

# Stanley Sibande: The SA-based, Zambian-born guitar hero

 By [Martin Myers](#)

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Stanley Sibande is a South African-based, Zambian-born, solo, acoustic singer-songwriter.



He began his journey as a musician in his formative years singing along to popular music with his siblings in the living room of his childhood home as a pass-time. Joining his first band while taking a gap year in 2013, he picked up guitar and soon after that, started writing his own compositions, which are heavily influenced by the likes of Hozier, SYML, Bastille, Linkin Park and Cinematic Orchestra.

His composition style is an amalgamation of the melancholic soundscapes of indie and rock coupled with the simplistic, yet catchy melodic compositions of modern alternative pop, serving as a backdrop for a narrative lyricism style that usually touches on the darker elements of the human condition and his journey through that landscape.

His performance style is homage to the early 2000s post grunge/hard rock scene that combines loud, raspy and melodic vocals with a big rhythm-driven acoustic guitar sound.

He released his new single "Falling Off The Edge", last week - which is now available on all digital platforms.

I caught up with Sibande last week.

■ ***The new decade means:***

The fulfillment of my plans for world domination

■ ***Fame is about:***

Being charismatic and convincing a large group of people that you're worth their attention and time. A pretty difficult feat in my opinion.

■ ***Retirement will happen when:***

Hopefully never. It's awfully ambitious to say never but I like to think of myself as an awfully ambitious guy.

■ ***I don't do:***

Trends; be it fashion, music, social media, I'm almost always late to the party.

■ ***What does music mean to you?***

To me, music means unfiltered self-expression, escapism and the freedom to truly be yourself. The comfort of knowing you can literally be anything or anyone without fear or inhibitions.

■ ***What is the most enjoyable aspect of your work?***

Sitting alone in a room with a notepad and a guitar. Cliché as it may sound, when I sit down and the song starts pouring out of me; it gives me the most insurmountable feeling of peace and completion.

■ ***Any funny moments on stage:***

On my birthday in 2019, I went to an open mic a friend of mine curates and they bought me so much tequila. I couldn't remember how to play guitar when I got on stage. I also forgot the words to the song I was singing and looped the chorus backs like five times. Fun times.

■ ***Your heroes:***

Dave Grohl because he was a huge part of pioneering to amazing eras in the genre of rock music and Caleb Shomo of Beartooth because he's able to consistently write, record and produce amazing records for Beartooth all on his own while dealing with some dire mental health issues.

▣ ***Which living person do you admire most and why?***

Jared Leto. To me, he's the ideal representation of the modern Renaissance man from his acting performances to his directing and I need not mention his work as a musician.

▣ ***What is your most treasured possession?***

My guitar. A friend of mine inherited it from his dad who bought it in the '70s and with his dad's permission, he gifted it to me when I got robbed and lost my guitar.

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

I'm a simple man. Give me a Striped Horse pilsner and I'll be happy.

▣ ***Dream gig to do:***

Reading and Leeds. I daydream a lot and every one of my grandiose daydreams ends with me standing on the main stage at Reading and Leeds in front of a sea of people holding up lighters and singing one of my songs back to me.

▣ ***What makes you stand out?***

I'm not sure but if I had to guess, I'd say being a Black man born and raised in Zambia doing the 'western sounding' music I do makes a lot of people do a double take. I've seen it so many times at this point but it never gets old.

▣ ***Nicknames?***

My friends used to call me 'leather pants' because I was the only friend in the group that listened to rock/metal, played guitar and wanted to be a musician.

▣ ***If you were not a musician, what would you do?***

Something to do with cinematography and/or photography. I've been a hobbyist photographer for some years now and cinema equally peaks my interest so I'd probably venture into that.

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

Unrelenting, individualistic, introverted, observant, guarded.

▣ ***Five favourite SA albums of all time?***

Seether - *Fragile*

Matthew Mole - *The Home We Built*

Prime Circle - *Jekyll and Hyde*

Hatchetman - *Finding Sanity*

Bongeziwe Mabandla - *iimini*

▣ ***Greatest movie ever made:***

This is a very subjective topic but, personally, I'd say *Pulp Fiction*. The way every character's story and arc intertwines between seemingly unrelated chapters is a really difficult feat to accomplish and (Quentin) Tarantino is a master at it.

■ **What song changed your life?**

Linkin Park - "A place for my head"

■ **Who do you love?**

No one comes to mind. Weird, I know.

■ **What is your favourite word?**

Awe, pronounced (aa-way)- could mean anything from hey to cool to yes. It's an expressive word ha-ha.

■ **Favourite fashion garment:**

A fitted long woolen trench coat. Like the one Neo wore in *The Matrix*.

“ That trench coat Neo wore in the matrix bruh! Legendary 💎💎 [pic.twitter.com/56Uh2OOxAx](https://pic.twitter.com/56Uh2OOxAx)— Not Erick tha Architect (@SaleemIOthman) [August 28, 2017](#) ”

■ **Give us some real proper slang and what it means:**

Awe, pronounced (aa-way)- could mean anything from hey to cool to yes. It's an expressive word ha-ha.

■ **Top of your bucket list:**

Travelling the world with my music and experiencing as many different cultures as possible.

■ **Your greatest achievement:**

Leaving my country with nothing but a guitar and a half-baked plan to become a rock star and actually making it this far without dying. I'm still working on the rock star part but needless to say, I'm pretty impressed with myself so far.

■ **What do you complain about most often?**

The unnecessary polarisation, division and 'us vs them' mentality amongst people in the world right now.

■ **What is your fear?**

Failure. Almost everyone around me told me I'd amount to nothing if I became a musician and the possibility of that happening haunts me quite a bit.

■ **Happiness is:**

Watching the sunset from the highest point you can find, followed by a late night drive with '80s psychedelic pop playing in the car.

■ **On stage, I tend to:**

Completely forget the set list I put together and wing it for most of the performance.

■ **The best life lesson you have been taught:**

Do it yourself. Waiting and/or hoping someone does it for you usually results in disappointment and frustration.

▣ ***Do you get worked up whilst watching a sports game on TV?***

I actually don't watch any sports at all. I tried but I just couldn't get into it. The hype flies straight over my head every time.

▣ ***Where would you like to be right now?***

On a stage at a festival taking a sip of my beer, about to start my next song.

▣ ***Do you do charity work and, if you do, what do you do?***

I don't but I'd love to take it up if I found the right charity.

▣ ***Wishes and dreams:***

I want to become a self reliant artist because it's gonna give me more leeway to flesh out some of the more unconventional ideas I want to try out as a creative.

Stay tuned to Sibande on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

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Co-owner at Triple M Entertainment, founder Music Exchange, manager Sipho Htstix Mabuse

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