

Jozia lets her fantasy rise like a water creature

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WHEN MUSICIAN Jozia was a young girl she used to hear tales of mamokebe – the water creature that would leave turmoil behind if provoked.

In the stories she was told while visiting relatives in Kot-siri, in the Sekhukhune area, the mermaid caused storms and made people disappear.

For her debut album, *Mamokebe*, Jozia drew on the story.

The haunting song about the mermaid is accompanied by an eerie music video in which Jozia portrays herself as the sea creature.

"I grew up listening to my grandmother talk about a hill that was shaped like a triangle. There were stories that nobody was allowed to go up there and that whoever would attempt to go would make mamokebe angry. Mamokebe will then retaliate with rainy storms and thunder. I grew up being fascinated by it," Jozia said.

Growing up as an outcast and regularly being teased and bullied, she identified with mamokebe.

"I grew up being the different one in high school. I was the weird one who did not fit in. I was bullied for my different looks. I have always been interested in things that other children weren't interested in," Jozia said.

The singer, who hails from



MORE RELAXED: Musician Jozia is back home and trying to grow her music locally.

PICTURES: BHEKIKHAYA MABASO/AFRICAN NEWS AGENCY (ANA)

Ekurhuleni, said she has always wanted to make music, even from an early age. She started singing in church and in 2014 enrolled at a music school.

However, she dropped out because she hated that she was not given the freedom to explore her art as she wanted.

"I wanted to learn to read, write and sing the music I wanted. It (music school) was too restrictive because they wanted me to sing songs I didn't like and not those that suited my range."

On her fascination with mamokebe, Jozia said: "In Greek mythology mamokebe

is medusa. Medusa are these beautiful half-naked girls chilling on the rocks and they would sing for the sailors and attract them with their music.

"Like medusa, if you look at mamokebe you turn into a stone. The message behind the song was that I want to attract people through my music."

The music video for *Mamokebe* was shot in California, Utah and Arizona in the US, as well as Mexico. Jozia said when she writes a song, she already sees the music video in her head.

"When I was writing the song, I could already see places I would shoot it at. I knew I

wanted to be a siren. I also wanted to use nature to make rhythm and sound. When I write a song, there is already a movie playing in my head," she said.

Jozia said she was heavily involved in all stages of her music production and has even learnt to edit videos so that the



final version could be what she envisions when she writes music. But this, she admits, has sometimes affected her badly.

For the song *Dlozilame*, Jozia shot the video in a cemetery.

"My aunt had died and I was dedicating the song to her. The location had to be a cemetery

even though it was scary afterwards as I was experiencing nightmares for a few months.

"I like people like Björk, FKA Twigs and David Bowie and they always have an edge in their videos. Sometimes it's not that you want to be dodgy or scary, it's just being an artist. Art is all about taking risks," Jozia said.

Born Rose Lukhele, 25, Jozia has performed at the Openair Literatur Festival in Zurich and other parts of Eur-

ope. From November 2017 to January 2018, Jozia was on tour with the art project *No Show Museum* across Central America, where she was invited to perform some exciting shows in Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica, Columbia and twice in New York.

Now she is back home and trying to grow her music

locally and record her second album.

"My idea now is to work with different people. I am going to work with different DJs for

my next album and try out different genres.

"I am more relaxed and I wanted my first album to be perfect. Now I want to have fun. My first album was too much work and too much pressure. Now I want something with a beat and something relaxed," she said.

The haunting song is accompanied by an eerie video