samples of his music and scholarly access to full scores and selected documentation for *bona fide* researchers.

Moerane’s works are grouped into four Volumes according to scoring and genre:

- Volume I: *Fatše La Heso (My Country)*, Symphonic Poem for orchestra, full score
- Volume II: *Works for unaccompanied SATB Choir A-L*, in dual notation, vocal score
- Volume III: *Works for unaccompanied SATB Choir M-Z*, in dual notation, vocal score
- Volume IV: *Works for unaccompanied SA & SAA Choir, and arrangements of African American Spirituals for unaccompanied choir*, in dual notation, vocal score.

Only two choral works appear to have been published during Moerane’s lifetime: *Liphala* for mixed four-part choir and an arrangement of the spiritual *Nobody Knows the Trouble I’ve Seen* for three-part female choir, both printed by Lovedale Mission Press in tonic solfa notation in 1938 (Moerane [n.d.1938]; Shepherd 1937). The Southern African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO) published *Barali Ba Jerusalema* in 1998 (Moerane 1998), and *Della* in 2008 (Moerane 2008), although this is a somewhat different version from the *Della* published here, as is explained on the front pages of the score of *Della*. A few other works, such as *Sylvia*, *Matlala*, *Morena Tlake*, *Tsatsi La Pallo* and *Ruri* have been informally reproduced by SAMRO on demand or by the organisers of choral competitions as prescribed music, over the years.

The process of publishing Moerane’s music in a form that made the music newly accessible to a global public and not only to those who read tonic solfa and understand African language texts, involved a team of workers as I explain in the Acknowledgments. We typeset the orchestral work, *Fatše la Heso (My Country)* in Sibelius music notation software, working from a copy of the original hand-written manuscript of the full score that is now kept in the Cory Library for Historical Research, Grahamstown. We then generated 30 orchestral parts from this newly typeset score. We researched and collected as many choral scores as we could find and transcribed them from tonic solfa notation into staff notation, using Sibelius. Mrs. Mpho Ndebele translated the texts of the 37 songs in Sesotho by extracting the words from each tonic solfa score and creating a poem from this, following Moerane’s capitalisation

of words in order to create the lines of the poem. She then made a literal translation, phoneme by phoneme, into English, and a more idiomatic, poetic translation as well. Mrs. Nosipho Rapiya did the same with the five songs to isiXhosa texts. We kept faithfully to Moerane's original tempi, metronome marks, dynamics and expressive markings on the newly type-set scores, only modernising the notation in respect to repeat signs and one or two other aspects and formatting the score to show the separate voice parts with their own text and dynamics. A piano reduction of the voice parts was added for rehearsal purposes, and we reinserted the original tonic solfa notation above the staves for the benefit of those who do not read staff notation.

This is a 'critical' edition, which aims to present Moerane's work with accuracy and consistency, respecting the composer's legacy and presenting it in a form that scholars, teachers, and performers can access. Moerane wrote his choral scores within the literary tradition of tonic solfa, but they were often learned orally and copied by hand or electronically by many different people, for decades. In this process, works were sometimes modified. This edition returns wherever possible to printed, manuscript, or typescript sources in order to prepare a new version of each song, explaining why one source is more authoritative than another. Every score has details on the title page of whom to contact for permission to perform or record the work: the Southern African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO), which administers copyright invested in the music, for the Moerane family.

Acknowledgments

This edition could not have been completed without the generous financial assistance of the Andrew Mellon Foundation, New York and infrastructural support from Stellenbosch University, both of whom I heartily thank. I am particularly indebted to the Director of the African Open Institute for Music, Research and Innovation, Professor Stephanus Muller, for his belief in the importance of this work and for his huge efforts to ensure that Mellon funds were available. Thanks are also due to the Vice-Chancellor of Stellenbosch University, Professor Wim de Villiers, who agreed to sponsor a Special Limited Edition of 20 copies published by African Sun Media in 2020.

The Mellon Foundation awarded three postgraduate bursaries, a post-doctoral fellowship and a research assistantship so that training could take place while the edition was compiled. Its production thus became a team effort, and the Africa Open Institute provided the resources and *bonhomie* for the 'Moerane team' to meet periodically between 2017 and 2019. It comprised Mokale Koapeng, Ignatia Madalane, Kgaugelo Mpyane, Mpho Ndebele, Marc Röntsch, Zayne Upton, and in the initial stages Cara Stacey, to all of whom I am deeply grateful. Ultimately, a team cannot do the finicky work of seeing an edition of nearly 700 pages through to publication, and I take full responsibility for the final outcome, relieved to know that mistakes can be corrected on the online edition. (Please notify me of errors, via christinelucia27@gmail.com.) In 2017, Zayne Upton converted the online platform of African Composers Edition, originally designed by Albert Sapsford in 2013 for the Mohapeloa Critical Edition and Surendran Reddy Edition, in order to incorporate the Moerane Edition. I am indebted to Zayne for his hard work and continuing maintenance of the site. My profound gratitude also goes to my husband, Michael Blake for supporting me throughout the months of finalisation of the Edition in 2020.

The following institutions are acknowledged for providing valuable material and information:

Cory Library for Historical Research, Rhodes University, Grahamstown

Documentation Centre for Music, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch
 International Library of African Music, Rhodes University, Grahamstown
 Lukhanji Museum, Komani (formerly Queenstown Frontier Museum)
 Morija Museum and Archives, Morija, Lesotho
 National Library of South Africa, Pretoria
 National Sesotho-Afrikaans Literary Museum, Bloemfontein
 South African Broadcasting Corporation Radio Sound Archives, Johannesburg
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Finally, I heard with great sadness of the death of Thuso Majalla Moerane in July 2020, when this publication was almost complete.¹ This edition of his father's music was to be dedicated to Thuso, and is now respectfully dedicated to his memory.

When I first met Thuso in 2014, I discovered that he had been curating Moerane's music for years - he had many scores that people had never seen - and I found him to be a man of immense warmth, humility, and quiet humour. He prepared for my visit in 2014 by getting all the scores in order, checking the lists in his possession and seeking out two unpublished family biographies. He allowed me to scan everything and to interview him, and he expressed relief that all the music would finally see the light of day. I visited him again in 2017, and for the last time in September 2019 in the company of his son, Tsepo, and his daughter, Neo. By this time, it was clear that Thuso was not well. He was unable to join in our conversation, but he responded warmly to the draft edition that I showed him. Thank you, Thuso, for everything that you did for music scholarship in southern Africa, by taking care of this valuable legacy and honouring your father's memory.

Christine Lucia, August 2020

¹ The photograph of Thuso Majalla Moerane on the Dedication page was taken by the author on 12 May 2014.

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