

Mapumba

 By [Martin Myers](#)

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Mapumba is a multi-genre world music artist who blends traditional melodies, stories, and languages from his native DRC with original inspirations that deliver a rich, authentic African sound with a modern touch. Best described as an African Tracy Chapman meets Salif Keita.

I caught up with him last week ahead of his show at Café Roux in Cape Town on 22 March 2018.





■ ***When are you happiest?***

I am happiest when I am connecting with life. Physically, through emotions, and the mind. I need to touch life.

■ ***What does music mean to you?***

Music to me means a beautiful way for people to communicate. Beyond words and cultures, which have their limits.

■ ***What drives you: ego or humility?***

I am driven by humanity.

■ ***Any funny moments on stage?***

With my band in Johannesburg, we used to have big Afro-pop dance moments in our set. I would sometimes do the James Brown leg splits. One day, I did the split and my pants tore right in the middle. I had to run off stage.

■ ***Your heroes?***

Among the popular heroes are Nelson Mandela, Sting (Gordon Summer), Richard Bona, Rosie Mutene, Will Smith, and Papa Wemba.

■ ***It's your round, what are you drinking?***

Single malt, smooth and blood warming.

■ ***What makes you stand out?***

My music and performances represent a journey. Either through the continent of Africa or from Africa to the world. I feel not many artists can do that authentically. I feel I'm undefined by genre or category. This was a problem for me for a long time when labels and the industry required that artists remain specific to one. Now I am a veteran of that approach.





🎲 **Nicknames?**

I'm just Mapumba to the world. I have developed an act under the name of 'Tshilombo'. It is an electronic live performance with a traditional twist. Imagine a singer/songwriter with more gadgets than just a guitar.

🎲 **If you were not a musician what would you do?**

I would be doing something technical. I like maths and I enjoy electronics. My 'soldering iron' would earn me some money then. Instead of just helping me maintain my old sound equipment

🎲 **Pick five words to describe yourself?**

Determined, humanistic, loving, energetic, socially-awkward.

▣ ***What is your favourite word?***

Equanimity.

▣ ***Favourite fashion garment?***

Hats.

▣ ***On stage, I tend to?***

Lose myself in the performance. I easily forget the formalities.

▣ ***Wishes and dreams for 2018?***

To perform at high profile events and collaborate with artists that I respect (I missed my chance with Hugh Masekela unfortunately).

Social media links

Facebook Page: facebook.com/mapumba.music

Twitter: [@mapumbamusic](https://twitter.com/mapumbamusic)

Instagram: [@mapumbamusic](https://www.instagram.com/mapumbamusic)

AllEvents (Live Show Calendar): www.allevents.by/mapumbamusic

BandCamp 9 (Online Store): www.mapumba.bandcamp.com

iTunes page: www.itunes.apple.com/us/artist/mapumba

Website: www.mapumbamusic.com

ABOUT MARTIN MYERS

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