



Tandile Mandela, former president Nelson Mandela's grand niece, plays the traditional umrhumba (mouth bow)

|| PHOTO:  
YAZEED  
KAMALDIEN

## Tata's fine, just forgetful

Nelson Mandela is in good health but often forgets even his own children.

His musician "granddaughter" Tandile Mandela confirmed this in an interview before the opening of a Cape Town music show in which she is taking part.

Tandile's dead grandmother, Baliwe Mandela, was Madiba's younger sister and worked as a nurse at the Nelson Mandela Academic Hospital near Qunu village in Eastern Cape.

Tandile said Mandela was "100% healthy" in Qunu, where he was born.

"He's very old. Sometimes his mind is like a three-year-old baby. Even if you go to him you have to introduce yourself because he doesn't even recognise his own children," said Tandile.

She often prayed for "more years" for the man she considers her grandfather.

"He's my mother's uncle. He's like a grandfather to me. Madiba's three sisters passed away. It's only him to reach this age. It is a miracle because he spent 27 years in jail," she said.

Tandile lives in

Paarl, Western Cape, where she teaches music.

She started her music career at the Durban University of Technology, where she obtained a diploma in jazz.

She said Madiba persuaded her to go to the University of Cape Town afterwards to do an honours degree, which she did.

While lecturing indigenous music at the University of Fort Hare, she established the Tandile Mandela Traditional Orchestra, which performs at festivals and educational workshops.

Tandile plans to visit Madiba in December when her family gathers in Qunu.

"We are a close family. My mother grew up in Madiba's house in Joburg before he went to jail.

"He was still with Winnie (Madikizela-Mandela) then. My mother grew up with Zindzi and Zanele (Mandela, Winnie and Madiba's daughters)," she said.

The Tandile Mandela Traditional Orchestra is currently performing for a Jazz art dance company show called Waiting for Rain in Cape Town until Thursday.

– Yazeed Kamaldien