

South Africa's Ndlovu Youth Choir to Release the First Officially Approved Translation of Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody

Ndlovu Youth Choir releases the first official isiZulu version of Bohemian Rhapsody on 29 Aug, approved by Queen & Mercury Phoenix Trust.

JOHANNESBURG, GAUTENG, SOUTH AFRICA, August 29, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- South Africa's [Ndlovu Youth Choir](#) to Release the World's First Officially Approved Translation of Queen's '[Bohemian Rhapsody](#)'.

“

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*Ralf Schmitt - Musical
Arranger*

On 29 August, the internationally acclaimed Ndlovu Youth Choir will release their groundbreaking rendition of Bohemian Rhapsody. Originally released by Queen in 1975, this year marks the 50th anniversary of this iconic song. The Ndlovu Youth Choir's rendition holds the historic distinction, as the first translated recording of the classic song ever officially approved by Queen's surviving members, and the Mercury Phoenix Trust.

The Ndlovu Youth Choir, known for uplifting communities through music and earning global recognition on [America's Got Talent](#), has reimaged the rock classic as a heartfelt tribute to its African roots. Musical Arranger and Artistic Director Ralf Schmitt shared the choir's excitement: “Securing the rights to perform and record Bohemian Rhapsody was a years-long journey involving global collaboration. Having the blessing of Brian May, Roger Taylor, and the Mercury Phoenix Trust is an immense honour. We can't wait for the world to experience this special version.”

The lyrics were meticulously translated into isiZulu by three talented choristers – Lungelo Masango, Sipho Hleza, and Sandile Majola. Sandile explains: “We approached the translation with the utmost care, keeping it as true to the original as possible. Bringing this song to life in my own language gave it a whole new meaning for me. Working on the song was a beautiful, creative journey.” Before its release, the translation was carefully reviewed and approved by Dr. Sipho Sithole, a leading international authority on isiZulu and African languages from Howard University, USA.

Ralf Schmitt explains, "In crafting this version, we intentionally retained certain original lyrics because they are iconic to the song (Galileo, Bizmillah, Figaro), instantly recognisable across the world, or because translating them directly would have altered the melody or disrupted the song's natural rhythmic flow. We aimed to honour Freddie Mercury's original musical phrasing, preserving the integrity and distinctive character of the piece."

"We infused the song with various African musical genres, including the rhythms of Kwassa Kwassa from the Congo, Isicathamiya, and Maskandi from South Africa, along with the call-and-response tradition that is deeply embedded in African music and already present in much of the original version. We carefully adapted the iconic guitar solos to reflect the natural swing and pulse of African music."

"This version is a homage to the original," says Schmitt. "It is a heartfelt tribute. I asked myself: what might Bohemian Rhapsody have sounded like if Freddie Mercury's musical journey never left the continent of his birth?"

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YOUTUBE LINK: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gbljPQbxtTQ>

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About Ndlovu Youth Choir

Founded in 2009 in rural Limpopo, South Africa, the Ndlovu Youth Choir transforms lives through world-class music education and performance. What began as an after-school program has grown into a global phenomenon, with five studio albums, sell-out international tours, collaborations with leading artists, and a standout appearance in the America's Got Talent finals. The choir combines artistic brilliance with deep social impact, giving young talent from a small rural community a powerful voice on the world stage.

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