

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

**THE PHILOSOPHICAL, BEHAVIOURAL AND ACADEMIC
MERIT OF UMASKANDI MUSIC**

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UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

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MERIT OF UMASKANDI MUSIC**

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BY

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**EXCEPT WHERE SPECIFICALLY INDICATED TO THE CONTRARY,
THIS THESIS IS ENTIRELY MY OWN.**

ELLIOT SAGILA PEWA

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I could not have accomplished this task on entirely my own. A number of people assisted me along the way to completion. I am grateful to all of them.

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I thank all the members of my family for affording me the opportunity to devote most of my time to my studies.

UBABA NOMAMA BENGENZELA OKUHLE NGOKUNGITHUMELA ESIKOLENI.

DEDICATION

FOR MY UNCLE AND TEACHER: BENJAMIN NGIBA

**AND MY PARENTS: PATTY BIZANI (MANGIBA) PEWA and
LEVI SICATHULO PEWA.**

ABSTRACT

This document on *umaskandi* is about a vocal musical style that was created and nurtured by the Zulu people. Externally and, at a distance, the style may not appear to be artistically captivating, praiseworthy, and linguistically significant. It is but only on closer scrutiny that the aesthetic worth of the music can be realized. Even then, without a considerable research into a sizeable amount of the people's arts in relation to their life activities, a casual listener may not identify any worthiness in the practice of *umaskandi* music. This is generally the case with all the music of Africa. The music is contained in the life activities of the people. Having discovered the entertaining element in the music, a serious listener will still be faced with the greater challenges of fathoming the organization of sound, the significance of the libretto and the physical execution, in relation to the lifestyles of the performers. The sound of the music, the observed rhythmic activity of the performers, and the language of the libretto and its elocution are only the surface of the activity. There is still, but, more signification in the unsaid source of the music.

The reason for the neglect of this music style by Western cultures and by some modern local indigenous Africans, was not a mere oversight, but a result of stigmatization of all African arts by Europeans, whose intention was to dominate the whole of Africa. They would not succeed in managing

the people dictatorially without destroying the latter's culture. For some time, therefore, because of such pressures and the demands of the culture of cities, and missionary education, the Westerners were able to 'convert' some Africans against their own (African) culture. Such attempts to 'Europeanize' Africans took place wherever there were European settlers on African soil. But, because of the breadth of the continent, they could not cover the whole surface of the country. Even amongst those that were reached, like the Zulus, there were always people who were not willing to abandon their indigenous heritage. Many were unbending and insisted on maintaining their traditional arts and cultures. It was from such a cultural attitude and disposition that *umaskandi* idiom was born.

The coming in of democratic rule in South Africa has, however, restored the dignity of every human culture in the country. Therefore, all nationalities are free to practise their various cultures with firmness and self-assurance. This attitude lent more confidence to those that performed *umaskandi* music.

It took some time before 'sophisticated' Africans could appreciate the sound and movement in performance of *umaskandi* performance style. The other nationalities took a little longer. Up to this day, those that have not been orientated in the language of the performers have not grasped the essence in *umaskandi* music, because of the social contextual nature of the music. Should a form of prejudice against indigenous African languages be sustained, ignorance about the life and thought patterns of Africans shall grow. This will be a drawback for the South African

people as a whole. This phenomenon is worthy of mention because the propagation of isiZulu is getting threatened in many ways. First: There is a big population of Zulu and non-Zulu learners that do not receive tuition of their vernacular because some school managers are negative towards African languages. Secondly: *Umaskandi* musicians, who are the custodians of isiZulu language and culture, and other Zulu artistes, shall never be comprehended if the language is ignored. So, for those unfortunate learners who do not have isiZulu in their curriculum, the doors are closed on both sides. Since they are not given tuition in the classroom, they are most likely to develop a negative attitude towards the language, which would be a great disaster. In their schooling career, they will also miss the further 'education through music' that is provided by Zulu music practitioners at large. *Umaskandi* musicians, who are speakers of isiZulu language, are in their own way, keepers and propagators of isiZulu culture. Their instruments are tuned in isiZulu style, which is their own instrumental creation based on their singing style. Their libretto is in isiZulu. They are historians of isiZulu life and its relevant culture of yesteryear. This will be missed.

Umaskandi concept, which embraces the isiZulu instrumental tuning, isiZulu manner of dancing, isiZulu vocal harmony and isiZulu elocution of *izibongo* (praise poetry), originated in the indigenous lives of the Zulu people. These people were so solid in their belief and practice that they clang tenaciously onto their culture even when they were exposed to a conglomeration of foreign cultures in the horrible

mining environment. *Umaskandi* concept, therefore, had an effect on the people's behaviour.

When the African indigenous people came across the new musical instrumentation at their disposal, they adapted the latter and used them to become an extension of their vocal styles.

When conditions in the mines were depressing, degrading and debasing, they painfully sang of the good life that they had left behind in their indigenous homes. Through this *umaskandi* style, they have, therefore, been able to relate a people's history.

The final question in the last chapter is whether *umaskandi* concept can be a method of education in the performance of instruments just as tonic solfa is a method of vocal music. The question can be extended further to inquire whether *umaskandi* concept can be a method of moral and cultural determination and perseverance as it has been the case with Zulu musicians.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 UMASKANDI MUSIC - EXPLICATION AND TITLE

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This document could have also acceptably been entitled "The Appraisal and Preservation of a Zulu Musical Performance Culture" because, in actual fact, that is what the document is about. It looks into the nature, origin, progress and depth of field of *umaskandi* music style and its accompanying performance arts, having been influenced by the political, economic and social climates of Southern Africa. While the study is a research into the resilience of Zulu traditional musical practice and education, as it has come from the past and also as it takes place today, the research is also meant to reveal the philosophical and behavioural derivation of the whole concept. This means that the research has, to a certain extent, also looked into the underlying non-music social environment and behaviour of the performers of the musical style.

While *Umaskandi* style was born out of the mingling of Zulu musicality with foreign instrumentation, its continued performance has not only promoted and developed the musical style, but has also sustained the other performing arts that are performed alongside the music. Besides the varied traditional dance styles that are aligned to music and which have been modified to suit the stage performance, there is also the composition and the oration of *izibongo* (praise poetry). The eloquence in the formulation of these and the illustriousness in their articulation lend the

language some moments of brilliance. On the other hand, the dance, as a form of communication in the performance of this musical style, is greatly appreciated by the listeners. More importantly, the overall performance style has enhanced and made popular the use and application of the general aesthetics of the isiZulu language. IsiZulu is the main language of the performers of this style.

Another option for the title of this document could also have been "The Indigenization of guitar music in South Africa". This is true, mainly because although the guitar is originally a foreign instrument to the Zulu people, who are the real promoters of *umaskandi* style, both the listeners and the performers nowadays perceive the guitar as a local instrument. They have no idea that it was originally an importation (Interview - Welcome Nzimande: 15<sup>th</sup> June 2002).

Indeed, so much music has been produced by these musicians on the guitar that it would be hard to believe that the guitar is not their indigenous instrument<sup>1</sup>. This is partly because *umaskandi* practitioners have developed their own local method of manipulating the instrument. This practice, therefore, automatically makes the instrument musically theirs.

The above occurrence where Africans have adopted a musical creation and made it theirs is not phenomenal to *umaskandi* style only, but there are several other examples where Africans have adopted and made theirs a foreign musical

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<sup>1</sup> The origin of the guitar shall be discussed later - in chapter four.

practice to the extent that the practice gets homogenized into the group's culture. For instance, when the African worshippers of the Methodist Church sing what they refer to as *Izindumiso* (Songs of Praise)<sup>2</sup>, it is then that they feel they are really involved in the process of worshipping and in the adoration of Christianity. Paradoxically, the White worshippers, who should be enjoying the tune when attending services together with Africans, are not keen on singing the said *Izindumiso*, in spite of the tune having been adopted from Western music compositions (Interview - Mbanjwa: 19<sup>th</sup> June 2004).

Another example of such an adoption of a foreign musical style by Africans from Western music is the use of the tonic-solfa notation in the practice of singing. Some people, both African and non-African, who have not read about music, believe that this method of reading music is of African orientation. There are even some European people who, simply because of prejudice, tend to look down upon this method of vocal singing because they think that it is owned by Africans (Interview - Sithole: 19<sup>th</sup> June 2004).

Although *Umaskandi* musicians have kept alive and brought above board an African tradition for which a provision to include it in the school curriculum was not made, the name "*umaskandi*" is not in the vocabulary of the educated Africans. This idea was well expressed by Michael Mvelase<sup>3</sup> when he said:

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<sup>2</sup> The tune is a Double Chant in Eb, composed by the Earl of Mornington. It was not necessarily and originally meant for the Methodist Church, and not even to mention African congregations.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Mvelase was the founder and leader of the Rhythm Aces dance band, that provided ballroom and jive music for the African middle class in the late 1950's to the late 1980's.

Some educated Africans look upon *umaskandi* musicality as a wisdom of the ignorant, and as if this style should please only the unlearned of the African society. All that the African teachers are thinking of are choral music competitions involving a Western repertoire (Interview - Michael Mvelase: 16<sup>TH</sup> June 2001)

Indeed, since the inception of the school system in South Africa, South African musical styles were deliberately left out of the curriculum (Jones, 1973:75 - 77). It is only now that efforts to establish music teaching are being done.

## 1.2 THE IDIOM - UMASKANDI

Generally, the name *umaskandi* refers to a musician, who is an instrument player. According to David Coplan, the word *maskandi* was derived from the Afrikaans word *musikant*, which means musician (Coplan, 1985:267). The instruments that are usually used by the *umaskandi* musicians are the guitar, the concertina, the piano-accordion, the piano, and the violin. In the case of an accompanying band, which is the latest trend that has now been established, the players use similar instruments, that is, instruments that can be tuned in *umaskandi* version<sup>4</sup>. There is also the addition of a bass-guitar and of any size and variety of percussion instruments that can be available.

But, according to the practitioners of *umaskandi* style, the word does not refer to any ordinary instrument player. For them, they insist that *umaskandi* is an instrument player who performs music according to some stipulated method of execution and music organization. These practitioners

stipulate that the strings or notes of *umaskandi* musician's instrument should be tuned or set differently from the ordinary Western order in which they are found. In other words, *umaskandi* instruments have to be tempered<sup>5</sup> with into a new and different order of intervals. This makes it convenient for the *umaskandi* musicians to perform in their own method. The insiders of the style are clear about their style and they do not want to compromise it, in any way. Phumlani Mdlalose, also known as "Phithiza", a musician who performs in this style, from KwaDlangezwa<sup>6</sup>, was unbending in his description of *umaskandi* practitioner:

No matter how good a Zulu musician may be, we do not refer to him as *umaskandi* if he does not play according to our tuning. The *umaskandi* players are those musicians that use the *umaskandi* tuning in their performance (Interview - Phumlani Mdlalose: 31<sup>st</sup> May 2002).

Although the majority of Zulu speakers from KwaZulu-natal refer to this type of music as *umaskandi*, there are some people from Gauteng who occasionally refer to it as *umaskanda*. Both words refer to one and the same thing. David Coplan, who has a good number of publications on African music, refers to this music as a *maskandi* style. For the purposes of this document the writer has stuck to the name *umaskandi*, the name that is used by the insiders of the style. For them, the word *umaskandi* refers to both the musical style and the practitioner of the style.

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<sup>4</sup> The *maskandi* version of tuning is discussed in Chapter Six (6.6.1.2) of this document.

<sup>5</sup> Pitch organization in *maskandi* music shall be discussed in Chapter Six (6.5.1.4).

<sup>6</sup> KwaDlangezwa is a district around the town of Empangeni on the Northern Coastal area of KwaZulu-Natal.

To the educated Zulu people, the notion of *umaskandi* concept has always been viewed with some negativity, as if to be a musician is to perform music only in the Western approach. It indeed took some time before these musicians could be recognized as musicians in their own right.

The earlier *umaskandi* guitarists were associated with shebeens. Otherwise, they could be seen or heard vamping their instruments and passing along, without any regard for the reactions of the listeners. They would simply enjoy themselves (Interview - Alfred Nokwe: 15<sup>th</sup> July 2004).

The practitioners of the style come from the various parts of KwaZulu-Natal. While some of these musicians have become very prominent, the examining of a wider range of regional musical nuances was a necessary dimension for the writer of this document, so as to access the different aspects of the contextual nature of the music style.

### 1.2.1 AFRICAN TRADITIONAL MUSIC:

*Umaskandi* music is African traditional music practice. Care should be taken not to fall into the prejudice of some western scholars who degrade African "traditional" music as simplistic and as a music whose role is on the periphery of western music. They (the scholars) have looked at the repetitive nature and the call and response texture of the music as a lack of musicality and an absence of structure and design. The reason for this is that they look at the music of Africa with western eyes and not from the insiders' point of view.

On the other hand, what he sees as artistic to his European music may sound artificial to the African. To the African, western music may sound meaningless:

....Western music may be purposeless, gibberish and inconsequent because it is not culture-bound, and does not enshrine African values and customs, and does not represent African philosophical thoughts about music (Ndlovu 1996: 26).

Indeed many westerners do look at readings about traditional and folk cultures but without delving into the etymological meanings of the words. Secondly, they come into conclusions about African traditions without examining the emic viewpoints of people concerned.

Thirdly, they have an idea that African music is inferior to western music because it is referred to as traditional and folk, and also because it is transmitted orally. Blacking (1976) says that all music is folk music. This is true, because all music, no matter how much recreated it may have been, originates from the simple people's ideas about their musicality. Nettl (1973) says that in some languages the words folk and national are the same. This is true because the adjective folk simply means "of the people". Ndlovu says:

Therefore, traditional music is not inferior to classical music simply because it is passed on orally. Distinctions between oral transmission and literary culture have nothing to do with the simplicity or complexity of music. All societies have simple and complex songs (Ndlovu - 1996:27).

It should be known that outsiders may not be articulate in the description of any musical style to which they have not been orientated, for they do not know the origin of the said foreign behaviour. For instance, some may take the singing of *izibongo* in the *umaskandi* tradition only as an opportunity for the main musician to introduce himself. An outsider will not know the aesthetics behind self-praise in relating the success of having made a kill in warfare, which is euphemistically known as *ukuhlabana*<sup>7</sup>, which is a pride to announce, whether the battle was won or lost. Zulu musicians have maintained the traditional contesting spirit and have now transferred it to music performance in *maskandi* music, *isicathamiya*, *indlamu* dance, wedding choirs and, among the schooled population, to school choral music competitions. Clegg explains this in his expression:

So in Natal<sup>8</sup> to this day you don't have organized stick fighting after a marriage. You have team dancing. People who come from different districts at a wedding come with their dances. Armed with sticks etc., but they just fight their dance instead of fighting (Clegg - 1983:10).

So, whether the music is folk or traditional, it is central to the Africans. What should be understood is that a people's music relates to the people's culture. People will, therefore, explain music in their own terms, according to what they practice as music. Therefore, while Africans may not even bother to understand that there is an innovation that is referred to as sonata form, Western musicians have, for many years, been castigating African music as barbaric (Nettl - 1956: 1 - 10).

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<sup>7</sup> To kill an opponent with a spear in warfare, in the culture of war of the Zulu people.

### 1.2.2 AFRICAN INDIGENOUS MUSIC

While *umaskandi* music is African and traditional in character, it should be stated at the onset that the music is, in essence, an indigenous practice of music making. The seat of the music is the voice. The instruments constitute an accompaniment. It is on the basis of the vocal melody that the music is viewed as indigenous. The term "indigenous music" refers to the music of the original and authentic people of this country, South Africa. For the term "indigenous", amongst other definitions, the United Nations uses the following wording to define it:

Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity; with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them (Agakhan S. and bin Talal - 1977:8).

So is the music of the Zulu people of the province of KwaZulu-Natal. It existed before the advent of the colonization of the country by the Westerners. A number of later Zulu urban musical styles in South Africa were based on the indigenous musical practice of the people.

### 1.2.3 THE QUESTION OF LANGUAGE

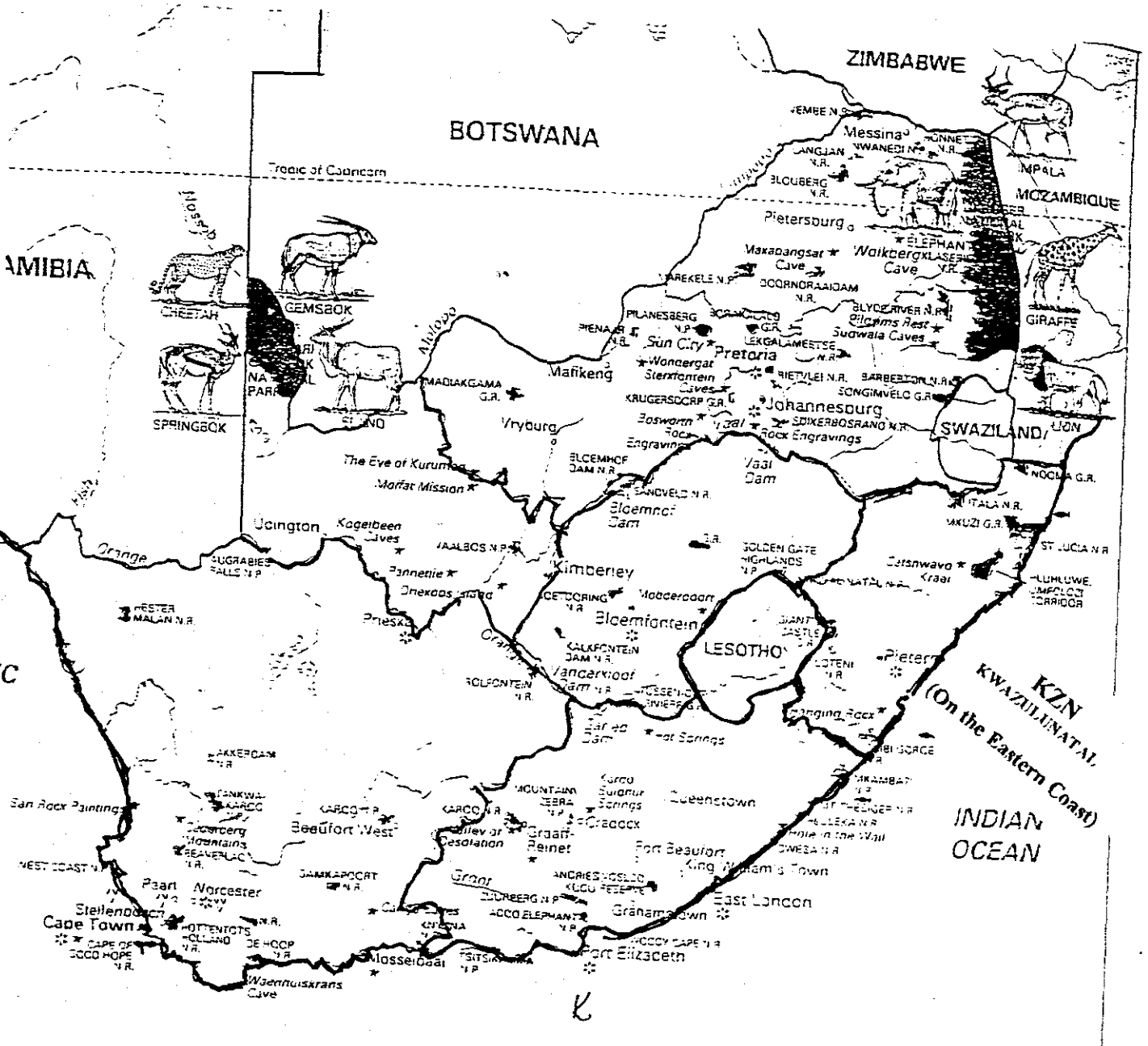
The practitioners of *umaskandi* are mainly Zulu speaking. The traditional composite styles that are in *umaskandi* performance, like the poetry, are in isiZulu styles.

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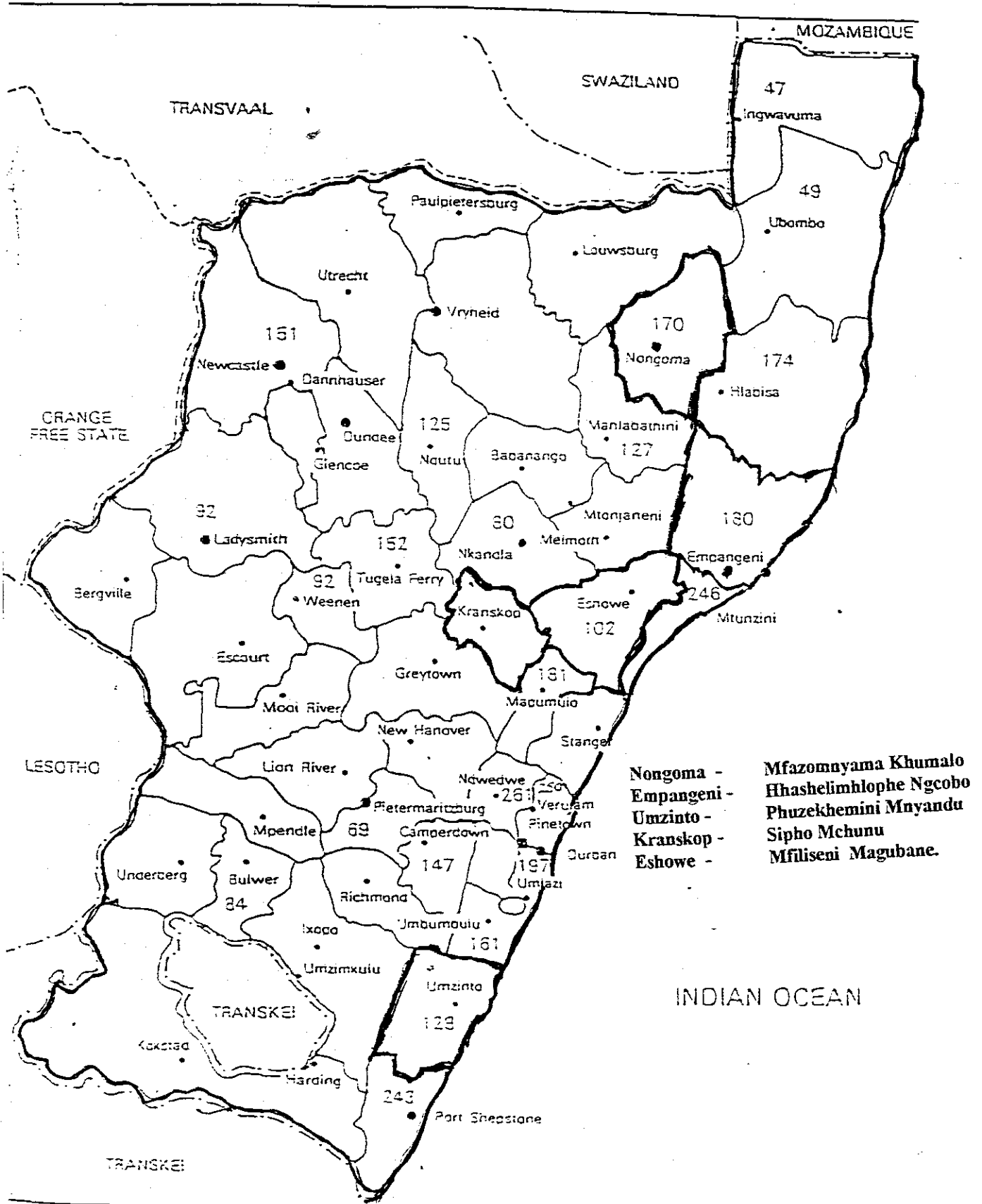
<sup>8</sup> This refers to KwaZulu-Natal province.

Another elaborate factor that confirms the originality displayed by the musicians is the sequence of their pitch setting in those instruments in which they have to re-arrange the order of the pitch of the open strings or notes. This is referred to as *isiZulu*, because they believe that it is their own creation. This research has, therefore, focussed on the province of KwaZulu-Natal on the South Eastern Coast of South Africa, which is the main abode of the Zulu people.

**MAP OF SOUTH - AFRICA**



**SHOWING THE PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL ON THE SOUTH - EASTERN PART OF THE CONTINENT.**



Indeed, most of the early players of *umaskandi* that visited the Zulu service of the South African Broadcasting Corporation to record their music were Zulu speakers. Welcome Nzimande, who was in charge of the recordings, confirmed this fact, and even mentioned that:

...they all recited the accompanying *izibongo* (praise poetry) in the proper isiZulu language and language tonology. I have not heard or seen a single non-Zulu instrumentalist doing praise-singing in the Zulu Service recording section of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (Interview - Welcome Nzimande: 15<sup>th</sup> June 2002).

The melodies and other sound sequences that are heard from the instrument relate to the vocal sound of isiZulu vocal tone of sound, the language being very tonal. In isiZulu indigenous music, whether the speech tone falls or rises, the singing tone will imitate it. In other words, prosody in singing follows the prosody in speech. This feature is well observable in the singing of *amahubo*. Rose-marry Joseph<sup>9</sup> confirms this unity by saying that:

Music and dance are inextricably linked in Zulu culture (Joseph - 1983:60).

The above tells us that the even dance gestures identify the sound of the music, which further identifies with the sound of speech. For instance, when Zulus perform a dance, they can identify it as being *IsiZulu*, *IsiBhaca*, *uMzansi* or *isishameni*, which are varieties of isiZulu dance. Although all these people may all belong to KwaZulu-Natal, they have identifying traits that can be well read by all of them.

This aesthetic correlation of speech, music and dance, which is effectively practised by Zulu indigenous musicians, has lately become a subject of focus for many scholars of traditional music. Nettl has commented about this feature:

*Correlating analogous features.* A universal problem in the relationship between language and music is that of correlating certain analogous features in these two forms of communication. Pitch, stress, and length are found in both music and language and are significant in many languages. The student of this problem tries to discover whether the syllables spoken on a high pitch by a certain linguistic group are also sung high when they occur in a song text, whether vowels stressed or sustained in speech are also sung that way, etc. .... The facts as usual vary from tribe to tribe. ...It is impossible now to say that in any particular culture the music is definitely subordinate to the language or vice versa (Nettl - 1956:24-25).

The above point is very pertinent in the study of Zulu music. First, it should be noted that the nature of the tone, that is, tonology and prosody in the speech of isiZulu language are the aspect that defy the annotation of Zulu music in Western notation. No notation has been able to contain both the pitch and the tonal variations of Zulu music. Secondly, as mentioned above, the Zulu vocal singer employs his singing tone (prosody) very closely to his speech tone. Where the tone rises in speech, it also tends to rise in the singing. This is because of the parallel harmonies (fourths and fifths) that the Zulus use in their singing. This practice is different from the Western mode of harmonization, where the parts have, very frequently to

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<sup>9</sup> Rose-Mary Joseph is a researcher on Zulu music. She was born in South Africa and now works at the School for Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London.

avoid consecutive movement. This means that even when the main melody has been loyal to the speech tone, the harmonizing melodies have got to break the conformity.

*Umaskandi* musicians adhere to this principle in vocal song. They also do try to reproduce the human singing voice from their instruments, especially the guitar, by sliding the stopping fingers up or down the fingerboard.

Although the emphasis in this document is on Zulu music, it should also be noted that music among Africans is very contagious. This means that such musical features as have been discussed above might not be contained within one racial group indefinitely. We now do have performers of *umaskandi* from other corners of South Africa, like the Sothos<sup>10</sup> and the Vendas. The ultimate sound that they produce is just like that which is produced by the Zulu practitioners. This is because of the velocity of physical movement and the speedy communication systems of the modern age.

#### 1.2.4 INSTRUMENTATION

Firstly, as mentioned above, the word, '*umaskandi*' refers to the performance style that involves the playing of an instrument, the most popular being the guitar. That the instrumentation is not an original African instrument in no way intimidates either the performers or the listeners, who are mainly African. What is phenomenal about the

instrumentation in this genre is that, although musical instruments are an importation to Africa, Africans, on the other hand, imposed their method of manipulating them<sup>11</sup>.

The foreign instruments that are involved in *umaskandi* music did not appeal only to South African Zulu musicians. While some Africans got interested and got an opportunity of playing in the Western style, others developed their own styles and methods of manipulation. There are also others who got influenced by later various South African styles, like Oliver Mtukudzi, the Zimbabwean guitarist, who got hooked to the South African *Mbhaqanga* style (<mailto:metcalfe@mweb.co.za>).

The idea that a music style relates to the people's cultures, cited from Joseph (1983:60) above, may not be confined to Zulus, since this phenomenon can be seen in other African groups. Just as the guitar style of the Zulus relates to Zulu music, Low (1982:18-19), shows us that although the finger-style used by all the Africans might have been similar, the different African race groups were indeed still musically influenced by their indigenous musical styles. These are some of the musicians in whose performance these differences were identified:

(a) FUNDI KONDE of Kenya:

Fundi Konde's very rhythmical playing, which gave his European-sounding songs a slightly 'Latin' tinge, betrayed his African background (Low 1982:18).

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<sup>10</sup> Although Vusi Mahlasela performs Zulu music, he comes from the Sotho National group.

<sup>11</sup> The real maskandi element shall be discussed in later chapters.

## (b) DAUDI KAPAKA and JIM LASCO MUGODO of Kenya:

Traditional music in Kenya influenced guitar music at a number of levels. The singing of Silas Muiruri and Mtonga Wanganangu, two Kikuyu musicians, closely reflects the traditional modalities of Kikuyu singing: ... one also finds melodic or modal features that are particular to one ethnic group. ...Both Daudi Kabaka and Jim Lasco Mugodo told me that they were influenced by the traditional melodies of Luhya instrumentalists (Low: 19).

The above phenomenon about the music of Africa also explains to us that not only were Zulu language speakers influenced by foreign instruments, but also that there are other groups that went through the same experience. Therefore, we should, however, be aware that a great deal of Zulu music may not be any more as authentic as one might imagine.

*UMaskandi* music performance involves instruments of Western origin, like the guitar, the violin, and the piano accordion. These instruments accompany Zulu vocal singing, Zulu dance, and Zulu praise singing. These shall be dealt with in the relevant chapters later on in the document (See Chapter 5.5.1).

A remarkable point about the use of the Zulu language is that the *umaskandi* musicians employ a lot of figurative language in their songs (See Chapter 5.5.4).

Secondly, the name '*umaskandi*' also refers to the person who performs the style. The distinction in the meaning will always be brought up by the context of the communication.

### 1.2.5 THE QUESTION OF GENDER

Initially, among the Zulus, it was men who appeared with western music instruments, obviously because it was men who went out to work in towns and cities and brought home such novelties. It was, therefore, they who first performed such instruments and who have also made a lot of recordings on the instrument. It is for that reason that they have sometimes viewed women guitarists as if the latter were encroaching into a men's world. Phuzekhemisi says:

*Isiginci sishaywa ngamadoda, ngoba yiwo*

A guitar is played by men, because it is they who

*abongelayo. Kayikho imbongi yesifazane.*

sing praises. There is no woman praise singer.

(Interview - Phuzekhemisi: 16<sup>th</sup> July 2004)

When Miss Busi Mayeza, a clerk at the KwaMashu Administration offices fell in love with the guitar and made efforts to learn the instrument, she became a laughing topic among his male counterparts. They eventually called her by the name of the instrument, "isiginci" (Interview - Christopher Ntshingila: 15<sup>th</sup> July 2004).

On the other hand, Tu Nokwe, also of KwaMashu, could not be intimidated by male domination from playing the guitar. She had been advised by a friend, Bheki Mseleku<sup>12</sup>, that playing the guitar would be therapeutic for her in that it would improve her intonation. She had to sing and accompany herself on the instrument. Moreover, Tu's parents were too much involved in the arts not to support

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<sup>12</sup> Mseleku is a jazz piano player who sometimes accompanied Tu Nokwe. His home is at Lamontville in Durban.

their daughter. The father, Alfred<sup>13</sup> and Patty, the mother, have been in the arts, singing and acting, long before the political emancipation of African arts by the democratic Government of 1994 (Interview - Alfred Nokwe: 15<sup>th</sup> July 2004).

That *umaskandi* appears to be an area that is dominated by men is because of that the earlier *umaskandi* musicians that appeared in the streets were males. The latter were the first to carry the new instruments around. They had brought these from cities and industrial areas where they were supplying their labour. It is for this reason that the story of *umaskandi* may not be told without referring to the economic drudgery of South Africans at large and Zulu people in particular. The music was conceived under trying and frustrating conditions. It is not simply a form of entertainment but it is significant for the struggles and spiritual sustenance of the Africans who were working under the worst conditions in the mines. Not only *umaskandi* style, but also the various forms of African music styles have been a pillar of strength to the practitioners during times of strife, since the arrival of expatriates in this country:

Among musicians and other artists and performers, resistance grew and despite (or perhaps owing to) the increasing difficulties, the 1950's was a period of increasing cultural activity. Artists participated in popular passive resistance

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<sup>13</sup> (Interview 15<sup>th</sup> July 2004) Alfred did stage acting as early as 1962 in the Play "Mkhumbane" which was written by Alan Paton. Later on, he played a role in Peter Scott's "Black Nativity" in 1966. Alfred also played percussion in the Durban Corporation Brass Band, as early as 1961. Patty started vocal training as early as 1950 under Laura Davia, who did not charge fees for the service, having been impressed by the quality of Patty's voice. She is still involved in acting today (July 16-30<sup>th</sup> 2004) in Sibonakaliso Ndaba's "Hole in My Heart" at the Playhouse Theatre in Durban.

campaigns. Songs of protest spread from one group to the next, and even managed to be played once or twice on the radio before they were censored (Selimovic - 2002:27).

African men who worked in the mines experienced the worst working conditions and treatment from the capitalistic whites. Two strikes, one in 1920 and another on in 1946, are evidence for the unbearable pressure that was put on the workers (Davenport - 1992: 310). As people who sing about all social life, Zulu musicians had to sing about this. Besides music being an instrument for alleviating pain, to them, music is more than a singing practice. It appears to be an ailment, a malady, a philosophy, a remembrance, a reminiscence and a medium for contemplation and retrospection. Phuzekhemisi says:

*Akuvumi ngilale ngingazange ngizithint'izintambo.*

I cannot fall asleep without having touched the strings. (Interview: 29<sup>th</sup> October 1996).

The feeling that is expressed by Phuzekhemisi, above may not be confined to men only. It was by accident that it was the males who got exposed to the *umaskandi* activity and music instruments like the guitar. The number of Zulu women who are involved in show business is not far below that of men. Tu Nokwe says:

I could have played the piano or the organ. But I was inspired by the sound of the guitar (Interview - Tu Nokwe: 115<sup>th</sup> July 2004)

### 1.2.6 IZIBONGO (PRAISE POETRY)

*izibongo* (praise poetry)<sup>14</sup> has now been fully established as the climax in *umaskandi* performance. As an art, the practice is an exposition of the practitioners' endowment with the ability to memorize extensive amounts of information. This is indeed a scholastic ability. Recitation has been observed among Western scholars, whose source of information is "mainly the book, which, in a way, gives photographic vision of the text. *Umaskandi* practitioners compose their own *izibongo*, and, what is left as a reference for these is the original source, in their heads, which is the imagined social event on which the text is based. Therefore, the event and the information remain written in their minds. Up to today the praise singers of Zulu monarchs and princes have maintained the practice of memorization.

Thus to Africans in general, and to Zulus, in particular, *izibongo*<sup>15</sup> (praise poetry) is a living tradition. That IsiZulu poetry was originally not written down does not weaken the power of the spoken word. In fact, the power of the spoken word was highly respected among the Zulu people. That was why among the young girls, the elder girl, known as the *iqhikiza* (chaperone), would, among other things, guide the younger girls in matters of debate between them and their suitors. The reason was that, if a girl inadvertently agreed to a boy's plea, she would be taken to have agreed to a proposal. Her spoken word would have

<sup>14</sup> See also Chapter 1.3.6 for a further explication of *izibongo*.

<sup>15</sup> See: the Definition of Terms in Chapter One.,

committed her to act accordingly (Interview - Mpumelelo Mbatha: 14<sup>th</sup> July 2004). Similarly, there is a saying that:

*Izwi leSilo kaliweli phansi.*

The voice of the King may not fall on the ground.

This expression is derived from the fact that the instruction of the monarch, in the unfeigned days of real monarchy, would have to be carried out as spelt out by the speaker. Any deviation from such, meant punishment (Interview - Vusabantu Ngema: 19<sup>th</sup> January 2005).

The praise singer was and is still a respected historian, since his pronouncements are based on what actually did take place. No matter how embarrassing and disconcerting the information might have been to the culprit, the poet had licence to say it.

The power of praise poetry is in the spoken voice. This is a different form of scholarship, which has to be understood within its own terms. It is the poetical effectiveness of *izibongo* that gives *umaskandi* style a scholarly recognition. Abram Nkabinde, a scholar of Isizulu literature, confirms this linguistic practice:

For this type of poetry to be effective, it has to be spoken and not read (Nkabinde 1976:7).

Delivering *izibongo* simply by elocution, that is, without reading them, lends a veracious and a guileless truth-speaking incident to the orator.

Culturally, the overall syncreticism of *umaskandi* genre has significance as a pattern of isiZulu way of life. The culmination of *umaskandi* performance by the singing of *izibongo* is indeed the consummation of Zuluness<sup>16</sup>. If a Zulu has achieved anything, he is usually heard singing his own praises, in either the first or the third person, mentioning his clan name, and concluding with the words:

.... *Ngadla; mina ka Sibanibani, kaSibanibani, kaSibanibani....*

I have eaten; I of so and so, of so and so,  
of so and so...

(recounting his ancestry) (Nyembezi and Nxumalo - 1983:112-113).

All the above are some of my assumptions and premises that formed the basis for my research. These were also some of the ideas that inspired me to take *umaskandi* as my research. Indeed, with the progress of time, more positive evidence of cognitive principles based on the above assumptions appeared in the study.

### 1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND HYPOTHESIS

There seems to be evidence of literary information about *umaskandi* by writers like David Coplan (1985: 13 and 267), Johnny Clegg (1983: 8 - 14), Xulu (1995:170), Davies (1995: 10 -25), D. Rycroft (1961:1-20), and others. With all

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<sup>16</sup> Most Africans do practice *izibongo* (praise-poetry). But, in this instance, the focus is on the Zulu people.

these writers, the trend is that they deal with the history and origin of *umaskandi*, performance styles of the different practitioners and their geographical location. My investigation reveals that there are still some vital aspects of this style that have not been accessed. We still need to understand the world of *umaskandi* musicians by looking into the following items:

- (a) The Socio-cultural conditions that led to the appearance of this style.
- (b) The philosophy and the human element stemming from the behavioural patterns of these people.
- (c) The academic merit that is apparent in the conception and execution of these styles.

In short, it is essential to understand the contextual nature of the music and musicians, beyond what is observable on the surface. It is for this reason that Ndlovu (1996), when analyzing *isicathamiya* accuses the earlier researchers for this neglect. He says that:

They have concentrated on the sound aspect, which is the 'surface structure'. They have neglected to fathom the 'deeper structures' which are behaviours, religious beliefs and attitudes of performers and their audiences. Such dimensions could have provided them with the necessary background information on the song and movement culture.... (Ndlovu - 1996:10).

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<sup>16</sup> Most Africans do practice izibongo (praise-poetry). But, in this instance, the focus is on the Zulu

Ndlovu goes on to say that even those that took to African music scholarship have:

...tended to ignore, for example, the anthropological aspects such as questions pertaining to cultural meaning and values attributed to a particular body of music. Such theories were objectionable to many ethnomusicological scholars because they treated sound as an isolated object outside of its cultural matrix (Ibid. - 1996: 12 - 13).

The core of the problem in this thesis is identifying and understanding the cultural content and beliefs on which the music was founded. This document on *umaskandi* should be educative about both the external audible features of the music and also the internal philosophical content of the artistic creation. Besides the expatriates, there is even a greater problem of Zulus that have stigmatized their own indigenous arts as rituals for pagans and unlettered members of their community. Such self-condemnation is a dehumanizing practice. Proper arts education is essential for the new multicultural South African community.

### 1.3.1 SOME CULTURAL PARADOXES

Socialization between the Westerners and Africans is full of paradoxes. One such contradiction was that while the Westerners condemned African arts, their language and their norms, they wished that the Africans could appreciate theirs. As a result, there are more Africans who appreciate and who are involved in Western music than Whites who participate in African cultures. Many

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people.

indigenous South Africans in general have no problem in the singing of the National Anthem, as many of them are able to read the three languages in which the song is presented. The grasping of both the tune and the concomitant words of the song is also an educative practice in music. On the other side, Zulus in particular were not intimidated by the fact that *umaskandi* instrumentation was foreign in conception. Instead they tried to make music in the best possible manner. The great contradiction is that this forging ahead to interact with foreign arts is done by ordinary working class citizens and not by the educated Zulus, who know something about race relations. No matter how advanced our education system has been affirmed, Zulu academics have not been able to promote arts in education, whether indigenous or Western. *Umaskandi* musicians have been creative.

### 1.3.2 MUSIC: A SHADOW OF THE PROBLEM

Although this document is about *umaskandi*, that is, the understanding of the external ramifications of music style and its internal philosophical foundations, *umaskandi* is, in fact, a mirror of the overall social lives of those that practice it. The return of the musical style into the social scene mirrors the return of the whole band of African cultural practices. These are items like the African traditional garb, the relishing of African dishes, the appreciation of sex education that is epitomised in the Zulu King's annual reed dance ceremony, the recognition of African traditional languages, and a host of other African traditional practices that had been ignored by Western civilization. *Umaskandi* is but one such cultural item that I

have used in this thesis to summarize other indigenous musical cultures. Inkosi Buthelezi, at the 2004 reed dance<sup>17</sup> ceremony commented that:

The ground on which we stand here is the very same land our ancestors stood upon, celebrating the very same tradition we are celebrating today. The reed dance ceremony speaks of the eternal cycles of life: of birth, childhood, youth, maturity and old age (Buthelezi - 2005: 2).

The understanding of a people through their music is another sophisticated method of discipline and communication. *Umaskandi* is simply one medium that is brimming with the philosophy of life of the performers, but only if the listener could be able to access the information.

To appreciate *umaskandi*, the various aspects that constitute the musical style have to be properly understood in their context. This means that the cultural setting of the people has to be taken into consideration, together with the philosophical aspects. These following items could be taken as the primary observable aspects of the music:

- (a) The instrumental side of the music.
- (b) The nature of the vocal melody.
- (c) The role of the supporting group.
- (d) The Dance.
- (e) Praise poetry.
- (f) Traditional Scholarship. (Social setting - the stage).

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<sup>17</sup> The Reed Dance as an annual event that is organized by the Zulu Monarch and is meant to alert on, amongst other things, the values of virginity.

It should be noted that it is by looking at these external features that the researcher may fathom the philosophical values of the people. An impartial and unprejudiced approach to the sound of the instrument should be made in order to interpret both the cognitive and the philosophical. The juxtaposition of music and the related performing arts is, therefore, an outward appearance. The real point of concern is the philosophical ground on which the Zulu people are trying to reconstruct their lifestyles.

Urbanized Zulus, who were left on the threshold of Western musical styles have tried in many ways to maintain their musical history by creating the various urban styles, like *mbhaqanga* and *mqqashiyo*, and also by dancing the urban dances. On the other hand, *umaskandi* musicians represent that section of Zulu people who are refusing to accept the Western music as it was delivered by the Westerners. Instead they have constructed their own musical history. It is through this creation that they relate and condemn the new urban way of life. This document seeks to look into the underlying pensiveness in the creation of the music.

### 1.3.3 THE NATURE OF THE VOCAL MELODY

The vocal pitch management in Zulu music seems to evolve from the singing of *Amahubo*, which is the authentic and original<sup>18</sup> manner of Zulu vocal singing that obtained before the arrival of the Western hymn with missionary education

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<sup>18</sup> This has been confirmed by several people, including Clement Sithole. He is a Zulu Bow (*Makhweyana*) performer, who grew up at Ngoje (Louwsburg District). Throughout his youth they sang AMAHUBO music for all occasions. Each *ihubo* would relate to the type of occasion for which they would be performing.

(Interview - Clement Sithole: 8<sup>th</sup> August 2004). To get into grips with this knowledge, a clear and unprejudiced approach is necessary. In the singing of *amahubo* music, there is a harmonization, that is, a sounding of more than one voice part, at any given time, which is different from the Western formula, and which has to be understood in its own terms.

#### 1.3.4 THE ROLE OF THE SUPPORTING GROUP

Besides looking at the combined sound of this section with that of the leader and that of the instrumental accompaniment, there is a subtle philosophical symbolism that obtains in the performance, which relates to the philosophy of life of the singers. This could be observed in the emotional intensity of the continuous "Call and Response" interaction between the leader and the rest of the cast, in both the vocal and the instrumental sections. Besides the vocal and instrumental instances of "Call & Response" this texture can also be elicited in kinetic form. The entry of the dancing group is sometimes summoned by a "calling" dance from one of the dancers or from the leader. The rest of the dancers will then respond by doing their dance.

A similar "Call and Response" texture is not confined to musical performance. It has been observed in the religious procedures of the Zionists churches, where an 'Amen' response from the congregation has been elicited and, indeed obtained, even when it is not a confirmation of doctrinal understanding, but a form of emotional support and sustenance. It is the grasping of such social issues

that will help us to understand the essence in such ethnomusicological circumstances.

### 1.3.5 THE DANCE

It should be stated here that dance among the Zulus is not always meant to be a simply frolicsome physical enjoyment. While at some occasions people may dance and enjoy themselves, dance can also be a conscientiously devout, solemn and religious ritual. Such dances, that are not meant to display enjoyment, are performed by the *iSonto lakwaShembe* and also by the Zionist Christian Church. The movements (dance) that are done by the religious groups are not for gaiety, sportiveness, merriment and cheerfulness. They are, but, a demonstration of reverence, awe, homage and respect. Therefore, whenever the word "dance" appears in this document, it shall have been used with such connotations in mind. Ndlovu (1996) says:

...I shall be using the phrase "structured movement system" or choreography instead of the word "dance", whenever I can, mainly because there is no Zulu word for dance. Performers deny emphatically that their movements are dances. (Ndlovu - 1996: 28).

It is for that reason that such dance movements in this document about *umaskandi* music have been examined to find out their real indigenous contextual nature. Such wordless movements are the most revealing acts of social life. They suggest, louder than words, that there are enormous unsaid ideas in the performer's mind.

The dance in *umaskandi* music is performed, mainly, by the supporting cast. By dancing the performers confirm (outwardly) that they are completely involved (inwardly) in the music performance activity. Such a spiritually involving act has also been observed in an isiZulu traditional wedding, where the bride has to sing her *inkondlo* and dance before the gathering of both her own people and her in-laws, to demonstrate her voluntary acceptance of the bridegroom (Pewa - 1996:80-81 [*Ukusinehwa*]). Such dancing can be equated with the appending of one's signature in a document. It is, indeed, the understanding of these traditional cultural details that assist in the understanding and enjoyment of a music performance and also, in turn, in reaching the depth of a people's philosophy of life.

### 1.3.6 IZIBONGO (PRAISE POETRY)

Generally speaking, this word, in the plural, refers to praise poetry, which is the basis of poetry among the Zulu people. (The underlined "Z" places it in the plural form). While *isibongo* (note the -s-) means a surname, *izibongo* (note the -z-) means surnames. But the word *izibongo* in this document is used with a different meaning, which is "praises". Since these praises are composed poetically, they are referred to as praise poetry. So, throughout this document, by *izibongo* shall be meant praise poetry, unless otherwise explained.

While the tradition of *izibongo* still goes on today, more especially with the renaissance of isiZulu culture, it should be noted that the practice stems from early Zulu

traditional life. All kings had their own *izibongo* (praises) that were sung to the former by *imbongi* (praise singer). Ordinary people too did have their own praises. It was not a shame, among Zulus, to sing or create one's own *izibongo*. Praise poetry was the mainstay of poetry literature in the Zulu language.

Among the Zulu people, up to this day, almost all surnames have a second surname called a clan-name, by which a person is addressed as a form of respect, admiration, praise and endearment. This is a form of praise singing for every family.

Some praise names stem from a long list of first names of some of the early forefathers in the family line. Others are derived from the events that took place or from remarkable acts that were achieved by the great - great - grandfathers in the family lineage (Interview - Zama Khumalo: 20<sup>th</sup> July 2003).

*Izibongo* (praise poetry or praise singing) was not performed only in praise of human beings, but the practice featured in all situations where there was some form of a concluded achievement or to spur, urge or motivate towards an achievement, in all social life. For instance, while herd-boys would create *izibongo* for their peers, they would also sing praises for their bulls, either to praise or urge them to devastate other animals in bull fighting. In the shouting of *izibongo* for the animals, the latter would seem to acknowledge<sup>19</sup> the sound of its shepherd and it would pick up

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<sup>19</sup> A bull will understand when a call is to stop it from grazing on forbidden foliage. It will also know if the call is to encourage the action.

more power. Of course, the animals would identify the voice of their shepherd (Interview - Phuzekhemisi: 20<sup>th</sup> September 2005). This tells us that to the herd-boy, cattle were no merely an economic item, but that they were part of his social life.

*izibongo* for human beings would be, and are still, very meaningful and relevant in that they are always based on some relevant event that was linked to the person in question. Any young man would, therefore, have his *izibongo*, based on some remarkable event. He would take his *izibongo* to adulthood.

Praise singing, even today, goes hand-in-hand with *ukuhlonipha* (listen with awe, reverence and respect and be seen to be taking heed of the words of another person) system. This is seen when reference to a homestead is made by using a surname tag, instead of using the surname. For instance, at Blaaubosch, a district of Newcastle, there are several homesteads for the Sithole brothers whose father was Jakobe. To clarify identification, all these homesteads have their names of endearment that are used when referring to them. There is Ekubongeni - which is a household that belongs to Caleb Sithole, Ebuhleni - a household that belongs to Jethro Sithole and Entokozweni - a household that belongs to Elkin T. M. Sithole (Interview - Dalton Sithole: 20<sup>th</sup> July 2001).

In the Zulu Royal Family, the various homesteads of the kings and princes, and, in fact, all family members' homesteads have names. These, as it is always the case, are derived from certain incidents that took place in

actual life situations. There is KwaKhethomthandayo, which was the homestead of the late king, Nyangayezizwe, kaSolomon, kaDinuzulu, kaMpande, kaSenzangakhona. There is Dlamahlahla (kwaDlamahlahla), Mahhashini (eMahhashini), Sokesimbone (kwaSokesimbone), Bhangano (eBhangano), and the Suthu (oSuthu) homestead. All these names give veneration to the respective people who dwell in these homesteads and make life enjoyable. Each of these names is a sort of a crown or a halo around the head of the homestead.

Praises could be composed even from a shameful situation or event. Such praises would not justify the act, but the beauty of such would be derived from the interpretation of the meanings of the word or expressions that would have been used in the verse. Usually, metaphor would be used to a great extent in the composition of *izibongo*. In other words, the artistry justifies the existence of the poetry, in spite of the shame in which the person might have been involved.

A person's *izibongo* (praises) are born out of a person's remarkable deeds. Whether they are praiseworthy achievements or remarkably shameful events, they have to be articulated in *izibongo*, because the latter should be a truth about one's history.

What *umaskandi* does in the recitation of *izibongo* is an age-old tradition. As a young man every male earns his *izibongo* from his peers. If his peers do not compose some verse about him, he has licence to create his own. This could be in either the first person or the third person. The verse

will somehow explain the event from which the praises were derived. This is how every male has *izibongo* by which he is honoured.

*izibongo* lend some elevated deportment to a person to whom they are showered and it is for that reason that a traditional or political leader has to have *imbongi* (praise singer) to confirm the leader's status.

To *umaskandi* musician the singing of *izibongo*, recited to the rhythm of the guitar, is a signal of triumph over other *umaskandi* musicians who are in continual contention with him. Contesting in music among Zulu musicians is part of a performance aesthetic (Pewa-1996: 8).

All kings have their own praises that are sung to them by *imbongi* (praise singer). Ordinary people too do have their own praises. It is not a shame, among Zulus, to sing one's own praises. Praise poetry is the mainstay of oral literature in isiZulu language.

Among the Zulu people, almost all surnames have a second surname called a clan-name, by which a person is addressed as a form of respect, admiration, praise and endearment. This is a form of praise singing for every family. These praise names stem from a long list of first names, of some of the late forefathers, in the family line (Interview - Zama Khumalo: 20<sup>th</sup> July 2003).

Herd-boys would sing praises to their cattle. They would sing praises to their peers. All these would be composed

by them, basing them on some relevant event that might have taken place sometime around the figure that was praised. Any young man would, therefore, have his *izibongo*, which he would take to adulthood.

In whatever situation, whether *izibongo* are a glorification or an abashment of the person in question, the praise singer is protected by artistic immunity. No reaction against him is expected, because he is taken to be an agent of the truth about the people.

### 1.3.7 TRADITIONAL SCHOLARSHIP

Scholarship predicates the growth of the mind in whatever activity a person finds himself. It is the task of this document to identify such traditional scholarship in the music cultures of the Zulu people, in general, and the Zulu *umaskandi* musicians, in particular.

True scholarship consists in appreciating other forms of scholarships, and not simply one's own. It is therefore assumed that the mind of the performer of *umaskandi* music does possess some degree of scholarship since he was able to impose his own musicality on a foreign instrument that was not created by him. This document has looked into such inceptive scholarship and its variations. For the creators of *umaskandi*, it is also a form of scholarship to be able to juxtapose the various music styles into one performance.

#### 1.4 THE RATIONALE FOR THIS RESEARCH

*Umaskandi* music has taken its place in the repertory of South African music culture. The acceptance and appreciation of this musical style, which previously received no attention, has emerged at the time when the musical styles of all the people of South are expected to be respected and be positively promoted, through government legislation. This is indeed a calculated move by the democratic government which, besides acknowledging the different cultures of all South Africans, wishes to restore the dignity of those African cultures that were previously sidelined and annihilated by the prejudice of the apartheid government. This recognition of the artistic possessions of all the people of the land is aimed at promoting overall conviviality in the country. Such living together of musicians has been observed at the Massed Choir Festival that is held annually at the Standard Bank Arena in Johannesburg. At this function, organized by Mzilikazi Khumalo and Alfred Cock in conjunction with a good number of sponsors behind them, musicians from all over South Africa to converge for a musical feast.

Acceptance of *umaskandi* style by the South African public has also been seen at the open-air public performances where musicians like Phuzekhemisi Mnyandu<sup>20</sup>, have been enthusiastically cheered by their audiences. Thirdly, a feeling of fellowship has been demonstrated by South African citizens in the singing of the national anthem in which Mzilikazi Khumalo, the arranger of the music, adopted

three national anthems and fused them into one for the sake of creating a feeling of empathy between the Africans and the expatriates. This juxtaposing of the three national anthems into one was another attempt to reverse the policy of apartheid that was created by the Afrikaans people:

National<sup>21</sup> party parlance has accorded separate nationhood to Afrikanerdom and officially also to certain African ethnic and tribal groups within the Republic. They are now called 'nations' by virtue of their linguistically tribal groupings (Malherbe, 1977:2).

The promotion of all music styles is an attempt to reverse the effects of the policy of apartheid, explained above.

The sudden event of the spread of *umaskandi* has, therefore, happened at the time, when, besides the positive emotional attitudes of the listeners, government<sup>22</sup> legislation<sup>23</sup> is also in favour of all the people's arts and musics.

The creation of the Department of Arts and Culture by the present government is indeed a great attempt to promote all arts of the people of South Africa, and not just one of them. This idea was embraced by all the people of the country, especially Africans, because they are now well aware that the civilization that was brought to Africa by

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<sup>20</sup> Phuzekhemisi Mnyandu has been regularly invited to perform at special soccer matches at the Durban ABSA Stadium on several occasions. He was also invited to perform on May 16<sup>th</sup> 2004 during the celebrations of the success of the 2010 Soccer Bid, at the same Stadium.

<sup>21</sup> During the apartheid era, the word 'National' referred only to those issues that favoured the interest of the National party, which was a political party for the Afrikaans people only, and which in charge of the South African government at the time.

<sup>22</sup> This refers to the present democratic government (that took over in 1994).

Europeans castigated, marginalized, undermined, illegitimatized and finally condemned all African civilization, indigenous beliefs systems and the performing arts. As a result, African music, African drama and other performing arts were not promoted in the classroom. Although it is appreciated that educated Africans immersed themselves into these new arts with enthusiasm, it is also a fact that they missed the African indigenous forms that were still practised in the rural areas. The institution of Arts and Culture programmes is an attempt to remedy that disaster.

### 1.5 RELEVANCE OF THE UMASKANDI COMPOSITE STYLE

But while that problem<sup>24</sup> is being solved, a new problem has arisen. Today's younger generation, at high school and tertiary levels, are not taking a very keen interest in the learning of African indigenous languages throughout South Africa, and all prefer to do English studies to doing their vernacular. The Sunday Times (25-04-2004) reported that African languages are in a great danger of extinction:

African languages are under siege... University students are saying "*hamba kahle*" (farewell) to South Africa's indigenous tongues as they turn their backs on studying African languages...  
 ....Parents in townships equate education with competency in English ... (Moodie - Sunday Times 25<sup>th</sup> April 2004:6).

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<sup>23</sup> In South Africa the promotion of arts and culture is ensured by having the Department of Arts And Culture - in the Central Government. There are also provincial MEC's for Arts and Culture in all the nine Provinces.

<sup>24</sup> The omission of both traditional and Western music programmes in the school curriculum.

What could happen to the languages in this century is what happened to the music of Africa in the past century.

## 1.6 HYPOTHETICAL CONCLUSION

Just when this language disaster is looming, *umaskandi* has emerged with a composite style consisting of various authentic Zulu artistic performing items. The language in *umaskandi* is pure isiZulu as it is spoken by the traditionalists. The articulation and the prosody of the tone are well placed. The educating side of *umaskandi* has never been highlighted. This is what this document is aimed at.

The campaign to bring *umaskandi* on board is, therefore, not confined to music, but also relates to all the arts that are involved in the performance, like poetry, elocution, ingoma dance, and, above all, the ability to compose these arts.

The main significance of *umaskandi* is that the practice is reviving African music that is traditionally part of all activities and the entire social life of the Zulu people. This means that in Zulu culture music was an on-going practice in both private and public life.

Finally, the extent of mental application in all the various aspects of the performance, musicianship in *umaskandi* is a highly cognitive process. *Umaskandi* music is educative to both the performer and the listener in various ways. It is educative in both music content and also in its social context.

It is assumed that the schooling community can be involved in *umaskandi* in one way or another. Participation in the art can be by either performing the music or by merely listening to it. To be meaningful, listening should be made creative by supporting it with some analytic explanations.

Educators can be expected to use musical material that is found in *umaskandi* in the classroom also in various ways. The advantage with this music is that the authenticity and the genuineness of the practitioners can be trusted. These musicians are the custodians of the people's arts and cultures and they have always stuck to that type of life. In spite of them having sojourned in urban areas, they are convinced that the preservation of generally African, and specifically isiZulu art, is their responsibility. This is perceived in their being donned in African garb whenever they practise their art. Mfaz'omnyama says:

*NgingumZulu qwaba. Lokhu engiyikho ngakunikwa*

I am a traditional Zulu person. Whatever I am, I inherited

*NguBaba. Ngiyoze ngife ngiphuza iVuna,*

from my father. Until I die, I shall be drinking the waters of the Vuna river, and

*ngigqoka ibheshu lami.*

Wearing my loin skin.

(Interview - Mfazomnyama Khumalo: 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1996).

Selimovic also confirms this sustenance of a people's belief through cultural practice:

Once again culture was the mould in which the urban African identity was formed, counter to the determination of the apartheid regime to keep the black population in the "homelands". (Selimovic - 2002: 27 - 28).

The above words explain and confirm the speakers' unshaken belief in their tradition.

The writing of this document about *umaskandi* has been inspired by the sudden burst and blowout of all African arts on the South African scene, and the positive reaction of South Africans, of all hues, to all these previously and deliberately marginalized arts. This incident has drawn the attention of the writer to the wide range and variety of African music and the arts in general. But for now, the focus is mainly on Zulu *umaskandi* music.

There has been an unprecedented eruption and explosion of *umaskandi*, on cassette, on compact disc, in the radio and on television. What makes this occurrence more remarkable is that the music has in the past always been overlooked even by Africans, especially the elite of the African society, many of whom were initiated into Western music on their first day at school.

The sound of this music is today heard at shopping malls, in car radios, on television and in music festivals. Disc dealers increase the sales of this music by playing the music loud to fill the shopping centre corridors. Man-size pictures of *umaskandi* practitioners, like those of Mfazomnyama and Mqgashiyo Ndlovu, are displayed on windows to lure music lovers into the shops.

Local *umaskandi* musicians, who happen to be mainly the previously ignored Zulu musicians, have had international invitations to play *umaskandi* music at international sporting meetings. Phuzekhemisi has often been invited to perform even in non-music functions, like soccer games. Finally even people who have not been aware of the music have been gradually convinced by the persuasive nature of the music, which does not come only as a human voice and instrument, but also as recited praises of the singers by the singers themselves.

After this research, the music should not be confined to the sincere and simple creators of the art. They have already uplifted the style to the extent that musicians around the world are aware of its existence. While this document, and a few others that have been written before this one, should lend dignity and academic recognition to the musical style, it should also bring this music to light to a much wider radius than it is known so far. Scholars of culture, of language, of poetry and of speech and elocution should look into new creative ways and means of incorporating the genre into other artistic practices.

*Umaskandi* has come a long way, from a one-man performance on the street. A guitarist or a concertina player would be seen on the street, passing by strumming his instrument. Not too many people would bother to listen, except for small children, who might crowd the performer, admiring the strange sounds that he made from his instrument. Gradually the musicians grouped themselves into sets of two, three or

four players. Today, they have eventually organized themselves into balanced and full sounding bands.

The aesthetic value of the music has been observed in the amount of listenership that is commanded by *umaskandi* music, on media and at rallies. To schooled musicians, a traditional music performance is not only a form of entertainment but is symbolic of some deep-seated, extensive and untapped talent of the performer.

Government legislation now protects the musicians from exploitation by recording companies, the scourge that ravaged the productivity of people like Solomon Linda<sup>25</sup>, Simon "Mahlathini" Nkabinde, and many other smaller musicians who did not attain a wide publicity.

*Umaskandi* musicians are the indigenous Zulu people of South Africa and they hail from the rural areas of our country. Researching about them will reveal to us the sociological side of their lives, which is very likely to influence their music.

Understanding the resilience of this music, that has survived for so long, will make the listeners to us understand the anthropology of the music itself. The music has survived for a long time, although there is no official or formally acknowledged venue for the learning, the practising and the public performance of it. Researching

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<sup>25</sup> Solomon Linda represents the early male-voice choir artists who, although they (many of them) recorded their music with big companies, they were not remunerated for their products. He died in poverty although the recorders of the music became very rich. It is only now that one of the big recording companies, Gallo, is making means of giving some compensation to Linda's children and grandchildren (Coplan-1985: 155).

the music will reveal whether there is any acceptable ethnomusicological imposition on the music composition, performance culture and management of the music.

This research should confirm, as it is the case in all the cultures of the world, that the music and the arts of Africa are a living tradition. The question is that the source of the said tradition should be well spelt out.

It is appreciated that the new learning area, referred to as Arts and Culture<sup>26</sup>, assumes that music, by its central nature to the arts, shall be part of the programme. But it is also felt that music should be spelt out clearly because of the urgent need of this form of education. The need has been identified in the music-practising world. Both the schooled and those that did not ever reach the classroom are involved in the practice of music. While the annual Standard Band Arena Massed Choir programme is an important date in the academic music activities of Professor Mzilikazi Khumalo, the invitation for Phuzekhemisi (Joseph Mnyandu<sup>27</sup>) to perform in the final match of the Soccer World Cup in Japan (June - July: 2002), was a monumental achievement for *umaskandi* tradition (Sunday Times - 30<sup>th</sup> June 2002:1).

Music lays a very important role in the daily life of the African; it is in fact one with the whole course of his life. Music has a social function, so much so that it can hardly be either

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<sup>26</sup>National Curriculum Statement 10-12 (2002) (Schools).

<sup>27</sup>"Phuzekhemisi" (Joseph Mnyandu), a maskandi musician, was invited to play his guitar at four It is remarkable that Mnyandu did not learn his guitar at school. concerts of the World cup Soccer Cup finals in Yokohama, marking the culmination of the tournaments.

understood or estimated correctly if this connection between music and African community life is overlooked (Weman, 1960:73).

Mnyandu did not learn his guitar in the classroom, but his first instrument was a five-litre oil can, to which he attached four fish-line strings, which were kept tight by making them run along a firm piece of pine wood which also acted as a fingerboard. Later on he transferred that knowledge on to a<sup>s</sup> real guitar (Interview - Phuzekhemisi: 19<sup>th</sup> June 2004).

The need to systematize the learning of *umaskandi* in the classroom, which has long been overdue, has further been highlighted by the visit of a British scholar, Daniel Miles<sup>28</sup>, who came to South Africa to learn the cultural life of the Zulu people. He is in the process of learning Zulu cultural life and behaviour under the guidance and tutelage a Zulu musician, Bheki Shangase, of Nsuze in the hinterland of Uthongathi in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Bheki was a practitioner of *umaskandi* music. The learning of the culture involves the learning of activities like IsiZulu language, hunting and stick-fighting. At the centre of all the activities, Dennis is anxious to learn *umaskandi* (Isolezwe-15.03.2003: 2).

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<sup>28</sup> . Dennis Miles (37), a British scholar, and a qualified computer technician, has suspended his activities to come to South Africa to learn more about Zulu life styles. He has even adopted a Zulu pet-name of

## 1.7 THE TRUTH IN THE MUSICAL STYLE

The spontaneity, accuracy and the exactness of African music in reflecting its environment is amazing. No matter how favourable or unfavourable the conditions may be for reflecting on the environment, the music will not relay inaccurate information. It was this quality of the music that made it popular. It is also apparent that it was this aspect of the music that made political songs to spread like wild fire. Zulu political songs were unwavering in putting across the unfair practice of the foreign white people against the indigenous Zulu people. The following working song, for instance, has never lost its impact in the minds of all the Zulu people, especially the working class, although it has been sung by generations to express the effects of deprivation:

*Abelungu ngo "dem",*  
Damned be the Whites,

*Abelunagu ngo "dem".*  
Damned be the Whites,

*Basincintsh'ikhofi,*  
They won't give us coffee,

*Basinik'itye.*  
They give us tea.

(Composer unknown - Interview - Khaba Mkhize, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2003).

Such a rhyme would be recited in the effervescence context of a working situation and as motivation for lifting some of the heavy objects that had to be moved with the hands,

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*"Imamb'emhlophe"* (a White Mamba), a name which is now his *"izibongo"* (praise poetry) like all other maskandi musicians have.

before the advent of cranes. Because of its musicality, even a person who did not understand the language would still be able to employ and enjoy the rhyme and rhythm in the lifting of the heavy object.

*Umaskandi*, as a megaphone for the traditional people, contains a lot of artistic and linguistic information that is likely to be missed by those that do not speak the language of the practitioners. It is, therefore, of paramount importance that who-ever wishes to understand the musical style should also look into the language of the practitioners. Like all languages, isiZulu, the language of the Zulu people, has its nuances that are employed extensively by artists.

### 1.8 THE URGENCY IN UMASKANDI MUSIC

There is an apparent feeling of urgency and insistence in *umaskandi* as a musical style that cannot be found in the music cultures of the sophisticated Africans. While songs may be sung as merely a piece of informative text for entertainment, some of the songs of protest of this style can be as forceful and dynamic like any other music of rebellion. Dance in the performance of the music provides an opportunity to demonstrate the emotional pressure of dissatisfaction and the pent-up energy that characterizes the social status of the working class.

For instance, for a considerable time it was accepted that the Africans that were schooled in Western music would express their political dissatisfaction on the stage merely as a matter of information and without a threat, by singing, perhaps songs like the Land Act by R. T. Caluza.

This song, as a protest against the deprivation of land does not demonstrate any anger (Coplan 1985:73-74). So is H.J. Masiza's "Hhay'usizi lomunt'omnyama e-Afrika" [*The plight of the black person in Africa*]:

*Hhay'usizi lomtomnyama e-Afrika,*  
Oh! the suffering of the Black man in South  
Africa!

*Zonk'izizwe zisibeka phansi kwenyawo.*  
All the other races trample them on the floor.

*Senze ntoni?*  
What have we done?

*Ityala likuthi, siyizidenge, asivani,*  
The fault is in us: We are dull-witted;

*Sinomona, asethembani.*  
We are jealous: We are not trustworthy;

*Vukani Mawethu, simanyane;*  
Wake up ye folks, let us unite;

*Ityala likuthi, vukani.*  
The fault is within us;  
Wake up.

This song demonstrates to us that while the traditional people would voice their complaints in a reprehensibly vicious circular rhythmic song, those that were schooled in Western music chose to express their discontent in through-composed song, which might not have the same impact as an African topical composition.

To the schooled community, the dynamism of *umaskandi*, as an educating medium, is the opposite of the Western hymn, which was based on harmonic conformity. Beyond its

spiritual merit, the hymn was employed as an instrument for subjugation. To legalize their act, the oppressors further created the Bantu Education Act of 1953, which did very little to empower Africans (Malherbe - 1977: 546).

There is, indeed, an urgency in *umaskandi* that commands the listener to, sort of, take heed of the musical announcement. It is this energetic character that has given it a place in the politically rebellious attitudes of today's African communities. In other words, some of the items of this music have become popular because they have joined hands in criticizing apartheid institutions of the previous government of the expatriates.

## 1.9 AIM OF RESEARCH

This section carries the basic intentions of this document. It explains what is anticipated with the knowledge that can be extracted from this document and also what may not be expected.

The primary aim of this document is to examine the merits of the music of *umaskandi* musicians for possible scholastic purposes. The observable and apparently extensive cognitive activity that obtains around the performance practice of *umaskandi* genre suggests that the music possesses a degree of academic worth and also some aesthetic value. It is anticipated that the depth of this material will be accessed by scholars, that should therefore, distribute it for the benefit of the formally deprived communities.

A closer examination reveals that scholarship in *umaskandi* music may not be limited to musical knowledge and the physical performances only. Beyond the sound of music and the artistic dances there is a people's philosophy of life, which is embedded in the whole activity. In order to understand and access the deeper aspects of the merits of maskandi music, one has to scan the activity from within. The musicians' philosophy seated in the thought-patterns of the people can be fathomed by working within and understanding not only the people's musical culture, but also their lifestyles. Incidentally *umaskandi* music is closely intertwined with the culture of its performers. That being the case, it therefore offers a greater opportunity of reading and transmitting the culture and the philosophy of life of the performers. They sing about their experiences, which are also the experiences of the majority of listeners.

This research on the philosophical merit of *umaskandi* music is an ethnomusicological study, and, according to Gourlay (1983:2), such a study can be approached from two directions, namely: the anthropological and the musicological sides.

The anthropological side examines how music is structured to function in the social context of a particular group. It also explains the people's views, concepts and philosophies about the use of their music. On the other hand, the musicological view is:

...concerned with the structure of music as a system in itself" (Merriam - 1964:3).

In other words, such a study looks at music as an end in itself and not as a means towards some form of functionality. The focus of musicologists is, therefore, on contours, intervals, harmonic constructions and progressions, scalar and rhythmic patterns and the overall manipulation of note values. Blacking (1976) refers to this study as the *sonic* approach. In this case of musicological approach, the scholars tended to ignore the anthropological aspects such as questions pertaining to cultural significance and values attached to certain types of musical practices. Ethnomusicological scholars objected to this theory because the practitioners treated sound as an isolated object outside of its cultural matrix. This document, while it gives an overview of the musicological content, focuses mainly on the philosophical aspect of the music.

### 1.9.1 WHAT SHOULD NOT BE DONE

The inclusion of any traditional knowledge in the school curriculum is a very proper move towards the promotion and reservation of the said knowledge or practice. But, care should be taken not to condemn and remove the traditional sources from their places. Those that were able to create African traditional music and maintain it and carry it along, even when they were spurned, should not be thrown off-balance by the school system. Mbiti explains this situation very poignantly:

The great movement of establishing schools in all African countries is a noble task and in some

places a very successful one. It should not, however, be at the cost of suddenly losing the riches and potential of our oral tradition, which through countless generations and millennia has been the central vehicle of African culture. This fact should be appreciated, exploited, and sustained. Millions of people who cannot read and write should not be put at the periphery of society; they have as much dignity and worth as those who read and write (Mbiti - 1994:31).

Secondly, this issue of seeking to identify academic merit in traditional music takes us beyond the issues of mere musical content. For instance, one salient issue about the nature of traditional music is that the creators of this music may not be literate, in the Western sense of literacy<sup>29</sup>. This point takes us further to the idea that the music may not necessarily be in a position to be notated in its entirety. While some aspects about it, like, for instance, pulse sub-division and rhythm may ultimately be put to writing, aspects like the pitch of sound may still give problems in relation to our present notation. The point that should, therefore, be put forward in dealing with the traditional Zulu music of Africa is that, whether the music can be notated on paper or not, the central issue is its musicality. As an aural art, it is the musicality of its sound that should be considered first and not whether the music can be written or not. The picture of the music should be drawn from the aural aspect and not from the visual aspect, music being an aural art. While notation helps to preserve and standardize the music,

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<sup>29</sup> According to Ndlovu C.M., the musicians are literate in the sense that they understand their music. They should not be regarded as illiterate just because they did not go to school to learn the Western method of writing music. Music can be preserved through other means, other than writing it. It is still music, even when it has not been put to paper.

the inability to yet write the music should not put off an opportunity to relish the music.

The third point to note is that the kinetic aspect of Zulu musical styles is always neglected and eventually underplayed when attempts to notate the music are made. The interplay between sound and movement, that is, music and dance, which complement each other, may be lost in the notation, as the latter focuses only on the pitch of sound<sup>30</sup>.

Finally, we have to note that in dealing with African arts, cultures, heritage, literacy and philosophy is the oral nature of African communication. There is a lot of oral information that could be floating amongst the people, although its source may not be identified and be linked to any particular individual. Such a circumstance is well-described by Sogolo:

They may be referred to as "community thoughts", or more specifically the floating thoughts of the community of philosophers. They are thoughts without identifiable thinkers, philosophy without philosophers. But their anonymity does not in any way affect their authenticity (Sogolo - 1993:10).

In isiZulu parlance, such information that is derived through oral transmission, can be identified by the following phrases, which can be complete statements on their own or could be prefixed onto the main statement:

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<sup>30</sup> It is for that reason that this document is accompanied with a video footage.

- (a) *Abadala*<sup>31</sup> *bathi* ...  
The elderly people say...

For example: *Abadala bathi: ibele lendlela kalivuthwa.*

[A fruit growing on the roadside will never reach fruition].

An English equivalent of this statement would be:  
[what belongs to everybody, belongs to nobody,  
regardless of its value].

All the elderly are supposed to be endowed with wisdom. In other words, wisdom is shared by all and is not confined to one person.

- (b) *Kwenziwa kanje* ...  
This is how things are done...
- (c) *Akwenziwa kanjalo* ...  
That is never done in that way...
- (d) *Ngakithi senza kanje* ...  
In my area, this is how we do things...

Numbers (b) and (c), also refer to the general accepted norms and wisdom of the society, to which an individual is answerable.

Number (d), tells us that even within the people of the same racial group and the same culture, there can be slight but essential nuances that may not be disregarded. It is

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<sup>31</sup> "Abadala" - Nyembezi and Nxumalo - (1983: 124).

such differences within the culture that Impey refers to as "regional variations" (Impey - 2001:01).

## 1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Music, being a product of society, has to be understood by getting physically involved with those that practise it. Therefore the researcher had to take care of the Research Design and the researched population.

Data collection was in form of direct observation, listening, and interviews. But because of the nature of my study, coupled with the fact that the majority of my focus group was illiterate, the writer of this document preferred to visit the groups in order to make a lot of probing. In short, the writer felt that the best method of investigation was by encountering the musicians in real life situations. Direct questioning gave the researcher an opportunity of reading the live reaction practitioner.

This encounter enabled the researcher to snatch an immediate and relevant follow-up in the questioning. Such straight-jacketed questions, as are found in a questionnaire, can sometimes miss such conversational openings that could lead to very relevant information. Chapter One, therefore, deals with a lot of such observed encounters of researched people. I could not also do without the use of a cell-phone. It was very handy. Generally, in all levels of society, any one called on a cell-phone gets a feeling that he is really needed and that he is a special person. Practically, *umaskandi* performers

are spread all over the country. This type of communication did save a lot of time.

## 1.11 RESEARCH DESIGN

A qualitative research paradigm was used. Yin in Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:321) identifies three distinct types of case study approaches, namely: Exploratory, Descriptive, and Qualitative. It was discovered that a qualitative paradigm offered in-depth analysis of reality. The observatory technique, which in this case is listening to the music, offered a more intimate relationship with the nature of the studied object and its relationship with the focussed group. Music, being an aural art, has got to be listened to, whether from live performances or from recorded discs. Music programmes and record sleeves also carry a lot of information that supports a listening programme by explaining the musical content.

### 1.11.1 THE RESEARCHED POPULATION

Since this is a study of the philosophy and the attitudes of the practitioners in the creation and execution of their music, the best procedure is to mingle with them and be part of the process. It was therefore expedient for the researcher to probe into the actual lives of the people, besides looking into the literature, for a closer understanding of the people's behaviour and their philosophy of life. One of Merriam's tenets of Ethnomusicology is that:

Music is a product of man and has structure, but its structure cannot have existence if it is

divorced from the behaviour that produces it. In order to understand how and why a music structure exists as it does, we must also understand how and why the concepts which underline that behaviour are ordered in such a way as to produce the particularly desired form of organized sound (Merriam :1964.7).

### 1.11.2 DATA COLLECTION

Ndlovu, in his doctoral thesis, argues that notating a musical creation that is a product of behavioural beliefs, like *umaskandi* music, can be problematic. He says:

....dissertation about people with a long history of oral transmission of culture and no evidence of written notation, whose ecological studies are conceptualized differently than in the west, and whole demographic tendencies are not approached in a numerical way, but approached through kinship system and lineage, and religion where everything has continuum of men who have connections with God, presents special problems for analysis (Ndlovu - 1996:15).

In other words, what Ndlovu says is that a music that is conceived and executed in an anthropological atmosphere is too fluid to be enclosed in a notational system. Similarly, in *umaskandi* music there are a lot of musical aspects that may not fit into a music notation. The best that could be done was to explain such music features.

Additional information was also sought from the literature of those that had already researched on *umaskandi* music, to confirm one's own findings and also to advance and extend the search further and deeper.

Patton (1990:169) says that there are no rules for sample size for qualitative research. Sample size depends on what one wants to know, the purpose of the research, what is at stake, and what will be useful. Therefore the population of this research on *umaskandi* comprised a wide range of musicians, and, finally thinning out at the top by focussing on those that I thought were representative of the cult of musicians.

Invaluable information was obtained from positive casual talks with a variety of people. Informal talks with some knowledgeable people can be arranged. Casual chatting, with intentions of retrieving knowledge from ordinary people in the street can, in many cases, be a route to very essential information.

### 1.11.3 SAMPLING

Sampling in this instance refers to the final identification of those musicians that are representative of the group. A purposeful research paradigm was used. This, as Cohen and Manion (1994:89) stated, allowed me to handpick items that I wanted to include in the sample on the basis of their typicality. Patton (1990:169) confirms this when he says that the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. He further describes information-rich cases as those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research.

#### 1.11.4 PRIMARY SOURCES

This refers to the practitioners and all those that were involved in the real production and handling of music products.

##### 1.11.4.1 UMASKANDI PRACTITIONERS

Primary sources for this study were the practising musicians themselves. The persons who could explain well about this genre were the musicians themselves. They are the practitioners. My initial target was the most elaborate of the group. Phuzekhemisi Mnyandu was top in my list. I was able to reach him for the first time in May 1996.

Through the direction of Welcome Nzimande of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, I was able to go to see the musician at his place, Mkhunya Reserve, in the Dumisa district on the hinterland of Scottsburgh, in the south of Durban. He draws his water from a small stream, known to the local community as the Makhoyakade river.

Mfazomnyama, who had made a name for himself, was in the same category of musicians like Phuzekhemisi. Through Welcome Nzimande, who had already been working with these musicians, I was able to trace him to his residence in the district of Nongoma.

At almost the same time in 1966, I was fortunate to witness a live performance of Hhashelimhlophe Ngcobo, who had been invited was invited to perform in a TELKOM show at the

University of Zululand. A talk with him and his wife, Ebony (Linah Khama), was very fruitful. Seeing this group after that show was mostly beneficial in that I could immediately overhear business negotiations between the group and the representatives of TELKOM who had organized the show. It was then that I was able to realize the business acumen of Hhashelimhlophe's wife, Ebony. She was not shy to say that she is very strict about business arrangements. Her role as the negotiator, in addition to performance, was well defined. I was able to arrange for three consecutive visits to see Hhashelimhlophe while he was at his original home at the Biyela area, a district of Empangeni, before he could return to Johannesburg where his own family was based.

I was also able to follow up some performers of *umaskandi* who had been invited to perform for the university students at the University of Zululand, so as to do an in-depth interview, after listening to them in a performance.

(a) Nkindlane Buthelezi, was easy to reach since he came from Buka, a district of Empangeni, where he stayed permanently. I made two trips to see him.

(b) Whenever he performed, he would sing his praises:

*"Ngadla mina Nkindlankindla zebululu"*

I have eaten, I, Nkindlankindla of the puff adder.

(c) Happy Biyela stayed at Banjeni in the district of Mthunzini, where I visited him. As I mentioned before, Happy Biyela had been asked to provide and

demonstrate the maskandi method to the University *umaskandi* group. This group was a students' activity, and the visit of Biyela offered me an opportunity to further scrutinize the actual physical manipulation of the maskandi technique.

#### 1.11.4.2 PROMOTERS OF MASKANDI

Since all forms of African traditional music had been left on the periphery of everyday life, even by the owners of the music, it took some strong decisions by those wanted to either perform or promote the style to stand firm with their artistic choices. The majority of people had been strongly influenced by the music of other cultures. Although the performers of the style had nothing to lose, they felt they also wanted to be heard by their fellows in the wider country through the radio and gramophones, which were accessible to all the communities. The majority of the educated masses looked upon participation in such music as backwardness. There were but a few people, among both the schooled and the non-literate Africans, who were clear about the concept and the items of African national heritage:

##### (I) WELCOME "BHODLOZA" NZIMANDE

When I first interviewed Welcome Nzimande, he was still a radio announcer at the South African Broadcasting Corporation in the Durban studios. He is now head of the organization in Durban. Welcome Nzimande who a great lover and promoter of *umaskandi*, was the first person that I interviewed. He initially came from Highflats to work in

Durban in the seventies. His father performed umaskandi music on a concertina. So, Welcome having acquired some basic knowledge of the instrument that he had inherited from his father, got interested in the music. When he joined the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) in the early eighties, he was made to take responsibility for the broadcasting of traditional music programmes. His colleagues, who had grown up in townships and mission stations, did not have sufficient interest in this type of music. For Nzimande, that was his greatest opportunity<sup>32</sup> to promote Zulu traditional music. The programme did not feature only *umaskandi*, but a wide range of Zulu traditional styles, like *isicathamiya*, *mbhaqanga*, *mgqashiyo*, and gumbboot dance.

He invited singers to come to the SABC for recordings, which was a popular event for them. In the process of recording them, he would also help in the general production of the music.

As a result, Welcome became very popular among the traditional singers because they had found somebody who could speak their language. To promote this musical style, Welcome even went to the extent of singing with the Mfazomnyama Group. His popular song was "*Ibhabhalazi Labulal'ubaba*" [The hangover killed my father]. It was then that Welcome was honoured with his own *izibongo*, and these were: "INGULUB'ENCANE" (Piglet).

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<sup>32</sup> He loved traditional music. At the South African Broadcasting Corporation, where he was employed, he eagerly came forward to take up the promotion of traditional music by recording the performers. As he recorded them he would guide them and make suggestions towards improving the recordings. He dealt with maskandi musicians, Isicathamiya, Mbhaqanga, Mqgashiyo and gospel music. He is now (in 2004) the Head of the Ukhozi Radio in Durban.

Eventually, Welcome participated in a number of other radio slots that broadcast Zulu music:

- (a) He was directly responsible for SIGIYA NGENGOMA PROGRAMME [We do the Giya war dance by sounding the relevant music<sup>33</sup>]. Nzimande inherited this *umaskandi* programme from Cecil Blose, who did not like it, in 1982.
- (b) THULAMSINDO (*Sop the noise - Meaning = The best in its class*) Programme - He shared this programme with his colleague "S'jula Somkhonto" Mnisi. This also was an *umaskandi* programme.
- (c) ZIQUBUK'OLWANDLE (*They arise from the sea - Meaning = Musical items heard from the Durban studios*) - This was an *ISICATHAMIYA* (Male Voice Choirs) programme which Welcome promoted also with great enthusiasm.
- (d) UYADEL'UMAKHASANA (*Makhasana should be very pleased or I wish I were there*) - This is an isiZulu expression: "Uyadel'uMakhasana, yena owazibona zibulalana" - (Makhasana should be delighted, he who saw them molesting each other).

This was also another male choir (*ISICATHAMIYA*) programme. This name suggests that this programme presented very highly appreciated items and that it promoted the spirit of competition, which was an environment under which the male singers would always perform.

<sup>33</sup> The *ukugiya* dance is normally performed to the accompaniment of a strong rhythmic rhyme - which is, in a way, musical.

- (e) EZIDL'UBHEDU (*Those that enjoy the prime meat*) - In the cattle rearing culture, when cow-meat was given to the boys, it was the fittest one who would enjoy the prime piece of the meat. The boys would contend by stick - fighting.

For Welcome Nzimande, this was a programme for MBHAQANGA and SOUL MUSIC, which also had a great following. The name of the programme encourages the singers to improve their performance.

It was a great pleasure to interview Welcome Nzimande who was proud that he made a contribution by promoting Zulu music, more especially because he was always conscious of the fact that:

- (a) The performers of the style, who enjoyed their music, usually felt neglected because no one showed any spontaneous excitement in their music.
- (b) To the other announcers of his time and age, within the South African Broadcasting Corporation, dealing with Zulu music was just another duty that they had to simply execute, but without any observable fascination.
- (c) To promote Zulu music was a form of empowerment for himself in the execution of his duties. It was also a relevant delivery to the listeners of traditional programmes. Greatest of all, promoting what the population wanted was the promotion of the image of

the South African Broadcasting Corporation. To the apartheid government, of the time, the promotion of African arts was a way of removing Africans from participation in Western arts, which, the government intended to reserve as a domain for Whites only.

- (d) Fortunately, for the lovers of this traditional style, musicians, Welcome Nzimande himself related affectively with this music.

## (II) KHABA MKHIZE

In my interview with KHABA MKHIZE of Embali in Pietermaritzburg, he gave me some rich information about how he promoted the singing of *umaskandi*. His involvement in *umaskandi* was due to his view of this music as a medium for educating people. He was able to promote the style through his quest to promote peace, unity, fraternity, and fellowship during the times of violence that had emanated from the politics of the time. He allowed his concept of S'XAXA MBIJI<sup>34</sup> to be propagated by he practitioners of the music, which became an indirect method of preaching the gospel of peace. For me, interviewing him was very informative.

In short, interviewing those that were highly involved in the creation and propagation of *umaskandi* was the primary method of investigation.

## (III) SOUTH AFRICAN TRADITIONAL MUSIC ASSOCIATION

Getting involved with the above organization, as the General Secretary, exposed the writer of this document, not only to *umaskandi* musicians, but, to a greater number of lovers and practitioners of wider range of traditional music styles. One was also able to read closely the deep sense of commitment, devotion and regard for the respective performing arts in which the people are involved.

To a great extent, this organization did raise the awareness of South Africans as a whole towards the appreciation of African styles in general. Although the emphasis was initially on *isicathamiya* performance, the existence of this organization created a sense of a great renaissance towards the restatement of African styles in general, and Zulu music in particular, to the centre stage.

#### 1.11.4.3 PROMOTERS OF PERFORMING ARTS IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE

The present Democratic Government in South Africa prescribes that the performing arts of all South Africans have to be promoted consciously in schools. In Chapter Three of the Reconstruction and Development Programme, we read as follows:

Arts education should be an integral part of the national school curricula at primary, secondary and tertiary level, as well as in non-formal education. Urgent attention must be given to the creation of relevant arts curricula, teacher

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<sup>34</sup> The caption 'SXAXA MBLJ' is defined in chapter one – among indigenous terms.

training, and provision of facilities for the arts within all schools (RDP - 1994:71).

The necessity and urgency of the instruction of the arts to the people of South Africa is such that not only schools are assisted to learn. The programme extends to embrace even those people that are no more of the school-going age. The RDP ARTS AND Culture policies aim to:

...place arts education firmly within the national education curricula, as well as in non-formal educational structures ( RDP - 1994: 70).

In the province of KwaZulu-Natal there are, therefore, people who are employed to do this as a full-time occupation. Such a promotion is done at different environments:

- (a) BRIAN THUSI: He is employed by the Department of Arts and Culture as an Assistant Director. His main field of activity is culture development in the community. He deals with the ordinary members of the community who are interested in the musical arts and who are not in school (Interview - Brian Thusi:30<sup>th</sup> November 2003).
- (b) ZABALAZA MTHEMBU: He is employed by the Department of Education to promote music in schools. He is not working within any particular school, but his job is to co-ordinate the various schools to participate in joint music activities, in form of competitions. Schools compete in traditional dance, gumboot dance, *isicathamiya* vocal singing, *amahubo*, wedding songs, and any other ceremonial performances from the various South

African cultures (Interview - Zabalaza Mthembu - 15<sup>th</sup> January 2003).

(c) SIBUSISO PEWA is employed by the Department of Education to promote the teaching of music within the learning area that is known as Arts and Culture in Education. In other words, he is concerned with music in the curriculum. He is continually linking up, in an advisory capacity, with the teachers who are in charge of the performing arts in schools (Interview - Sibusiso Pewa - 15<sup>th</sup> January 2003).

(d) SIMON D NGCOBO (S.D.)

Mr Simon D. Ngcobo (Known as S.D.) did a lot to promote both African and Western performing arts while he was still principal teacher of Ohlange High School at Inanda between the years (1959 - 1970). In his annual programme of "Mafukuzela Week", which was a week-long commemoration of the life of John Langalibalele "Mafukuzela" Onjengezulu" (*Mafukuzela who is like the heavens*), he made sure that all students participated in the proceedings in one way or another. Students would take part in Western choral music, Solo singing, Duets, Jazz, *Isicathamiya* male voice singing, African traditional dance, Gumboot dance and recitations of literature from various languages. Attending those "Mafukuzela" functions intensified my view of African performing arts. I had an opportunity of interviewing Mr Simon Ngcobo at his house at Clermont on 10<sup>th</sup> July 1992, when he explained to me his love of performing arts and dance. At that time he

was still convenor for the South African Traditional Music Association (SATMA), a public body that was established to promote the various types of African traditional music in South Africa.

Relating with the people who have been mentioned above will keep the researcher abreast with the cultural progress and the general attitude of the local people towards their cultural lives. The significance of these programmes is that they relate to the cultures of all the people that are involved. Imposition of one culture above others, as it was the case in the apartheid era, is not entertained. Zabalaza Mthembu felt that this team of three musicians was most appropriate for this job because they spoke the three prominent languages that were spoken in KwaZulu-Natal schools, which were isiZulu, English and Afrikaans (Interview - Zabalaza Mthembu - 15<sup>th</sup> January 2003).

#### 1.11.4.4 UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

In my working experience with university students and school children in general, I discovered that they are indeed an enormous source of African traditional music. Some of these students come from the areas where indigenous musical styles are the main mode of music performance. Some of the students are great exponents of such styles, but they never mention it because of fear of being castigated. The fear is a result of the general air of condemnation that prevails among the schooled Africans when it comes to their music cultures. Such learners may not even mention these types of activities to their university colleagues. But when they probed and invited, in good



bibliographies, the researcher has to be conscious of any possibly informative people who could be linked to Zulu performing arts. Positive and calculated casual talks with people who are inclined towards performing arts can, in all likelihood, lead to hotter contacts.

#### 1.11.4.6 UMASKANDI MUSIC PERFORMANCE VENUES

These were of primary importance in that there is nothing to beat a first-hand encounter of a performance. Music, unlike the plastic and the visual arts, lives only for a few moments, and, thereafter it is gone and will live only in memory. For any one who wishes to scrutinize a performance, he has to listen to it for several sessions. But, in this instance, since this is a philosophical investigation, more listening should be done in the relevant social context. It is for this reason that, besides a man-to-man interview, it is also best to intercept the musician in an ordinary performance without any warning.

Secondly, a stage performance is different from a studio performance that we get on a disc. Recorded music that was done at the studio is always likely to have some electronic effects that may not be available in a public performance venue. This listening is, therefore, the musicians' own efforts, besides the electronic amplification.

Before the turn of this twenty-first century *Umaskandi* performances for large audiences are not a regular feature. On the main, for the viewing on *umaskandi* in action, I relied on public performances in form of festivals. There were

also occasional performances where specific *umaskandi* performers would be invited to appear in conjunction with performers of other musical styles. Suddenly, within the first ten years of the present democratic government, *umaskandi* performances have become much more regular, now that African music cultures have been accorded their dignity.

## 1.12 SECONDARY SOURCES

This consists in recorded music, which can be records, cassettes, tapes and compact discs. Literature on *umaskandi* also falls into this section.

### 1.12.1 RECORDED MUSIC

Listening to recorded music on cassettes and compact discs is beneficial in that one is at liberty to repeat the listening of any section that one wishes to repeat. The viewing of certain television programmes<sup>35</sup> helps one to keep in touch with the general trend of the public in relation to their general attitude towards the style. Viewing television programmes can also be of benefit in that one can see the various preferred formations and combinations of participants, the material for the stage attire of the different geographical areas that one may not have visited.

*Umaskandi* performance groups may not be able to have the same number of participants in a group. They depend upon those people that are available to form a group. At the same

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<sup>35</sup> Programmes like EZODUMO present a variety of Zulu traditional music.

time, they may also not stop playing just because a certain section is not fully represented.

### 1.12.2 LITERATURE ON UMASKANDI MUSIC

There is indeed some documentation about *umaskandi*, although it is rather sparse. Generally musicians have written

about guitar music. Not too many have written about *umaskandi* aspect in instrumentation.

Jonathan Clegg, a scholar of African performance cultures, has contributed a considerable amount of information in the International Library of African Music (ILAM) publications. Kirby has also in the same publications contributed some general information on African music. On reading such material I was able to obtain more references.

Allan P. Merriam's publications are significant for his in-depth scholarship in the general ethnomusicological approach, which is the mainstay of this research.

Nollene Davies has, in her publication, "Aspects of Zulu Maskanda Guitar Music" dealt mainly with the musicological aspects of the maskandi guitar.

I also do hope, in my post-doctoral research, to find literature that deals with how life situations, described in poetry or metaphors, are put to music by, say, *umaskandi*, *Isicathamiya* (male voice) composition, or a *mbhaqanga* performance. The literature should also explain how Zulu poetry, especially in *izibongo* (praise poetry) deals with

traditional life situation. Nyembezi C.L., Krige E., Nxumalo O.E.H., Ntuli D.B.Z., Ntombela T.E., Mathenjwa L.F., Msimang C.T. and Donda N.G. are some of the writers that have produced some informative literature on African culture.

In addition to published literature, now that the South community is waking up to African traditional culture, newspapers and magazines continually publish some events that involve cultural events. Some of these have actually even commented about Western interest in the culture of Africa.

### 1.13 THE SCOPE OF THIS RESEARCH

The choice of this subject has been impelled by the resilience of the music of Africa in general and *umaskandi* in particular. Besides looking into the origin and the extent of the radiation of the music, the manipulation and the practice of the style by the practitioners, the document also examines the social and cultural environment of the people that are involved. Although the main issue is *umaskandi*, a glimpse into the other contemporary or preceding performing arts does shade some light on the quality and shape of this style. Those shall also be examined, where such an action will be relevant. At the end, the ultimate and the most important issue in this study is the philosophy behind the performance of the style.

#### 1.13.1 INSTRUMENTATION

Although instrumentation in *umaskandi* is not confined to a single instrument, in this document, much work will be

based on one instrument, the guitar. The reason for this is that the guitar has been widely exploited by the practitioners of this style. The guitar always takes a central role in the presentation of *umaskandi* performance.

### 1.13.2 THE HISTORICAL ASPECT

It should be interesting to look into the historical beginnings and other related side issues that might have directly or indirectly led to the events that culminated in the sound of *umaskandi* compositions.

It will also be exciting to look into how the newly discovered *umaskandi* instruments found their way into most of the African areas, in spite of the restricted movements of Africans. As the instruments came from urban areas, the townships obviously came out with their own brand of instrumental music that explained their proximity to western cultures. On the other hand, the rural musicians did not fall prey to that. Their music suggests that they wanted the new instruments to speak the language of the Zulu musician.

The history should explain the conditions under which *umaskandi* was initiated and the related problems, if there were any. The history of such related issues has been able to explain the elements that lended such unflagging resilience to this style that has existed humbly among its practitioners.

### 1.13.3 MODERN MASKANDI MUSICIANS

This study has looked into the past reactions of the missionary communities to *umaskandi* practitioners. Western-orientated academics had their own negative response to the early one-man musicians and also to modern revamped *umaskandi* bands. While this study has surveyed the modern *umaskandi* in general, the researcher has made a special focus on three *umaskandi* musicians. These three were brought into prominence by agreeing to be commissioned to perform together to perform on a special programme. This programme was meant to be a feasibility study of how easily peace and *ubuntu* could be achieved in the war-torn province of KwaZulu-Natal in the early 1990's. Indeed, through their co-operation and demonstration, a good picture of amity and benevolence was painted on the minds of the people. Some degree of pacification was achieved.

At the helm off this research, zooming into the three *umaskandi* musicians gave an opportunity to even come closest to one of the three, Phuzekhemisi, who appeared to be representative of the present-day *umaskandi* concept.

The Earlier instrumentalists would perform as an individual person, passing by in a moving rhythm, strumming chords in his instruments. The present semblance of the musicians is different from that of the 1930's. They are more professional and more forthright in articulating their traditional inclination. They no more walk along, but they perform on a fixed stage, and in a booked venue. Their sound is amplified electronically. They record their music for the wider world. Indeed, they are all fascinated

by the idea of making a living out of their music, and yet preserving the original Zulu indigenous flavour and the traditional ethos of Zulu music.

#### 1.13.4 GENERAL MUSICAL LITERACY

The inclusion of African traditional music and other performing arts in schools has started as decreed by the Revised National Curriculum Statement<sup>36</sup> - Grades R -9. This is done for the promotion and reservation of the knowledge as a people's art. Secondly, this is done because, it appears, the education managers and planners have started to realize and value some cognitive aspects in parochial music styles in general and the performing arts as a whole. But, in the researcher's view, care should be taken not to condemn and remove the traditional sources from their places. Those that were able to create African traditional music and maintain it and carry it along even when they were despised should not be thrown off-balance by the new environment of the conventional school system, because they themselves are a school in their own vista.

This issue of seeking to identify academic merit in traditional music takes us to further issues, other than mere musical content. For instance, one salient issue about the nature of traditional music is that the creators of this music may not be literate, in the Western sense of literacy<sup>37</sup>. Literacy in them refers to knowledgeability in the arts that are practised by them. They are the masters and any one who wishes to understand this particular Zulu

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<sup>36</sup> Department of Education (C2005) - Section 2: The Arts And Culture Learning Programme.

style will consult them. The inability to yet write the music does not put off an opportunity to relish the music.

The general aesthetic contention or competitiveness in the lives of the Zulu people is an interesting aspect. Awareness of the existence of other performing musicians in the same category is a popular consideration, not only in *umaskandi*, but in a general performance of Zulu music. *Isicathamiya* musicians do it. *Indlamu* dancers dance with a knowledge that they should do better than the other dancers, who are physically distant from the performer but spiritually seem to be in the immediate vicinity. Such "imagined existence of contenders" appears to be part of the psychological disposition of the performers of most African arts. This phenomenon was well explained by Phuzekhemsi:

*Kufana nokugiya. Uma ngigiya ngisuke ngisibona*  
It is like the ukugiya war dance. When I do this  
war dance, I must visualize

*isithombe somuntu engilwa naye. Kufanele ngigiye*  
the mage of my opponent- I should then perform as

*sengathi ngiyamshaya.*  
If I am hitting him.

*Kunjalo-ke nasekushayeni umculo kamaskandi.*  
So is the case with the performance of *umaskandi*  
music.

(Phuzekhemnisi Mnyandu: 20<sup>th</sup> June 2004).

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<sup>37</sup> According to Ndlovu C.M., the musicians are literate in the sense that they understand their music. They should not be regarded as illiterate just because they did not go to school to learn the Western method of writing music. Music can be preserved through other means, other than writing it. It is still music, even when it has not been put to paper.

This performance phenomenon that exists in the performing culture among the Zulu musicians has also been visited.

#### 1.13.5 CONCISE RESUME OF CONTENT

Briefly summarizing the scope, the First Chapter deals with the description of the theme of the document. The chapter explains the immediate outside appearance of *umaskandi* musician and the prima face view of what is perceived in *umaskandi* performance. The rationale and the main working assumptions are also tabled in this chapter.

Chapter Two deals mainly with the historical aspects of both the music and musical practice.

Chapter Three is an overview of the social and cultural setting of the lifestyle of the Zulu people. This was the environment that inspired and gave birth to *umaskandi* concept. The events and the locale that constitute the source of the libretto of the song of *umaskandi* are dealt with in this chapter.

Chapter Four deals with the resilience of Zulu music and its features and the indignation that was caused by the foreigners who imposed their music and performing arts on the Zulu people. With the appearance of mission stations, there is also the incident of the creation of new music traditions that relate to the Christian gospel and the Western hymn.

Chapter Five is mainly an analysis of the subtle and philosophical content in the libretto of the song of *umaskandi* musicians.

The whole of Chapter Six zooms into the essence of *umaskandi* music and all the related activities that go with the music culture.

Chapter Seven deals with the aesthetic and cognitive merits of the musical style.

Chapter Eight, which is the conclusion of the document, includes some recommendations to the relevant bodies and institutions to which this musical style can be of benefit. On a broader scale, the concerns expressed in this chapter are not simply suggestions about the academic merit of music only, but it is a concern about all the indigenous arts of the Zulu people.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 SOME HISTORICAL ASPECTS OF UMASKANDI

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

There are a number of authors who have written about migrant labour and urbanization in South Africa. Malan (1979: 111-129) describes the social conditions and how the Whites struggled around Barberton when gold was discovered in 1883. Kallaway and Pearson have given accounts, in pictures, of the pressure that was put on Africans to supply labour in the newly discovered mines in the reef. They have also aptly described the appalling and dreary conditions in the mining compounds, the low wages, and the effects of leaving their families behind. All the aforesaid aspects of urbanization are not the focus of this thesis. Consequently, the main objective is to discuss but one musical style that emerged there and which has developed to reach an extent that it has influenced commercial music styles. It is also apparent that although this style appeared in the mining areas, it, in fact was a continuation or an extension and a variation of a deep-seated indigenous Zulu culture of music-making.

#### 2.2 MINE COMPOUNDS: A REPOSITORY OF DIFFERENT MUSIC CULTURES

The performing art styles that were found in and around the mines were as varied as the number of the various nationalities that were there. While some were local

styles, there were a good number of those that had been brought by foreign nationals, like the Chinese, the Portuguese, and the European countries. In short, South African musical arts were juxtaposed against each other and as well as against the foreign arts in a proportion that had never been imagined before. The mines therefore, became a repository of various types of instruments and musical styles.

The Zulu people continued with their traditional vocal music like *amahubo* and other dance songs. There is also evidence that the Sothos and the Tswanas did bring their own musical instruments, like the *dinaka*<sup>38</sup> (Pedi) and the *lesiba*<sup>39</sup> (Southern Sotho). The Chinese also brought their music bands that consisted of either brass instruments only or a combination of guitar and banjo instrumentation. A variety of music instruments and music activities would be found in the streets, in the shops, in the dormitories, and in the shebeens. Kallaway and Pearson say:

It was in their leisure-time activities that the distinctive elements of working class culture could emerge, even within the constraints of compound life (Kallaway and Pearson - 1986: 23).

What happened in Kimberly was similar to what obtained in Johannesburg and later in Barberton. The sale of foreign instruments got spread across the country. A common feature about South African music was that the males who went to work in the towns did not bring any traditional instruments with them, obviously because the music of

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<sup>38</sup> A Pedi reed pipe.

<sup>39</sup> A Southern Sotho blowing instrument.

Southern Africa is mostly vocal, unlike the music of the central African states. Coplan says:

Unlike Central and West Africa, communal music in the South was basically vocal, without drumming or other instrumental accompaniment, though solo performance often involved instruments, with or without voice (Coplan - 1985:23).

It is therefore, apparent that the Zulus got interested in the newly discovered instrument when they heard them played by their counterparts. Coplan says:

The guitar and concertina along with the auto-harp, and violin were available in compound stores and rural trade stores... The instruments became popular with Africans in part because they could achieve an expression of indigenous principles which in some can be more effectively realised through these new media than could be done on the traditional instruments they have replaced (Ibid. - 1985:23).

It can, therefore, be assumed that it was the Zulus' own out-going spirit that made them draw themselves towards the instruments that interested them. Weman says:

The African's capacity for adaptation has been phenomenal. It has been axiomatic for him that the Westerner is a superior being, and he has tried to measure up to him in all respects. Nor has he been found wanting, either in ambition or in any other mental or physical equipment. He has shown himself capable of assimilating knowledge just as easily as does the Westerner, and as a rule does so with greater eagerness and speed (1960: 128).

It is most probably because of the above attitude that the Zulus in the mines were able to access the cultures of other nationalities.

It is remarkable that Zulus are always ready to make music, which might have been the reason for the record companies to find no difficulty in exploiting them by not remunerating them fairly for their contribution, very early in the twentieth century.

Zulus easily participate in the musics and arts of other cultures without any fear of losing their own. This spirit of a desire to participate congenially is well expressed by Biko:

Thus one would find all boys whose job was to look after cattle periodically meeting at popular spots to engage in conversation about their cattle, girls, parent, heroes, etc. All commonly share their secrets, joys and woes. No one felt unnecessarily and intruder onto someone else's business. The curiosity manifested was welcome. It came out of a desire to share. This pattern one would find in all age groups (Biko - 1998:27).

The above passage explains to us that the Zulus, having appreciated the sound of the instruments of other cultures, they would not doubt to try to get involved in performing them. Biko has spoken of African culture as a culture that:

"..has used concepts from the white world to expand on inherent cultural characteristics (Biko, 1989:29)".

In Zulu musical practice, tuition has always been by oral instruction. When Zulus acquired the new instruments they could not receive any formal tuition or oral tuition for them to learn the music. They could only learn the instruments heuristically.

### 2.3 THE ORIGIN OF THE GUITAR

Instruments that are occasionally involved in *umaskandi* performance are, primarily the guitar, the concertina, the piano accordion and the violin, as mentioned in chapter one. All these are not originally African instruments. Although all these instruments shall be involved in the discussion, in this document we shall trace the history and background of the most popular among these and that is the guitar.

There is much speculation on the origin of the guitar, and several theories have been proposed to account for its presence in Europe (Harvey Turnbull - Entry in "The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians": 1980).

The etymological relationship of the word "guitar" and "Kithara"<sup>40</sup> suggests that the instrument might have come from either Greece or Rome. Khithara was the Greek word for the instrument and in Italy it was known as the chitharra.

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<sup>40</sup> A lyre of ancient Greece and Rome; the most important stringed instrument of classical antiquity (Sadie [edit] 1986: 430).

Some historians have a mind that since the guitar has a long neck, it might have been the bee born in Mesopotamia or Anatolia.

There appears to have been much activity with four-stringed and five-stringed guitars of various makes in Europe in the middle of the eighteenth century, without any explanation as to where the instruments had originated. There is, but, no doubt that the guitar had been fully established in Europe during the Renaissance. This idea is confirmed by the musical literature of the time.

Some historians are convinced that guitars were already being made in Spain in the sixteenth century. They think that these had been evolved from the instruments called guitarrs latina, the earliest of which had four strings (Goetz [edit]: 1991 - Encyclopedia Britannica vol.5). This gives Spain a stronger possibility of being the earliest maker of the instrument.

There is also strong evidence<sup>41</sup> that Spain had a hand in developing the musicality of the guitar into the level in which it is today (Danner in Randel (edit) 1986:359. A number of composers of guitar music have come from Spain, including Villa Lobos and Andres Segovia, who really promoted the guitar to a classical concert level.

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<sup>41</sup> Spain appears to have a number of prominent guitar composers. They, therefore, mad a great contribution towards the growth of guitar literature. No having crated the guitar. Italy. Spain, Portugal, Mexico and Chile all seem to have had a hand is developing the instrument one country can claim to have the sole right of.

It should, however, be noted that further uncertainties have arisen in establishing the extent to which the intercultural communication has expedited the diffusion of instruments between the various cultural groups.

The countries that are mentioned above dealt with the guitar as a classical music instrument. When the instrument later on reached the continent of Africa, musicians there used it widely in the performance of folk music. Such modifications, mainly in the manner of execution, obtained in African countries like Kenya, Katanga and Zimbabwe (Low - 1982: 19-27).

#### 2.4 THE GUITAR IN AFRICA

The guitar became popular across the continent of Africa. It thrilled the people of Africa in Zaire (Katanga), in Kenya, in Tanzania and in Zimbabwe (Low - 1982: 21 - 29). In all these countries, we do not find the people seeking to perform the guitar in the European method. In most cases, they are trying to extend the musicality of their own indigenous music through the newly discovered instrument. What was common in all the African indigenous musicians who had been attracted by the guitar was the use of their own new finger styles as against the European method of sounding the instrument. There was also a dissimilarity of finger-styles between the urban and the rural musicians:

From this melting pot of influences gradually emerged distinctively Kenyan finger-styles. In the towns, the influence of 'Katangan' styles,

Latin American music, and two-guitar styles from Zaire was strongest (Low - 1982:24).

So great was the impact of the new traditional styles on the foreign instrument in Kenya that three guitarists, John Mwale, Jim Lasco, Ben Blastus Obulawayo and a few others were employed to promote, with their music, the products of three firms in the radio and in open-air concerts. Such promotional work gave those musicians extra coverage and more money in their pockets (Low - 1982: 24).

As Africans, there are many similarities between them and our South African Mfazomnyama<sup>42</sup> in the execution of their music. For instance, their songs too were topical, and could be passionate, cheeky or outrageous (Low - 1982:25).

The finger-style of these musicians from these central African states were similar to our South African traditional musicians, that use the thumb and the index finger only for plucking the strings.

By singing to the accompaniment of the guitar in Kenya, there was much cross-pollination of musical ideas between all the participants. Some different groups ended by adopting the others' style. In some cases some guitarists found themselves getting influenced by the singing of certain groups. Instrumentalists also influenced each other.

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<sup>42</sup> The music of this umaskandi musician shall be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five.

Traditional music in Kenya influenced guitar music at a number of levels. The singing of Silas Mairuri and Mtonga Wanganangu, two Kikuyu musicians, closely reflects the traditional modalities of Kikuyu singing: their tunes have a mesmerising quality, and little melodic variety. In the playing and singing of other guitarists, one also finds melodic or modal features that are particular to one ethnic group. Luo two-part singing, for example, often has a texture that distinguishes it from the singing of other ethnic groups. Certain chord sequences preferred by Luhya guitarists, particularly those influenced by the 'sukuti' guitar style, are also particular to them. Both Daudi Kabaka and Jim Lasco Mugodo told me that they were influenced by the melodies of traditional Luhya instrumentalists (Low 1982: 19).

The above is an example of the extent to which cultures can influence each other.

## 2.5 THE GUITAR IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africans got into contact with the guitar in the fast growing urban life of the nineteenth century and also in the mines. Instruments could be bought from the shops in the mining towns, especially from the shops of Chinese, Portuguese, and Indian in the mines would buy the instrument and take them home at end of their term shopkeepers (Interview - Duncan Xaba<sup>43</sup>: 10<sup>th</sup> July 2002). The same would happen with those people who worked in urban areas. They would get home with their instruments, mainly as a status symbol than as a useful tool. However, being musical themselves, they were quickly caught up by the

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<sup>43</sup> Duncan Xaba, a tenor Saxophone player, founded the Lamontville Golden Arrows Football Club in 1943, and later founded the Sundowns Dance Band in 1948. His band was very active in the 1950's and the 1960's) in and around the city of Durban.

sound of the naked strings and they would learn the instruments by oral instruction or by trial and error.

When Ben Tyamzashe, the Xhosa choral composer first heard the violin played by the Malays, he spoke of "exuberant music and vibrant rhythms emanating from gambling dens" (Coplan - 1985:14).

In Kimberly, where there was a huge activity in the diamond mines, there was a lot of new instrumental music experience for the Africans who had come from the hinterland to work in the mines and towns:

In Kimberly, Africans were exposed to a wide variety of new musical influences. Many of the young white diggers held musical evenings frequented by black workers where the whites played guitar, concertina, banjo, cornet, violin, and even piano (Coplan - 1985:13).

There was much movement in the newly established urban environment. Some people would come and stay, while others would come and get whatever new acquisitions and leave.

This was the time in South African history when locations began to spring up for some who were lucky and it was also the time for the birth of squatter camps and shanty towns. What happened in Kimberly obtained in all the newly established urban areas of the time:

Kimberly began to take on the appearance of a permanent town, cultural exchange among these people from all over the world intensified (Coplan - 1985:12).

This time marked the birth of a new music culture for Africans. When the latter came across the new culture of Western musical instruments, the new takers went in different directions. Some of those that chose to stay and work in the new urban areas adopted new instruments. Thus we see the new culture of African dance bands. Some got interested in the American jazz styles. There was also Afrikaans dance and instrumental styles that came from the Cape. In short, the newcomers got interested in different directions.

## 2.6 THE MAKING OF UMASKANDI PRACTITIONER

Migrant labour in South Africa accelerated the distribution of the cultural styles that had been brought into the cities, towns and mines from the various parts of the country as well as from outside the country.

Almost all Southern African race groups were represented in the mines. There were abaPedi, abeSuthu, abeTswana, WamaXhosa, amaShangane, amaVenda, amaSwazi, amaZulu and many sub-groups like amaBhaca, amaMfengu and others. There were also Mozambicans who were already under Portuguese rule (Coplan: 1985:94). This large aggregation of racial groups shows the extent of cultural convergence that had suddenly taken place in Southern Africa. Besides these Africans, there were also foreigners. Indeed, in Kimberly mines there were also coloureds, the Khoi Khoi people who were later referred to as the Khoisans (Ibid. - 1985:14-15). The Cape Malays were originally a group of slaves

that had been brought by the Dutch East India Company for their skills.

**THE RECRUITMENT OF AFRICANS FOR EMPLOYMENT IN THE  
MINES**

For males, the new culture of leaving home to go to work either in the mines, or in a city or farm became a new way of life that was different from the previous rural life. They had no choice, since the whole system had been institutionalized by law.<sup>44</sup> The payment of poll tax compelled them to acquire some money so as to meet that responsibility.

In the mining areas of the time, that is, in Kimberly, Johannesburg and Barberton, there was a lot of unavoidable cultural mixing although there was at the same time a tendency to resist. It was at such heated environments of penned-in cultures that there was bound to be a cultural explosion in all directions. One item that could not have been avoided was the onset of transformations of the different musical genres that had been brought together.

### 2.6.1 URBANIZATION

Urbanization and industrialization are two factors that transformed the lives of African indigenous people from an agrarian way of life to urban life. These factors necessitated the recruitment of migrant labour when diamonds were discovered in Kimberly in 1870 (Jones: 44), and gold around Johannesburg in an area which became known as the Witwatersrand and also at Barberton in the east of Johannesburg, in 1883. Today, with the latest subdivisions of South Africa into nine provinces, Barberton is in the province of Mpumalanga (Malan - 1979: 111-129).

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<sup>44</sup> All Africans were expected to pay poll tax (in cash). They therefore had to leave their homes to go to work, so as to earn the money. They also had to pay hut tax to the local authorities.

The mining industry in the country marked the start of a great transition in the lives of the people of South Africa of all races. Before this time, Africans were fixed to their rural areas, and all their social lives were mingled with vocational involvement. They depended on farming and their lives evolved around the rearing of cattle. For the whites, that had just settled in South Africa, the strength of their economy was also on agricultural farming. We read:

The economy of the country, until the discovery of gold and diamonds in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, was based almost entirely upon the soil. The later discovery of iron, coal, silver, copper, tin manganese, platinum. Chrome and asbestos, deposits has resulted in rapid developments in the fields of primary industry (Macmillan 1973: 15).

Here began a great sojourning of Africans between their indigenous homes and the new areas that provided employment.

The completely new and hectic lives of the city brought all Africans closer to cultures that they that they had never experienced.

Besides the mines, industrialization and city, life which was a life of shebeens and stokfels for the Africans, became a melting pots for new creations. Changes, modification and by-products of the original arts were bound to take place. For the music of the Zulus, it being

an art that is closely intertwined with the people's social lives, new artistic forms were seen to be emerging.

### 2.6.2 WHITES REJECT AFRICAN CULTURE

On the other hand the Whites made every effort to maintain their arts and not to compromise them with any other. The system of apartheid was also in place to make sure that the whites would always maintain their arts, cultures and status.

It is universal knowledge that colonizers would always impose their culture wherever they established a colony. They never adopted the language of the colonized people and instead they would impose their language over the indigenous people. The aim was to make the colonized to adopt the arts and cultures of the newcomer. They established affirmative action societies, to make sure that they did not get involved in the cultures of the Africans (Malan 1987:77).

On the other hand, the attitude of Zulu musicians was positive towards the new and unknown music and its instrumentation. It was indeed that positiveness of local musicians that provided them with the courage to fiddle with the new instruments that made them to come out with new creations and variations like *Umaskandi*.

### 2.6.3 THE TURNING POINT

Kirby argues that the imported instrumental and vocal traditions of the Western civilization were very suitable

for the vocal music of the Xhosas, the Zulus, and the Sothos. He says:

So interrelated are instruments and vocal traditions that it is uncertain which is more basic to traditional musical development... ..pentatonic multipart structures in traditional South African choral music derived from the harmonics of stretched strings in instrumental playing (Coplan - 1985: 23).

The migrants from the different African racial groups were inspired differently by the different types of instruments and each group could identify a suitable instrument for their music style.

As the new music reached the seaports, the culture filtered through to reach the rural areas, mission stations, and the shops in local towns. As the music reached the urban dance halls, the different cultural styles that would converge in these venues were influenced in relation to their social standing:

The new instruments also offered a medium for the creation of new musical forms and practices as part of the process of developing urban African cultural models through performance (Ibid. 1985: 25).

#### 2.6.4 GETTING INVOLVED

Amongst the educated classes, mission stations were the first to come into contact with Western methods of music performance. The legacy of such knowledge has been observed in the music composers like Rev. Tiyo Soga, John Knox Bhokwe, B.B. Myataza, P.J. Tyamzashe, Hamilton Masiza, Todd Matshikiza and many others who, in later years, made

great contributions in their field. These were associated with Mission stations in the Cape. In KwaZulu-Natal there was R.T.Caluza, William Mseleku, Nimrod Sithole, Jethro Sithole, Alfred A. Khumalo, G.F. Khumalo, Ngazana Luthuli, Obadiah Mbatha, Elkin Sithole, and many others. There were many more composers in the other two unmentioned provinces. The purpose of giving the above examples is to show that the Missions made every effort to impart authentic information in the most efficacious method. The Mission stations also provided the four-part hymnal harmony that was used by all the *amakholwa*<sup>45</sup> (the believers) who had abandoned the indigenous ways of life. Real *umaskandi* music<sup>46</sup>, as defined by the insiders, is a variation of the mission station four-part harmony.

#### 2.6.5 COMBINATION OF LOCAL AND FOREIGN MUSIC MATERIAL

Wherever learning is not taught formally, there is no order of definable pattern that can be described. It is, therefore, not easy to identify the time when the *umaskandi* practitioners started to interfere with the tuning of the guitar.

The traditional Xhosa favoured the concertina, while the Sotho fell for both the concertina and the piano-accordion.

On the whole, there was a lot of combining of traditional and foreign musical materials in response to changed conditions and expressive

<sup>45</sup> Although the word "AMAKHOLWA" literally refers to those Zulus who had been converted to Christianity, the Zulu indigenous people would refer to any civilized people as "Amakholwa", whether they had been converted or not.

<sup>46</sup> Real *umaskandi* music shall be defined in the chapter on tuning the guitar (6.6.1.2)

needs. Western instruments provided new means and possibilities for the elaboration of traditional music principles (Coplan 1985: 25).

Definitely, the combination of the Zulu vocal song with the accompaniment of a guitar, and the latter to also accompany the praise singing are the ultimate fruits of such blending.

#### 2.6.6 ACCEPTANCE AND REJECTION OF UMASKANDI

When the miners and those that were working in ordinary urban areas came home with some of the unknown instruments, they did not always meet with approval. To some traditionals the urban musical instruments were an indication of having been unable to manage one's life in the mines or in the city where one had been working. The thinking was that such people could not withstand the demands of a working situation. They were taken to have tarried and spent all their money in wasteful nonsensical pleasures (*Wadliwa zindunduma*) [To be eaten by the sand dunes]. Such talk would refer to people who failed to bring home some earnings (for general maintenance, and also very seriously, money to pay *lobolo* for a bride). Such people were, therefore, a burden to others.

In some homesteads, a guitar would be played only outside the fence.

Playing it within the yard would cause the ancestors to turn their backs against the whole family. A disaster might befall the members of the homestead (Interview - Siphwo Gumede: 26<sup>th</sup> July 2004).

In spite of the music being pushed out of the arena of the homestead, a singing *umaskandi* musician, walking across the valley, would have meaning to the listener, mainly because the words of the music would be a familiar story. Even in townships, the sound of a passing instrument player<sup>47</sup> became familiar, even for its spectacle. Before the rise of the modern *umaskandi* musicians, guitar players were generally known to be walking musicians<sup>48</sup> whose music would fade away as they pass along. Miraculously, this music style has survived until it took the present-day guise and shape.

## 2.7 UMASKANDI SCHOLARSHIP

It can be re-iterated here that there are features in *umaskandi* music that cannot be written or notated on paper and that these should not appear as a handicap to learners. The playing of a music instrument is a physical action that can be demonstrated to the next person. If the unschooled musicians have been able to transmit knowledge to other unschooled persons, a trained teacher should be able to grasp this knowledge and also be able to pass it over to the next person, without necessarily having it transcribed on paper. If an ordinary *umaskandi* musician is able to practice his music, and even transfer his knowledge to another interested person, in spite of the fact they have

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<sup>47</sup> Alfred Nokwe recalls that at Cato Manor there was an itinerant musician, called MALAHA (Jacob Malahu) who would be followed by children around the streets, and would play his instrument for a small fee. The story went on that, he, originally from the West Indies, and, having been dejected by a lover, stowed away on a vessel bound for South Africa. He eventually found himself living in Cato Manor (Mkhumbane), which was the first huge settlement of shacks in Durban. His percussive instrument was a motor bike rim, covered with animal skin (Interview – Alfred Nokwe: 15<sup>th</sup> July 2004).

<sup>48</sup> Incidentally, there were similar itinerant musicians, called troubadours, in Europe in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

neither a designated literature for formal tuition nor a specified formal venue for practising their music, a formally schooled musician should, therefore, be able to achieve much more than the *umaskandi* musicians have done. A trained musician should have the ability to analyse the authentic *umaskandi* method and be able to expand its conception. From what has been observed, there should, definitely, be an observable reality and validity in the musical method of *umaskandi* musicians. Academics should not be condemning this method because it has proved its efficacy for the traditional *umaskandi* musicians. That it has not been propagated through transcription is not the ultimate.

Transcribing may not always be the measure of usability. In support of Garfia's views, George List says:

When two scholars transcribe the same recorded performance there is rarely agreement on all details heard. No matter how qualified or experienced the two scholars may be, their transcriptions will display differences not only in methods of notation but also in content, in what is notated (Garfia - 1974:353).

Merriam (as cited in page 57 of this document) emphasizes this point of relationship of cultural and traditional considerations in the notation of a cultural performance.

Jonathan Clegg (1981: 9-15) explains how IsiShameni style can be perceived in both the sound of the music (from the tuning of the guitar strings) and also from the dance patterns of the people of Shameni.

Vusabantu Ngema has also explained that *Ubhaca*<sup>49</sup> dance style can be better understood by being performed than being explained on paper (Interview - Ngema: 4<sup>th</sup> June 2004).

Ndlovu echoes a similar idea when he says that the above argument also applies to Zulu music:

...a dissertation about a people with a long history of oral transmission of culture and no evidence of written notation, whose ecological studies are conceptualized differently than in the West, and whose demographic tendencies are not approached in a numerical way, but approached through kinship system and lineages, and religion where everything has a continuum of men who have connections with God, presents special problems for analysis (Ndlovu 1996:15).

Ndlovu further states that Zulus do not notate their musical performance in written form, but in symbols and metaphoric forms:

...they link spiritual experience with expressive culture, like the wearing of *iziphandla* [armbands] and *ukugcaba* [traditional immunization by facial incisions] (Ibid.:16).

Although what is academic in *maskandi* music could be found in both the anthropological and the musicological sides, what is expedient in the lives of South Africans at this juncture in the understanding of the philosophical conceptualization of music creation and performance among the them. Ndlovu argues that the non-verbal modes of artistic conceptualization that have been mentioned above have their own right to be recognized, just as the neumatic

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<sup>49</sup> Originally danced by the Umzansi people (Donnybrook, Bulwer, Mkhomazi). It has now spread up to Nkandla and Nongoma areas.

notation of Gregorian Chant which merely suggested upward and/or downward movement of musical phrases.

John Blacking, a renowned ethnomusicologist, also supports the idea that a music style will always relate to the culture of its performers:

Nonverbal modelling systems may sometimes be as important as speech in influencing a course of social action (Blacking 1981:4).

Ndlovu explains that to Zulu traditional singers, a musical is representative of a metaphorical musical, as described by Mthethwa in a paper on syncreticism in church music:

A short melodic phrase is referred to as *umucu*, which means a short string of beads, given to a male suitor by her female friend to register acceptance of his love. Therefore, musically speaking, *umucu* represents an unfinished story or a musical phrase. When the couple decide to get married, the woman shows her consent by giving her male friend *umgexo* (necklace with an assortment of *ubuhlalu* (beads)). Musically, *umgexo* is symbolic of a fuller idea. To performers, a musical sentence is representative of a metaphorical journey to the stage (Bongani Mthethwa 1988:56).

From the above quotation, it appears that it is expedient for any scholar of the music of Africa to get involved in the cultural lives of the people. Without this, the scholar would definitely not be able to read the artistic comparison that has been brought forward in the quoted passage. This does not apply to foreigners only, but to all who wish to get involved in African music practice. It has indeed taken a while before some of the "schooled

Africans" could appreciate *umaskandi* music, whose basis is African traditional life.

*Umaskandi*, as an open book, is an unpretentious and sincere exposition of the inside life of an African and his philosophy. The main thrust of this document shall be on the philosophy behind the music of *umaskandi* musicians. It is understood that not all academic qualities of an art can be clearly apparent, overt and observable on the surface. There shall always be some qualities that are very subtle and which can only be identified by the insider of an art. Subtlety is a universal phenomenon in any art and it is the discovery of the subtle and the less obvious qualities of an item that lends beauty in any form of art. The music has, therefore, to be studied for the very fact that there might be some intrinsic subtle aspects in the art. Which might be the case with all the music of Africa. The following are some of the prevailing concepts about the traditional music of Africa:

- (a) African music should be learnt within its social context, as the music always obtains within a certain medium of human activity. Music is not done in isolation from a societal event.
- (b) It is, therefore, obvious that as a person gets educated in music, he also gets educated with music. This means that as the person learns the music, the music also becomes a vehicle for learning other knowledges, which can be learnt during the practice of music.

(c) All social activities, therefore, have some relevant music that goes with it, without which the social event is incomplete. For instance, a woman's wedding has to be formalized by a dancing event. If no social function was held to a betrothal, the woman in question would be described as one who (*akasinanga*) "did not perform the dance", which would mean that the marriage was not concluded. As such a marriage is without the traditional seal of authenticity, the absence of the dancing occasion, indeed, takes away a lot of pride in the woman's status.

(d) Among traditional Africans it is generally assumed that the practice of music making is a way of life for everybody. All people are expected to somehow participate in music performance. That the Zulu saying or adage that underlines this fact is found in a non-musical context shows that every person is expected to take part in music. For instance, if somebody, in ordinary life, does something that is not expected out of him, he is said to be acting against the rhythm (of the clapping of hands) - (*Uphambene nehlonbe*). This explains that if music is performed, all people are expected to participate and maintain the correct rhythm. In real life, all people should, therefore, conform to order.

Today South Africa is a democratic country, where socialization should be free and spontaneous. Understanding each other's philosophy of life is expedient in that it will expedite cross-cultural interaction. The

emphasis on this document is, therefore, on the philosophy behind the musicality of *umaskandi*.

### 2.7.1 SOME DOCUMENTATION ON UMASKANDI MUSIC

A few scholars have written some papers about *umaskandi* music. The main focus of these writers has been the practical and the performance side of the music. This document should be a little different from these in that its central issue should be the philosophical side of the style. The main concern is the philosophical viewpoint of the participants, which should communicate to the reader the way of life of the people. In other words the writing should go beyond the musical surface to explain to us the philosophy of life of the people.

Davies, N. (1995), when mentioning all the possible *umaskandi* instruments, gives an exposition of how the Zulu musicians manipulate the guitar so as to make it their own. In her paper she deals mainly with this one instrument because, she believes that:

...it is on this instrument that indigenous musical principles can be most effectively realized (1995:29).

She describes the various styles of tuning the guitar to suit the various regional variations of performance styles and explains a number of styles that can be found all over the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

Impey, A. (2001), in her survey of Zulu music and musical instruments in the Greater St. Lucia Wetlands Park

Authority, cites two musical instruments that were adapted by the Zulu people for their use. These are *Udloko*, a single stringed instrument, and the guitar. By having been adapted, she means that both instruments were originally not rooted in Africa. She explains the performance culture of the guitar and how this got fused with other forms of Zulu performance culture.

A paper written by S.R.T Koloti (1993) on the *Hlonipha* Custom in Zulu Language is relevant to this document in that it ideals mainly with the people's philosophy of respecting one another amongst the Nguni tribes in general and, in particular, the Zulu People. Although it does not deal with musical instruments, it is relevant in that it touches on the peoples' way of life, which is a great challenge in today's South African multi-racial societies.

In his paper, Jonathan Clegg (1982:8-14), explains a number of Zulu dance patterns, some of which have been transformed into guitar music. It is this transference of a (visible) dance choreography into an (audible sound) that further confirms the contextual nature of African music. That quality of music being part of the social life of the Zulu people has never withered.

Musa Xulu (1995:170) in his paper, "The Revitalization of Amahubo Styles and Ideas in Zulu Maskanda Music", is convinced that *umaskandi* is derived from authentic Zulu traditional music instruments, which were *umakhweyana*, *isitotolo*, *ugubhu*, *isicelekeshe*, and *abadlokwe*. Although Xulu does not identify the basic point of similarity, I would support his idea by pointing out that the time rhythm in *umakhweyana*

music is the basic pulse division in which music phrases are contained. The accented beats in the phrases are suggested by the rhythm of the spoken words. Another point that supports Xulu's idea is that rhythm in *amahubo* music is suggested by the word-rhythm of the libretto, which, on the other hand is derived from the social context from which the text is derived. In that way, rhythm has become an elaborate feature in the music of the Zulu people. This feature, like the social context of the music of the Zulu people, has always stood its ground. Even when Western orientated composers compose in the Zulu medium, features like rhythm and the social context become very distinct. The music of R.T. Caluza, though written in tonic solfa notation, maintains a very strong sense of rhythm. Similarly with JSM Khumalo, whose very first songs were a mixture of strong rhythm and "amabile" styles, his latest works are simply based on isiZulu rhythm and *amahubo* harmonization. These are some of the features that are resilient in Zulu music and which might have given Zulu indigenous music an urge over other styles when the Zulus were juxtaposed against other music cultures in the mines.

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## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.0 ZULU MUSIC - AS PART OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE.

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the structure of the social organization of a Zulu homestead and the basic cultural activities that possibly provided philosophical and spiritual sources and inspirational influences to *umaskandi* music practitioners. These are musicians who were able to maintain their indigenous culture even when they were away from their cultural source, that is, the home. Even when they were in alien lands, they did not get demoralized. In this chapter, the loyalty of *umaskandi* musicians is traced back to their indigenous homes, which are some of the items that the musicians sing about. Although there might be so many guitar players in the townships and other urban areas, those guitar players who are referred to as *umaskandi* musicians are those that are still linked to their fellowmen in the hinterland. This point and their inclination towards playing what they refer to as *isiZulu*<sup>50</sup> style tells us that they are somewhat linked to the culture of the Zulu people. This chapter, therefore, partly traces Zulu culture and also its linkage to the traditional Zulu homestead and Zulu cultural life .

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<sup>50</sup> *IsiZulu* style shall be discussed later in Chapter Five.

### 3.2 ZULU SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Horizontally arranged, a circular Zulu homestead, with circular several circular huts within, a circular cattle kraal, usually at the centre, surrounded by a circular fencing, were the immediately visible structures<sup>51</sup> of a traditional Zulu homestead. The shape immediately tells us that there was communalism in the life patterns of the people who occupied such structures.

Communal life started within a homestead by being faithful; to both the VERTICAL and the HORIZONTAL lines of *Ukuhlonipha* system.

Vertically, the father was the head of the family. He derived strength from the ancestors<sup>52</sup>. To confirm this, a head of a family has been very often heard pronouncing the words:

*Kanginamuzi mina. Lona eniwubonayo ngumuzi kababa.* (I do not have a homestead of my own. This one that you see is my father's (Interview - Zama Khumalo: 19<sup>th</sup> January 2003).

Very often, *baba* (the father), mentioned in the above passage, might be no more. But, referring to him would strengthen the vertical government of a homestead. The visible head of the family, therefore, that is, the interacting father, derived his strength from the unseen ancestors. In turn, all the members of the family would look to him for direction. Immediately below him were his wife\wives, who would *hlonipha*<sup>53</sup> his word. The latter persons, that is, he and they, were the living parents. In turn,

<sup>51</sup> Nyembezi and Nxumalo - 1983: 38-89.

<sup>52</sup> Only the elderly members of a family were expected to communicate with the ancestors.

<sup>53</sup> *Hlonipha* the word used as a verb - in this instance.

their children would look to the parents for orders. In *ukuhlonipha* system, besides the homestead set-up, any person, regardless of his age and family relationship, had to be accorded a proper *ukuhlonipha* attitude. But, any absence of *ukuhlonipha* attitude towards the elderly, especially from the younger generation, was a serious crime. Although this form of education had emphasis on the top-down (VERTICAL) application, it encouraged a sense of respect in every individual.

Within each age group, social interaction was HORIZONTAL. First and foremost, people were formally classified according to their age. This was known as *ukubuthwa* (regimentation). Each person had to interact freely, but still with some amount of respect, with those of his age group or his equals. This was the practice that was known as the *abontanga* or *awontanga*<sup>54</sup> classification.

This *awontanga* (peer group classification) concept that transcended all levels of life was the binding force in all the social activities of the people. It was a form of an educating institution that was built into the people's community life since all age levels were an automatically established classifying factor. Each person had to behave or act in relation to what was anticipated of and by the age group. If not, that person would be censured, by all the people around him. Children, especially, could be admonished, not only by their parents, but also by any adult person who might notice any form of cultural departure. It was an open system and it was effective.

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<sup>54</sup> See also page 131 - for this social classification.

The constitution for such peer-groups, which was not written anywhere, but in their heads, spelt out the mode of life that they were supposed to live.

This classification by age applied in all the age groups and was recognized by all members of the societies. People of the same age would interact together. Failure to reciprocate mutually with one's *abontanga* (equals) would be a shame.

The circular shape of the homestead suggested the overall communalism that started within each individual homestead, and would spread to the neighbours, and eventually, to the whole community. This affinity with the community was significant in that the performing arts as a whole, including music learning and music practice, were a communal issue. There were no schools, and, the guidance of children from infancy to adulthood was a societal issue.

Several writers have confirmed the existence and success of traditional education before the arrival of the Western school system. Wells, a Historian, explains the efficacy of *ukubuthwa* (regimentation into peer groups) and the significance of the role of *Umunzane* and *indunas* in the organization of a community structure, and how these structures crumbled at the onset of urbanization:

... working in towns, especially, takes young people away from their homes and districts, and they do not grow up with their own *izintanga*<sup>55</sup> (Wells - 1944:16- 20).

As they spread out into towns and lived independently, their will to practise *ukuhlonipha*, a tenet on which morality was built, started to disintegrate.

A listener could identify a singing group from the words and mood of the song that the group sang. There were, indeed, different songs for the different groups and for the different functions.

Within the HORIZONTAL interaction of the peer groups, there was a lot of positive contention that was part of socializing. It was a means towards success, and, in whatever a person did, he had a picture of the reaction of his peers. Nobody liked to be a centre for laughter before his peers in whatever undertaking a person did.

All social activities, serious, solemn or pleasurable, had to conform to the established procedures of the various levels or stages. These are today some of the issues that are expounded by *umaskandi* musicians that help us to trace the philosophical background of the idiom. The truth is that they sing about what belongs to them. This belief is based on the topical nature of Zulu music.

The VERTICAL discipline of the indigenous order has been identified in *umaskandi* at the opening when the musician announces his background and parentage. At the height of his performance, Hhashelimhlophe Ngcobo usually repeats the announcement:

*Kusho mina umfo kaManyomfana*  
Say I, son of Manyomfana

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<sup>55</sup> This word 'Izintanga', that has been used by Wells, is a Xhosa version of the word 'abontanga'.

Phuzekhemisi also does refer to his father:

*Ngasho ngingumfo kaMajazana*  
Say I, the son of Majazana.

Mfazomnyama would also very proudly announce his father:

*Ngasho mina mfokaMgquzula.*  
Say I, the son of Mgquzula.

Mfazomnyama, in his *izibongo*<sup>56</sup>, would also announce his allegiance to his parents' order by practising some of the vocations of his parents. Although these could be a metaphor, reference to them explains the loyalty to the established order.

Singing about such cultural features would endorse that the singers were part of the culture and, secondly, it made the musician more popular with his listeners because he reiterates their (the listeners') culture.

### 3.3 HERITAGE FROM THE ROUND HUT

The traditional Zulu hut was round in shape. The circular shape was also seen in the order of the arrangement of the huts within the homestead. The cattle-kraal, within the homestead was also round. Beer pots, of all sizes, were round in shape. When men were either drinking beer or eating meat, they would seat in a circle or a semi-circle. The pot would circulate, from man to man, until everybody had taken a turn. Then it would be placed on the floor. Perhaps, if the circle were wider, the pot would circulate until the contents were finished. The shape of these

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<sup>56</sup> See also Chapter 6.16.2 (P. 245) - for vertical allegiance among the Zulu people.

these structures had a definite consequence on the music of the Zulu people:

- (a) When girls did their dance songs, they would stand in a circle, sing and clap hands, while the dancing girl would move into the centre of the circle.
- (b) Although *isicathmiya* choirs stand in a semi-circle when they are on stage, they start by forming a circle so as to get their tunes in order, in the well of the hall, before they climb on to the stage.
- (c) Male dancers also do sit in a circle in a performing venue and the dancer move into the centre of the circle, while the other participants sing and clap the rhythm.

*Umaskandi* practitioners, like all other Zulu musicians, postulated that philosophy in a different way. Their songs are cyclic. They are not through-composed and they are in short and repeated phrases. To an uninitiated person, the repetitions could sound unnecessary and boring. To the insider, the important issue in song is the impact of the words, which should be articulated for several times until the singer feels that the song has flowered. What matters in the vocal song is the thought-force of the words. Since Zulu music is topical, these have to be explored to satisfaction.

When the singing section has mellowed, the dance takes over. This section too is not limited to any specific

length, and its continuity depends on the contentment of the singers.

The leading instrumentalist will decide, when he feels that the whole performance is hot enough, to recite his praise poetry. In this instance again, the length of the poetry may be determined by the length of the composed verse. But an inspired leader can always add a few extra lines.

While the singers literally move in circles in performances like *isicathamiya*, in *umaskandi* it is the song that is cyclic. Nevertheless, the philosophy, that was inherited from the Zulu cultural set up, is maintained in both areas (Ndlovu - 1996:184-185).

### 3.4 AESTHETIC COMPETITIVENESS

The different social levels interacted mainly horizontally; that is, each person had to deal mainly with his equals. Girls of the same age would fetch either wood or water together. In music performance, one had to be involved with one's equals. The event of age classification would be witnessed taking place simultaneously in a mat eating party, where each group would be given their meat tray at the same time. There would be order in eating together, but not for the herd boys. Among them, the stronger boy would eat the first, and usually much more than the others.

There would be some form of constructive and aesthetic competitiveness that would cause people to improve their productivity in all their chores and at all levels. But the

sort of contention that was shown by the herd-boys was the not tasteful.

### 3.4.1 BULL FIGHTING

Small boys would start bullfighting with clay bulls. As they grew up they would actually bring oxen together to fight for the pride of having the strongest bull. Eventually the fight would be brought over to the boys so as to identify the leader. The strongest would be the leader.

Every family knew that when there was a feast, the meat traditionally given to boys, was the lungs and heart. Boys would contend over that, by stick-fighting, and the strongest would get *ubhedu* (the choicest meat).

When the boys grew up to become young men, such fights would be transferred to district fights at weddings. Contention never stopped. After such fights had been transferred into urban areas, the big men came to their senses and abandoned it. But, the tradition did not die out. Instead of fighting with weapons of war, in the cities they competed with music performance. Johnny Clegg describes this situation:

...the dance was becoming an alternative to the *uphenge*. So in Natal to this day you don't have organized stick fighting after a marriage. You have team dancing. People who come from different districts to a wedding come with dances. Armed with sticks etc., but they just fight their dance instead of fighting (Clegg, 1981:10).

This explains to us that traditional music competitions have descended from traditional inter districts fights and from the herd-boys' bull-fighting contents. This is the tradition that is today seen among *umaskandi* performers and also among *isicathamiya* weekly music contents. All *isicathamiya* performances are competition<sup>54</sup> performances. Whenever *umaskandi* musician says his *izibongo*, the verse is a challenge to other musicians of his style, and a warning, informing them how strong he is. *Umaskandi* musicians are, therefore, popular among the Zulu people because they are the carriers of the tradition.

Accomplishment in stick fighting gave the community a hope for success in warfare against invaders.

Accomplishment in warfare influenced all levels of society and all life ventures. It is this success that eventually became a metaphor for success in any field. Today, whenever a symbol of a Zulu shield, with spears and a stick are seen, it does not necessarily mean that the owner of that symbol wants to go to war. The sign is initially a symbol of identity. Secondly, it is an expression of his wish to succeed in whatever venture he has taken.

Even when war is verbalized, it does not mean that people want to go to battle. When Phuzekhemisi likens himself to a *mamba*<sup>55</sup>, it is not an invitation to take up arms. It is, but, an expression of a wish to be the best musician in his

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<sup>54</sup> Weekly in the Durban YMCA (Beatrice Street), Dalton Road Location, Glebelands Hostel Hall, S.J. Smith Hostel Hall, Te Huis Railway Hall, and many other place, *isicathamiya* competitions are held by the different choirs.

<sup>55</sup> See chapter Five (5.5.1) on *izibongo* (praise poetry) for an elaborate analysis.

category. All practitioners do express this wish. It is a continuation of a Zulu traditional aesthetic that has been adopted by all practitioners of this style. When they sing their *izibongo*, they start by introducing themselves. Then all speak highly of heraldry and conquest. This is the way in which they publicize themselves and it is an established trend in the *umaskandi* tradition.

Not only Zulu traditional musicians have sustained their activities by reference to contention. Music in schools has been sustained through choral competitions for quite a long time. Even adult choirs have been formed mainly for competing against other adult choirs. Although the motive for forming a choir might be music enjoyment, it is easier to get a bigger choir enrolment if the choir is meant to enroll for music a contest. Ndlovu says:

Performers refer to competitions as *ukusikazana* and *ukungcwekisana*, (pretend fighting)..  
(Ndlovu - 1996:171)

The metaphor, whether real or imaginary, was very effective in sustaining Zulu music and other aesthetic performing arts. This is the heritage of heroism that has come down from Zulu traditional life to influence today's *umaskandi* musicians. Even when they encountered foreign instruments, they were not intimidated. That they had no formal tuition did not seem to be an impediment. Their peer group motivation and confidence and a sense of identity helped the musicians to put forth an effort to create their own style of execution on the new instruments.

### 3.4.2 THE ORIGIN OF PRAISE POETRY

The source of praise poetry among the Zulu people was social life activity. The recitation of the poetry would be a reaction to some high-powered social activity. The domain where all this began was the cattle-rearing domain, where a herd boy would recite praises for his bull when it encountered other bulls. Every herd boy wanted his bull to win a fight against other bulls. So, he would sing praises to the animal. In that way he would learn the coining of the words, the use of metaphors, the phrasing, and, most importantly, the art of elocution.

With the passage of time, when herd boys grew up to be young men, they would give each other praise names, which would be popular especially amongst their peers and not with their family members. Praise names would be a replay of some elaborate incidents and episodes that the young man had encountered, and overcome.

The praise poetry in *umaskandi* is a continuation of a tradition that was part and parcel of Zulu heroism. Men who had been to war had their praises. These would be a brief or summary of the events and heroism of the young man. His peers, who were likely to have witnessed the event, would easily understand the poetic lines (Interview - Shange: 15<sup>th</sup> December 2004).

The praise poetry in *umaskandi*, therefore, did not come from the mines, but is a continuation of a long standing Zulu tradition.

### 3.5 THE ACTUAL ZULU INDIGENOUS MUSIC SCENE

In the original indigenous social system of Zulu life, the singing of *umlolozelo* (lullaby) for a little baby and *isilandelo* (rhyme) for toddlers was a daily affair. Baby - sitting was not a specialized practice. Every girl went through that a practice and she would be able to sing such music whenever a need for it arose. Obviously music learning had no formality, but it crept in as part of any activity that took place.

Bigger girls would sing their own songs when fetching either wood or water, while young boys had their songs for the activities associated with the cattle culture. Music was a way of life for all:

Songs are composed by almost everybody; children at play, boys herding the cattle, girls when working in the fields or at home, all invent songs. Almost every mother invents for her child a lullaby (*umlolozelo*) which she sings to the baby during its babyhood (Krige, 1936:36).

Wells says:

Every mother makes a lullaby for her child, its *isihlabelelo*, which is sung for the last time at the child's wedding, years afterwards (Wells, 1944: 36).

When the men from Zululand left their homes to work in the mines, they were a musical people, who knew how to create a rhyme, how to create a tune by whistling it, and how to perform a song by dancing to his music, which is known to be highly rhythmic.

Because of his creative nature of Zulu music, *umaskandi* can even recite *umlolozelo* to the accompaniment of his guitar, just as he recites praise poetry.

These men that were taken to work in the mines were musical people who were living musical lives in their homes. Their music training was in the practice of social life. It is against such a background that we look at the early life of *umaskandi*.

It is, therefore, through that attitude that *umaskandi* performers had no problem in establishing themselves. This facet of African music is well-expressed by Kwabena Nketia of Ghana:

Music and life are inseparable, for there is music for many of the activities of everyday life as well as music whose verbal texts express the African's attitude to life, his hopes and fears, his thoughts and beliefs (Nketia, K., 1963:1).

Even the first attempt by the baby to stand on her feet and also to start walking were sung or rhymed to the baby in a definite rhythmic order that the baby might easily understand. Some have been heard to be in eight pulses, like the following:

*Wama yedw' umntwa - na,*  
She stands alone, the baby,

*Wama yedw' umntwa - na,*  
She stands alone, the baby,

*We ma ye dwa - na - ,*  
She stands alone,

*Ngcathuzi, Ngcathuzi.*

Step by step; Step by step.

|  |      |   |     |   |     |   |     |   |      |   |     |   |     |   |   |  |
|--|------|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|------|---|-----|---|-----|---|---|--|
|  | 1    | : | 2   | : | 3   | : | 4   | : | 5    | : | 6   | : | 7   | : | 8 |  |
|  | Wa   | : | ma  | : | ye  | : | dwa | : | -    | : | na  | : | -   | : | - |  |
|  | Wa   | : | ma  | : | ye  | : | dwa | : | -    | : | na  | : | -   | : | - |  |
|  | Ngca | : | -   | : | thu | : | -   | : | ngca | : | -   | : | thu | : | - |  |
|  | Ngca | : | thu | : | zi  | : | -   | : | ngca | : | thu | : | zi  | : | - |  |

The significance of the above figure is that *umaskandi* musician, as a baby, went through the same experience of the eight-pulse rhythm. Surprisingly, his music still maintains the same time-rhythm. Eight-pulse phrases are naturally a popular length and time rhythm in African musicianship, whether the composition is a song or a rhyme (See Chapter Five - (5.6.1)).

As a baby, the child's world would be limited to the perimeter of the homestead. When the baby became a young girl or young boy, her world would get wider and she would start interacting with her peers within the homestead and also outside her home.

For the young men and women of marriage-able age, there were songs for *umemulo* party, *umcelo* ceremony, and *umbondo* ceremony, amongst a number of other intermediate arrangements. For a traditional ceremony many of the songs would be sung for the first time at the real performance. An outsider might not realize that, perhaps, most of the singers might be singing the song for the first time. This

is because of the very effective method that they use for teaching the songs. The secret was that all participants got to know this method until it became part of their method of performing vocal music. In short, in any traditional gathering, learning a new song would be part of the performance and the learning posed no problems. It would become even much easier if the tune was known. The idea of rehearsing for a wedding is practice that emerged at mission stations when the wedding repertoire consisted of through-composed songs that are different from the traditional Zulu call and response patterns.

Although music transmission through the radio and television might be a very great force today, the traditional approach to music making is still very effective in that it comes as an activity that is exciting to observe.

Throughout a person's life there would exist, especially among the IsiZulu speaking communities, very influential peer groups. These groups, in all ages, had a similar task of keeping in touch with their equals and keeping each other informed about matters relating to their lives and what should be done and what should not be done. Although there were no schools, there were means of learning the ways of life orally from those who were living with the growing person.

As a young person grew up, he would know that:

- (a) Music was an activity for every body.

- (b) There were no specialists who were meant to either compose or perform the music while the larger group of people formed an audience. All people would freely participate in any music activity or practice.
- (c) Since Zulu music was topical, every person was expected, at one time or another, to compose a song, that should relate to some event around him.
- (d) Zulu music was a form of communication. A song very seldom consisted of neutral words. Normally a composition would always carry a message of some kind and the targeted person would always be socially or physically in close proximity of the singer, to receive the message.

### 3.5.1 MUSIC AS PART OF THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The resilience from extinction that has been demonstrated by Zulu music is a reflection of the resistance of other African arts and associated cultures from being removed from. In spite of a lot of influence to replace some of these, the Zulu people are still maintaining a lot of them, like the following:

- (a) The Zulu people have not moved away from the culture of negotiating as families whenever young people wish to get married. This negotiation has preserved the culture of *ilobolo*.

- (b) The revival of the reed ceremony by the Paramount King of the Zulus is one such attempt of reviving the pride of virginity in young women.
- (c) The wearing of Zulu traditional garb and generally African garb whenever there are Zulu traditional is a form of acknowledgement of loyalty to Zulu culture.
- (d) *Ibandla lakwaShembe* has continued to use Zulu music for the conducting of their services. Besides the Zulu community, there are still other African orientated religions, like the Zionist Christian Church, popularly known as *Ibandla likaLegkanyane*, who practise Western Christianity in an African approach. This tells us that the resilience in Zuluness is part of Africanness.
- (e) The continued building of (round huts) next to the main Western building, the idea being a relic of the Zulu traditional hut.

### 3.5.2 SYMBOLISM, METAPHOR AND ARTISTIC IMMUNITY IN MUSIC

The use of figures of speech and other artistic devices only help to heighten the aesthetic and affective side of the style. The ability to use these differs from person to person.

#### 3.5.2.1 SYMBOLISM

The competitive nature of *umaskandi* music makes Phuzekhemisi to clothe himself with image of a mamba that should not be

provoked. This is said merely to inform his fellow musicians that he is the best musician:

*Ungaboyithint'imamba isemgodini. Iyolikulimaza.*

Never provoke an imamba in its hole. It will bite you.

At the height of his performance, Phuzekhemisi will always sound this warning.

When Khethani, the brother of Phuzekhemisi, compliments the Zulu service of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, nicknamed UKHOZI (The eagle), symbolic of hitting the airwaves, he extends the symbolism by saying:

*Sibambelele emaphikweni; Sigudl'ulwande siqond' eThewkwini.*

We are clinging onto the wings of the eagle, along the coast, on our way to Durban.

These words inform us that it was the radio that promoted them throughout the country.

### 3.5.2.2 METAPHOR

Metaphor can also be very aptly used to heighten the image of the musicians or to paint a very effective image of the information he might be delivering. Phuzekhemisi also sounds a warning to other *umaskandi* musicians not to contend with him, when he says:

*Wabale Nsizw'amagam'akho; Singabas'eMkhomazi,*

Count your words (you) young man; We are from Mkhomazi.

And goes on to say:

*Sayincela komama ingoma.*

We suckled it from our mothers, the *ingoma* (song).

Metaphor in this phrase is found in the idea that to Phuzekhemisi, music is second nature. Music to him is food and is compared to milk that he suckled from his mother. He, therefore, may not be separated from his music.

Phuzekhemisi also referred to the union of the three practitioners, (SXAXA MBIJ), that is, himself, Hhashelimhlophe and Mfazomnyama as:

.... *yisigxabhane lesi bafana;*

..this is a stone-breaking caterpillar, you boys;

*Ningasondeli, sizonilimaza.*

Do not come close: It will hurt you.

(Sxaxa Mbij' - MCGMP 40711 - Side 2-2).

Literally, *isigxabhane* is a caterpillar - a large heavy-duty machine that breaks rocks and removes tons of sand when building new roads. Younger musicians should, therefore, not dare come close to the three musicians as they might be devastated. Such is the power of metaphor. It intensifies the meaning of an expression.

### 3.5.2.3 ARTISTIC IMMUNITY IN MUSIC

Artistic immunity refers to artistic licence, that gives the artist freedom to express himself without being admonished for doing so, no matter how sensitive the information might be. As an artist, the law protects him. By the use of his art, he may refer even to very confidential information. That was how Phuzekhemisi, in his song, "*imbizo*", was able to shout about the unfairness of

certain chiefs and traditional leaders who impose unfair taxes on their subjects in rural communities (Chapter 5.5.1).

It is indeed common knowledge that *umaskandi* music is a form of communication.

At times the singing might be made a scapegoat, when a person intends to indict his or her colleagues in a situation where all are expected to interact on equal terms. For instance in the case of a woman who intends to attack her colleagues with whom they would be sharing a husband in a polygamous situation, music can be made a vehicle for verbal attack. But the performer would remain unquestionable because the source of the words would be the music and not the singer. Even though these lines might be sung to a baby, those who are targeted will not fail to read the message:

Inqushubeyane kaMama!  
*The mother's paunchy one!*

Inqushubeyana kaMama!  
*The mother's paunchy one!*

Ziyangquz' umzondwase,  
*They are admonishing the hated one,*

Ziyangquz' umzondwase,  
*They are admonishing the hated one,*

Beth' umbangose kaMama.  
*They say he is the mother's tool for conflict,*  
(Ntombela, Mathenjwa & Donda, 1997:90).

In this instance the music of *umaskandi* can be used as harborage. This means that the sound of instrumental music can be sounded while the musician recites a verse that he would not recite in ordinary speech. He therefore hides behind the music. This was noticed in the song: "*Amakhansela*" by Phuzekhemisi (Gallo MCDMP 40886: Side 2.1). The song is an indictment to the Councilors of his local government, who have not delivered any services to the people. For such utterances, the musician may not be challenged formally because the source of the information is not him, but the song.

### 3.5.3 MUSIC AS A FORM OF COMMUNICATION

In music as a form of communication, Francis Bebey, an African musicologist, gives the following example:

....a lullaby, like almost all-African music, conveys a number of ideas simultaneously. Outwardly, it is intended to soothe the baby and lull him to sleep but at the same time, it expresses his mother's gratitude toward Nature or God - for having given her a child, a privilege denied to so many other women (Bebey 1987:6).

An interesting feature in music as communication was that the phenomenon would not be confined to human interaction, but, in Zulu cultural activities, the practice could be observed even between human beings and animals. A herd-boy could communicate with his animals through whistling. He would not milk the cow without whistling a tune as a way of inducing and encouraging the animal to co-operate. Musically speaking, whistling is melody making because the

whistler emits definite and horizontal syllables, from one point to another, with intelligible melodious phrasing. The sound that is produced in whistling is pitched similarly to the whistler's vocal singing. Such moments of music making are some of the experiences which empowered Zulu musicians and gave them a sense of melody making. When they bounced against foreign instruments in the mines, they were able to start from somewhere. Mfazomnyama would sometimes whistle in a melodically figured but punctuated rhythm in the middle of a performance. When asked why he did this, he would say:

*Ngisuke ngikhombisa ukuthi izinto ziyenzeka.*

I whistle to show that things are now happening.

*Ngisemncane ngisenga, uma seliduma emansumpeni,*

In my youth, milking the cow; the milk-bucket getting full,

*Ngangiye ngishaye ikhwela;*

I would whistle;

*Ukukhombisa ukuthi izinto zihamba kahle.*

To show that things were happening.

*Nenkomazi yayizwa uma sengishaya ikhwela.*

Even the cow seemed to be aware of my whistling.

*Ilalele;*

It would listen;

*It would not kick the milk-bucket*

*Yayingalikhahleli ithunga.*

It is apparent that, therefore, whistling can be an expression of a dramatic moment.

It can be argued that traditional learning of indigenous music superceded school education in that the former was

done within the context of the activity. A lullaby would be sung to a baby and not simply to the classroom walls. Corn-harvesting songs would be done on the field and the performance would be meaningful and convincing. Therefore, aesthetically, the traditional singer would have a stronger thought-force in the meaning of the words in his figuring of his verses. That is the strength of our present day *umaskandi* performers. They do not sing from books, but they relay in music what they have experienced.

### 3.6 MUSICALITY IN ZULU CULTURE

The significance of musicality in Zulu culture is underlined by the two words, which are: *igagu*<sup>56</sup>, a word that refers to a person who sings well and who easily takes up a music leadership wherever there is a singing crowd or, simply, a need, to start a musical performance. This act of initiating a performance, which also includes the ability to compose music, would be referred to as *ubugagu*. A person's inability to start a performance, when there was an obvious need for it, would be quickly noticed by the people, and the person who is not able to take the lead, when opportunity calls for it, would be referred to as *idliwa*. So, the inability to rise to the occasion would be referred to as *ubudliwa*.

These two words, *igagu* and *idliwa*, have wider connotations than simply being a reference to singing. *Ubugagu* also refer to the awareness, the intelligence, the timing, the sensibility, and the perception of when, how, and which

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<sup>56</sup> See also the GLOSSARY for a more elaborate definition of the terms IGAGU or UBUGAGU and IDLIWA.

musical style should be performed. This is one of the subtle academic merits of Zulu traditional music that the school could have developed, because it is such artistic intelligence that has a bearing on the people's choice of repertoire and curriculum of life in general. These are some of the artistic abilities that have been displayed by *umaskandi* musicians in their performances.

*Ubudliwa* also refers to a person's inability to speak well or to address people properly. So, the word also has something to do with ordinary speech.

The introduction of the Western school system did not link up, inherit or continue from where the previous system had ended, but it tended to contend with the previous systems without a commendation of a single speck of good. The traditional educational practice catered for all age groups. The *awontanga*<sup>57</sup> (peer grouping) applied to all levels. Young boys would sing with other young boys. Young men had their own songs. A young man would not sing an *ihubo* that is done by the elderly men. For a virgin it would be a pride to compose her last song as a girl on her wedding day, when she would transfer to a new group of *izintanga*, which would be a level of *awomakoti* (early wifhood). Contrary to this traditional organization, the school would take care of only those who were at the school-going age, and they would be expected to preach the gospel to thousands of others who had not been to school. It is indeed hard to transfer ten, twelve or fourteen years of classroom education to one's equals in one day. In African

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<sup>57</sup> *Awontanga* or *Abontanga* are one's equals or all those that are in the same peer group people of almost the same age being classified as one group.

traditional culture, education on was an on-going process, from birth to death.

For instance, although South Africa has, since 1994, voted for a democratic government, some officials, whom the Western education system could not train properly still go on, in the name of law, to exploit ignorant and unsuspecting rural citizens by demanding unexplained taxes. Such criminal acts are obviously done by criminal people and also by people who have no proper means of receiving finance from their subjects or people who were improperly educated in their business. *Umaskandi* musicians sing about these things, as does "Phuzekhemisi" in his song entitled "IMBIZO" - CCTIG 456: (Side one). (This song is discussed in detail in Chapter Five (5.5.1))

Music participation in Zulu culture started at early age:

- (a) From the cradle, the mother would sing to the baby. By so doing, she expected the baby to respond.

### 3.7 ZULU NDIGENOUS MUSIC - VIRTUALLY UNKNOWN TO URBANIZED ZULU PEOPLE

*Amahubo* music is relevant in this chapter in that some of the *umaskandi* repertoire like that of Hhashelinhlophe Ngcobo is based on the *amahubo* melodies<sup>58</sup>. He also starts this item by singing reciting the *izaga*<sup>59</sup>, which sets the mood for the starting of the singing.

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<sup>58</sup> See Item Number 2 in *Izingqungulu Zomhlaba* (SXAXA MBLJ' 4 - CDGMP 40875) Track 2.

Although *amahubo* singing is an authentic Zulu style, it should be accepted that the style is practised mainly in the rural areas by ardent traditionalists. These have always been virtually unknown to Christianized urbanized Africans. Even those few that may happen to have practised this genre may not be easily identified because they may simply sing *amahubo* out of context (Interview - Vusabantu Ngema: 4<sup>th</sup> June 2004).

A phenomenon that I have noticed at the University of Zululand is that whenever there are student uprisings in the campus, the singing is always done in *amahubo* style. The confrontational environment can be very pertinent for warlike confrontation. In such incidents, very often, one may find that even those who have never sung this musical form relish to join the anarchistic *toyi-toyi* activity, not necessarily with a rebellious attitude but expressly to enjoy the singing and the dancing. There were particularly two students who were doing drama and music and who used to enjoy a *toyi-toyi* for its musical content. They were Mkhonzeni Gumede and Vusabantu who was popularly known as "Nkohlankohlo"<sup>60</sup> Ngema. Gumede would say:

*Thisha, kumnandi ukudansa iToyi-toyi.*

Teacher, it is nice to dance the *toyi-toyi*.  
(26<sup>th</sup> October 1991).

For the very reason that he referred to it as a dance, to him participating in such an activity he did not take the

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<sup>59</sup> *Izaga* are explained in the Glossary.

<sup>60</sup> Vusabantu Ngema, who has taught dance in Drama schools of the University of Cape Town and the University of Zululand, completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Zululand in the early 1990's. His real home is Melmoth and he is well-versed in traditional Zulu music, including *amahubo* and dance.

event as a wholly belligerent activity, but he looked forward to some aesthetic indulgence in the activity, in spite of the overall confrontation.

Finally, disorientation of Africans from what is African has finally resulted in producing African academics and leaders who did not understand the relevance of African people's art to their own people. This disaster was well demonstrated when an African manager of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, Romeo Kumalo, withdrew a weekly Television Programme of African cultural music, *EZODUMO*, from the air. The extent of the disregard of the manager's own traditional music had gone to the extent that he could not take heed of the State president's (Thabo Mbeki's) own African Renaissance programmes for the whole of Africa's people. As a result, a host of African listeners:

...lambasted SABC<sup>61</sup> 1 and its general manager, Romeo Kumalo, for the axing of the Zulu Cultural Radio Programme, EZODUMO (Sowetan - 13-05-2002: 4).

The remarks that were made by all the viewers who were demanding the re-instatement of the programme suggested that the programme of cultural music in question enjoyed a very wide viewership.

In short, when the Africans took the route to school, they dropped their traditional music on the threshold of the classroom with a promise of learning more and better things than they had learned in their traditional environment. But the disaster was that music education was not part of

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the curriculum in the new type of a school. As a result, Africans did not receive sufficient music education to extend or replace what they would have learnt at home. They received only enough to enable them to sing the hymns, but not to compose them, unlike the traditional African whose musical practice was to compose<sup>62</sup>, teach and perform his music.

Performance of a song in a traditional environment implies the composition of a song, the leading and orientation of the song to the crowd, and finally, singing the song. In short, the song is learnt and performed on the spot. The few Africans who became composers in tonic solfa were only those who were lucky to access the knowledge through private tuition. There are even fewer who compose in staff notation.

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<sup>61</sup> The South African Broadcasting Corporation.

<sup>62</sup> . When a traditional African introduces a song to a group at any gathering, the group may; not necessarily be knowing the song. He, therefore stands up and sings his section of the "call & response song, then sings the response, which is the section of the bigger crown around him. This format is well understood, and does not need to be announced. At the second singing of his initial phrase, the responding crowd, pick up their section of the song. After two or three repetitions, the songs simmers (Ingoma iyavuthwa) and everyone sings the song. The initiator of the singing may have known the song previously. He may also be composing the song, by basing his libretto on some current, sensitive and relevant information or gossip.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 RESILIENCE OF ZULU MUSICAL TRAITS: AGAINST FOREIGN CULTURAL ENCROACHMENT

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The title of this chapter indicates that Zulu music, which survived in the changing times of urbanization, industrialization, changing economy, and changing political life, did endure some repression from the new environment. Such opposing forces came mainly from the expatriates and partly from some of Zulu musicians who had already been consumed by the new foreign styles.

*Umaskandi* emerged as a composite style that contained both musical and performing arts under one roof. This style confirmed that in spite of the cultural invasion, the original and authentic pillars of Zulu music did not get eliminated. Some of the styles that contended with Zulu music are, today, gradually becoming unpopular with Zulu people. Some aspects of these foreign styles have been fused with Zulu music, without overshadowing the Zulu indigenous character. This chapter shows that the period of urbanization, industrialization and missionization caused great musical upheaval in the lives of the Zulu people. Musically, a wide assortment of styles came into existence. But, in spite of all the eruption of the arts, Zulu music has not lost its ethos.

## 4.2 A CONGLOMERATION OF STYLES AND ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES

As soon as the Zulus and other South African indigenous people shifted away from their indigenous ways of life, whether temporarily or permanently, there emerged conglomeration of musical and artistic cultures that sprang up with the development of the culture of cities. As people bounced against new ideas, they themselves created new styles and variations of what they had known previously. The new ways of life that displaced the Zulus from their cultural practices did not link up with such practices. The social order of the expatriates, if there was any, did not provide a smooth transition for the Zulus whose order had been displaced. The new music that came from Europe was completely different from *amahubo*. Although there were new laws, civil laws had nothing to do with culture and Zulu ancestral religions. On the other hand, the Zulus became free from *ukubuthwa*<sup>43</sup> (regimentation into peer groups). That freedom enabled people to interact with people outside their sphere of influence and also outside their own racial groups. The freedom of being an artist superseded any traditional order and it was under such social conditions that people sang songs that were different from those that they sang while they lived true indigenous African lives.

## 4.3 URBANIZATION AND INDUSTRIALIZATION

The need for men to migrate to look for work in cities and industrial areas was two-fold. First, as mentioned in

Chapter Two (2.6), they were forced to pay poll tax (a stipulated amount in form of cash). So, the only way to raise money was by looking for work either in the mines or in other forms of industry. Secondly, the mines needed manpower and this had to be imported from the rural areas of South Africa.

In as far as music activity was concerned, the urban areas had, to a certain extent a freedom of choice. Zulus in cities never regarded themselves as city dwellers since their families were left in the indigenous homes. So, although they were physically in cities and towns, spiritually, they belonged to their rural homes. They, therefore, would never involve themselves with the music of the towns because they were not committed to the social activities of the towns.

It was out of that home-linked population that emerged *isicathamiya* musicians and *umaskandi*. This was the population that sang about their girl friends who were left at home in the country. Although *isicathamiya* music is mainly vocal, it is not free from non-Zulu influences. The earliest *isicathamiya* performers would put on three-quarter coats that were designed in the style of tailcoats. This form of dress was an importation from foreign cultures. From the other population that eventually settled in townships, and lived the lives of *stokfel* parties<sup>64</sup>, shebeens and *Marabi*<sup>65</sup> nights, was born some syncretic urban Zulu styles, like

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<sup>63</sup> Nyembezi and Nxumalo - (1983:108).

<sup>64</sup> See Coplan - 1985: 130.

<sup>65</sup> Marabi music displayed an advanced stage of racial mixing, when musicians of different races disregarded the racial laws of South Africa and played their music together.

*mbhaqanga*, *mgqashiyo* and *umaskandi*. Although all the styles that are mentioned here are based on Zulu culture, *umaskandi* seems to supersede the others in such content and extent.

#### 4.4 CHANGING SINGING STYLES AND PATTERNS

The main forces that brought changes from indigenous Zulu cultural life were urbanization, industrialization, the church and the school system. All these institutions waved a flag of *impucuko* (civilization) as the catchword for dropping the old ways of living and adopting the new ones that were publicized as a betterment of the future. But above all these, there was political pressure that was breathed by every black person, and which was constantly reminding all indigenous people to be subservient. Subservience in social, political and economical issues led to subservience in musical practice.

In urban and industrial areas, imported ways of singing and music participation impacted on the people without any organized method of articulating the change. In schools and in the church, the change to other styles was actually delivered mainly through imposition in the school syllabus and persuasion in the exposition of the new religious doctrine. These four areas of musical activity later produced different kinds of musicians who are today trying to find identity by looking back into what is supposed to have been their authentic means of music-making.

#### 4.4.1 THE INFLUENCE OF THE SCHOOL AND THE CHURCH

While the mines and newly formed urban areas were struggling with an undefinable music programme, the schools were supposed to take over, from indigenous traditional home programmes, the education of the youth, that included music education. This was a time, around the first half of the twentieth century, when the power of the homestead and the Zulu community was beginning to decline. The father having gone to work in the towns, the boys and girls beginning to interact differently, and the mothers learning to take charge of home management, the father was far away in the mines. Most importantly, the school did not provide an education as proper as home education. For instance, it had no programmes on morality like those that had been offered by *amaqhikiza*<sup>66</sup>. In short, the school did not take over and continue from where home education had ended.

Although the schools, initially run by missionaries, became the most influential institutions since children would go there with a specific aim of being taught, they did not educate the whole child. Schapera says:

The school and the church do not and cannot provide as comprehensive and thorough a training as the Native child received under purely tribal conditions (Schapera - 1937:381).

Even at the time when the Afrikaner government completely took over the management of African education, by the

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<sup>66</sup> Nyembezi and Nxumalo - 1983: 110.

promulgation of the Bantu Education Act of 1953<sup>67</sup>, music learning was not a priority. By then, mission schools had long established the order for the promotion of Western cultures. The church and the school were, therefore, synonymous in displacing Zulu traditional music from the life of a Zulu child.

What happened was that while the men had left their homes to work in the mines, the missions flooded indigenous communities with new music styles from Europe. So, while new styles were born in the mines and in the cities, new forms of performance were set up for those that were in mission stations and surrounding areas.

*Amakhohwa* (those that had been converted) and the educated people quickly welcomed the Western style of singing as an integral part of *impucuko* (civilization). As a result, there soon developed societies of *izifundiswa* (the educated).

Eventually new forms of music performance were practised in mission stations. New triadal four-part harmonization replaced the doubled fourths and fifths of Zulu music. New forms of choreography, like *ukureka*<sup>68</sup>, became very fashionable. New types of wedding songs replaced *amahubo* music.

Written music, in form of tonic solfa notation and staff notation, was now introduced in schools. Apparently, the former notation, with its transferable tonic, became much easier and quicker to apply Zulu schools, as these would

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<sup>67</sup> Jones, 1970: 70

<sup>68</sup> Ukureka comes from the raking movements of ragtime music of the 1920's (Ndlovu - 1996:60).

not be involved in higher musicological studies. Western music became a status symbol.

It, therefore, became a norm that to be educated meant to be able to perform Western music in the form of Tonic Solfa notation. The hymn in the church and in schools, sung in the major\minor scale, became the epitome of high-class culture. Thus was seen the appearance of an era, in South Africa, of the emergence of African composers who composed the new music and matched it to African words. Many of these learned this new method in mission schools, while some of them received music education overseas. That was the period of musicians like R.T.Caluza, A.A. Khumalo and Nimrod Sithole in KwaZulu-Natal Coplan, 1985: 116-124).

Concurrent with the practice of music, It also became fashionable for the educated to dress and speak like the dominating race. The English language became the language of the educated.

#### 4.4.2 THE EDUCATED ZULU PEOPLE

Indeed, the Africans who got educated in the Western system developed a notion that to be educated was to assume a way of life that was lived by the Whites. It took some time before such ideas could be elucidated. So was the case with music. For some educated Africans Western music was preferred to African music. And indeed those African elite who eventually believed that the best method of singing was the Western major scale, eventually, could not notice the beauty of African musicality. The mistake was that they did not look upon the two systems as different means of

achieving different styles of music performance. Their idea of *impucuko* was that, having been orientated and educated in the Western system, they had to condemn the indigenous methods.

Unfortunately, these practices could not penetrate the whole population, because, primarily the South Africans had a culture of singing which was knitted into their lives. The school-going percentage among Zulus was too small. The Africans, as a whole, had a strong music culture of their own and for them music was not an activity just for concert halls and other similar venues. They did not have public centres put aside for music. Even when music was done at home, it would be an activity for everybody. Visitors were not to be treated as strangers when it came to matters of music performance.

Educated Africans did not possess the philosophy of the indigenous rural African whose philosophy of harmony was deep seated into the philosophy of life of the people. The harmony of sound to the African-orientated Zulu was based on social harmony. Therefore, harmony in his music should have much more than the Western four voices that are pitched in relation to triad harmony. To the Zulu person all sounds that constitute the sound of, for instance, a "waterfall" are welcome to his music (Ndlovu - 1996: 187 - 192).

#### 4.4.3 THE NEW WESTERN CURRICULUM

The imbalance between the African orientated curriculum and the Europeanized learning content can be observed in a

history book, *History For Bantu Schools*<sup>69</sup> by R.W. Wells, that was prescribed for standards five and six in the 1940's and 1950's. In the book, the history of African culture is contained in only fifty pages.

This is an example of many other disparities that existed in the content of the school curriculum for the Zulu community. Although the curriculum was organized, administered, supervised and finally evaluated, as a pedagogical process, the rationale behind the process was ill-conceived in that it was prepared by people who had no insight into the academic needs of the Zulu people. The situation was the same with all the subjects, including music.

This great cultural upheaval, in the work situation of the urban areas, in mission stations, and in the role of the indigenous homestead as the facilitator of life orientation, could not come out with a valuable solution for the promotion of life for the Zulu people, that were at the centre of the game. The practice at the mentioned different points was unco-ordinated. Two issues could be mentioned about *umaskandi* musician:

- (a) The musician sang about this woeful break-up of family life. People who could understand him were only those who had been part of the circumstances. For an example, Hhashelimhlophe sings about a young woman whose fiance' is

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<sup>69</sup> The book was used by Mr E.V. Mathibela while he was principal of the Lamontville School in 1946. He later left Lamontville to read for a B.A. degree at the University of Fort Hare. He

working in away from home. The latter is sending messages to those who are travelling home. He asks them to greet his fiancée for him and that he too would soon be coming home (see Chapter 5.5.2).

- (b) *Umaskandi* musician was able to maintain his traditional way of life as much as possible, practically and spiritually, even when he was exposed to urban conditions. He was able to promote his music with foreign aid and was not swallowed by the Western guitar.

Zulu musicians, who had never been to school to learn the Western scale, should, however be commended for manipulating the unknown instruments and come out with a method that is a variation<sup>70</sup> of the Western scale. For an example, Shelembe, who is a Gumboot dance *umaskandi* guitarist has a slightly different tuning for his guitar. Although the strings of his instrument are tuned forwards and backwards, he comes out with a harmony of his own (See Chapter Six - 6.5.1.6).

It is for such deeds that it is felt that there is an academic merit in the *umaskandi* method of making music. They also had the conviction and the fortitude to go on with this musical practice without condemning the new music, but by simply doing their own activity.

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graduated in 1951. When he returned to Durban, he was promoted to be an inspector of schools in the Durban circuit.

<sup>70</sup> For instance, Fleiman Shelembe, a guitarist who plays *umaskandi* music for Gumboot dance, came out with a rare tuning that goes forwards and backwards, but finally coming out with some interesting harmony (See Chapter Six - 6516).

#### 4.4.4 THE NEW URBAN SYNCRETIC STYLES

In addition to *umaskandi*, the appearance of working class Zulu music styles like *umgqashiyo*<sup>71</sup> and *umbhaqanga*, was not a birth, but a continuation of a people's culture. Their re-emergence as urban styles demonstrates the resilience and pliability of the original Zulu styles which these were built. The impact of foreign styles against which Zulu music was matched in urban areas could not absorb the impact of African rhythm and its overall texture. The addition of foreign instrumentation to Zulu music enhanced its musicality instead of abating it.

#### 4.4.5 GOSPEL MUSIC

Gospel music, an import from America, found fertile ground among the Zulu middle class, since the music was inclined towards Zulu rhythm. The music is a definite shift from the Western classical hymn. In a way the music did answer the rhythmic needs of the Zulu people. As an escape from the pressures of classical music which were imposed by the Westerners, the Americans gave themselves liberty to add their rhythm, re-shape the melodies, add a fermata where they wish to do so, and a host of other changes that suite their own outlook.

This music was born in America under conditions that were similar to those that gave birth to the chorus in South Africa. Black Americans, who had been shipped to America as slaves, were forced to disuse their language until subsequent generations could not pick up anything of their

original African culture. But, because of the dynamism of human nature, they ultimately created the Negro Spirituals. Thereafter they fused their own rhythm into the hymn:

The infusion of ragtime, blues and jazz into the religious musical expression of black Americans in the early twentieth century created black gospel music. It became a style that comfortably merged sacred and secular influences (Willoughby 1993:54).

Ultimately Gospel music landed in South African. Zulus and other South Africans at large take pleasure from performing this musical style.

Gospel music in South African churches took over from the Western hymn and, as a result, today there are people who never experienced the 'Western hymn', but went straight into Gospel music. Africans have a feeling of being the rightful heirs of this American style because they feel that they too were unlawfully deprived their rights by Western prejudice.

Although this document is about *umaskandi* music, the essence about the people of South Africa in general and of the Zulu people in particular, is that most people are gradually denouncing the Western hymn in favour of African orientated musical styles. Although *umaskandi* took some time before it could emerge and gush out, the style is significant in that it embraces number of Zulu performance genres in one item. Zulu musicians are at home with *Umaskandi* style.

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<sup>71</sup> *Umgqashiyo* and *umbhaqanga* have been defined in Chapter One (1.3), where all isiZulu terms are defined.

#### 4.4.6 THE CHORUS

The singing of what became known as the chorus or chorus singing, among Africans, was another way of Africanizing Christian worship (Pewa, E. 1984:1). Like gospel music in America, chorus singing became a compromise between the Western hymn and Zulu vocal music. It loosened the hymn from its uprightness and rigidity, and gave it a lighthearted socializing flavour. It is still a hymn, in the sense that it is a song of praise to God.

In a "chorus" the ordinary hymn element is modified and transformed into a rhythmic and circular musical style. It uses, mainly, the first three primary chords (I - IV - V or sometimes I - IV - [I 6\4] - V - I). The modification is different from that which was done by the nineteenth century composer, who would take thematic material from an existing vocal or instrumental music and adopt them to form a new melody. In the chorus, the tune is not changed, but the adjustment is caused by the rhythm that is made to prevail throughout the song (Ibid. 1984:11).

It was the traditional Christian churches that precipitated the growth of the chorus. This was because, while they had to sing the Western hymns, they could not follow the musical text properly, although they could read the words of the songs. As a result they ultimately used Zulu rhythms to sing the songs.

#### 4.4.6.1 THE CHORUS IN SCHOOLS

Many African schools that hold morning prayers shifted towards the singing of the chorus in place of the hymn. This move became very convenient for schoolteachers or educators, as they are now referred to, who had not gone through music training at college. This situation was well explained by Simon Mthiyane<sup>4</sup> of KwaDlangezwa High School:

Learners take a much shorter time to learn a chorus from their mates, because the chorus goes like a Zulu wedding song. The Basses simply sing only "doh", "fah", "soh" and "doh" again and the song becomes known (Interview - Mthiyane: 16<sup>th</sup> June 2003):

The three bass notes that Mr Mthiyane was referring to were the root notes of the three primary chords that dominate chorus singing (doh, fah and soh - I- IV - V or I6\4). This chord sequence is today found as the main framework in song construction among schooled Zulu people. These are the people who have never been orientated into real indigenous Zulu music. They think this is Zulu music.

#### 4.4.6.2 THE APPLICATION OF THE CHORUS

The chorus or chorus singing has overtaken the singing of hymns in the worshiping services of many African churches, schools and even at ordinary household prayers.

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<sup>4</sup> Simon Mthiyane is a school master at KwaDlangezwa High School. He conducts the school choir and also the Kwadlangezwa Community Choir - for more than twenty years now.

1. Killie Campbell Library - in Durban that keeps this information, does not allow readers to make photocopies.

At first, this form of singing was an activity for the independent churches that tended to avoid the grandeur and academic formality of the Wesleyan hymn. Later on the style made its headway even into the long established main stream churches. At first many of these churches were disinclined to take up this mode of music performance.

#### 4.4.7 AMAHUBO

The livelihood of *amahubo* is the sustenance of real Zulu music. That this style has survived up to this moment when all the music cultures have been given a leeway to exist, gives hope that the music may still live for many years to come. The mission stations could not bury the fervency and passion of *amahubo* until they preached that Zulu music can now be used for Christian worship (Interview - Clement Sithole: 10<sup>th</sup> Aug.2004). The schools have today, through Arts and Culture studies, been made aware that *amahubo* are the best form of musical identity for the Zulu people.

Basically all Zulu music is based on *amahubo*. It is the type of social occasion that models the song to its mood and rhythm. There can, therefore be *amahubo* for a wedding, for a funeral, for war, for hunting, for dancing and for general entertainment.

The Zulu traditional Christian churches have used *amahubo* as their main mode of singing. Mntwana Magogo kaDinuzulu sang *amahubo* solo works for various occasions. *Umaskandi* musicians have incorporated *amahubo* into their repertoire, and these go well.

#### 4.4.7.1 THE SACRED ASPECT OF AMAHUBO

There are *amahubo* that may be performed for certain exclusive functions. Such songs can be found:

- (a) In the custody of the Zulu king's programmes of ceremonial office where only certain royal elders may attend. These are for certain ancestral functions that relate to the monarchical rituals. There are also some that can be sung for the respective ceremonies that the king holds for his subjects, like the *Umhlanga* (reed) ceremony, *Ukweshwama* (First Fruits) ceremony (Interview Inkosi Endala KwaKhoza: 23rd October 2004).
- (b) Similar items can also be observed when certain family rituals are conducted by the leaders of the *ibandla lakwaShembe*, like the ceremony of *ukukhipha intombazane*<sup>2</sup> (Interview Rev J Mthethwa: 19<sup>th</sup> December 2004-Mtubatuba).
- (c) There are also sacred *amahubo* that are performed only at a king's funeral, and these may not be sung anywhere else. When they are done at the next king's funeral, it will be then that the people who were not present at the previous king's funeral will know them. In this sequence, knowledge is passed form one generation to the other. In this way, the oncoming generation relies on the memory of the previous generation.

That is also one of the ways in which the vertical line of interaction is maintained (Interview-John Hadebe [Emahlutshini]: 31<sup>st</sup> Oct. 2004).

- (d) Certain Clans that are culture-conscious do have *ihubo* for the family. That music is performed only when the whole family is gathered for some ritual. Such music is never sung as a form of entertainment (Interview - Bhekisisa Mthethwa: 19<sup>th</sup> December 2004).

What should be noted is that music among the Zulu rural communities is preserved by performance. Therefore even some of the Zulu people may miss these rare items that are performed only when there are those specific functions. If a person has never attended that type of a function, he is likely not to know that there are such items in the repertory of his own people.

Indeed, it is true that that some traditionalists attach high regard and reverence to their folkloric possessions. Similar cases have been seen among the Polynesians:

Frequently the songs of a people, especially their ceremonial songs, contain the most sacred lore they know. ....But a stranger coming among them seeking songs, myths, and the like, must remember that such requests are often regarded as unwarranted probing into private affairs, and must go about it slowly and tactfully....  
(Roberts - 1931:1)

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<sup>72</sup> When a daughter is formally leaving her home for her wedding ceremony, she is formally pronounced to be moving out of the hands of her family's ancestors to the care of the in-laws' ancestors. Amahubo will relate that story.

The similarity of the names of BaSotho dances using a similar singing style is another evidence of the entrenchment of music styles among Sub-Saharanans in general. Although this is not a comparative study, it is interesting to note that the words *umrhibe*, a dance for girls, and *umrhubelo*, a dance for boys and men, are similar to the word *ihubo* in the ISiZulu language (Interview - Thabo Mokoena<sup>73</sup>: Ncome Traditional Celebrations: 16<sup>th</sup> Dec.2004).

#### 4.4.7.1.1 AFFIRMING ZULU IDENTITY

Before the advent of Western civilization, African performing styles were preserved automatically by being part of the people's regular programmes. Today, the democratic government consciously makes purposeful attempts to preserve and promote these indigenous cultural styles by putting up annual Heritage Festivals (Interview - Langalibalele Mathenjwa: 16<sup>th</sup> December 2004 - Ncome).

Besides the open and public functions that are done by the government and the Zulu royalty, *amahubo*, are still being sung for the different functions of the people. What is today generally known as *ukucula* or *ukuhlabelela*, was known as *ukuhuba*. The tendency today is for people to revert to *amahubo* style of singing as a form of identity. It is not only the Zulu monarchy that is emphasizing the return to traditional culture, but the ordinary *amakhosi* are also keen on intensifying their positions by inclining towards ancestral divinity. Their inviting of *umaskandi* musicians to

their functions is another means of openly affirming identity. And like-wise, the musicians will align his programme accordingly. The song "*Zul'omnyama Ngeyakwabani Lengane*" (CDGMP 40875 [4], which is sung by Mfaz'Omnyama Khumalo is one of the best example of *umaskandi* songs that are built on *amahubo* music:

- (a) The topic is secular.
- (b) The subject appeals to public interest because of its call for morality. The message is short and to the point.
- (c) The time rhythm gives the singers a leeway to dance or make any form of body movement that they feel can be suitable. It is the agitation in the message that gives it a forward drive.

The appearance of the chorus in the musical scene was as a result of a realization and an acknowledgement by the *amakholwa*, of the fact that true Zulu music can also be used in the church. In fact there are instances where many of them have shown a preference for Zulu orientated music to Western music in the conducting of their services. All these are signs or traits that show the resistance of the Zulu people from giving in to foreign forms of music.

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<sup>73</sup> Thabo Mokoena is the leader and trainer of *umrhibo* and *umrhubelo* dances for the Sotho Community at Nquthu. This community, under chief Molefe, is recognized as a permanent abode of the Sotho people under their own chief.

#### 4.4.8 MISSION STATIONS

Those that did not go to work in cities were flooded with mission stations that gave them new methods of singing and new forms of body movement that were regarded as sophisticated. This document deals with such a mixed bag of musical styles that developed away from African traditional social activity. Those that were in cities did their own thing. Those that were in mission stations were ushered into a new approach to morality that sanctified even the music that accompanied the gospel. But the church was not wholly efficacious in the execution of its mission. The various denominations on the same subject left some people very rather clouded about the single role of the church. In 1937 Schapera noted that:

On consequence of this new attitude towards Christianity has been the growth of Native separatist churches (Schapera - 1937: 370-371).

It is interesting to note that it was the same independent churches, like *ibandla lakwaShembe*, that promoted the singing of isiZulu *amahubo*, the music that is at present catapulting the Western hymn out of the curriculum of the church.

Those that remained in indigenous areas continued with their traditional music. *Umaskandi* music was created by those who, after settling in metropolitan areas, did not forget their history. *Umaskandi* is, therefore, a study of tenacity and resolution.

It was such persistency that afforded *umaskandi* to try new and foreign instruments without any fear of censure. Among

Zulus, there was once a speculation that to know a guitar one had to take the instrument and play overnight in a graveyard, so as to communicate with evil spirits. In some circles, the guitar was also known as *izimbambo zika Sathane* (devils ribs), and was not a clean instrument (Interview - Mfazomnyama Khumalo - 21<sup>st</sup> May 1996). Zulu musicians who went on to explore the musicality of the guitar were real musicians, in that they were not intimidated with such a myth. They went on and sought what was musical about the guitar.

#### 4.4.9 THE PREVALENCE OF ZULU MUSICALITY

It should be noted that African musicality may not be wholly explained in Western terms. There can be behaviours that can be regarded as musically orientated by any person. But there can also be those that may be understood by the insiders only. These can be in sound or in movement. Here are some of them:

- (a) During any performance, the steady movement of women around a performer is a sign of appreciation of the performance.
- (b) A member of the audience may stand and move up stage to join the performers. In a really indigenous environment, there is no strictly dividing line between performer (participator) and audience (listener).

- (c) Unexpected sounds, which may have no known linguistic meaning, like "Heshe", or 'grrr... grrr...' (as used by the Ladysmith Black Mambazo) may be verbalized during the performance. Ndlovu refers to them as rhythmic aids. Some ethnomusicologists refer to these as mnemonics or vocal percussive devices (Ndlovu 1996: 195 - 197) (See Chapter Six [6.5.1] for a further explication of this phenomenon).
- (d) A new song may be introduced, learnt, and performed in the arena, within minutes.
- (e) In dancing, some of the performers may simply add a few extra, but unrehearsed movements, when things get heated up. Some of these can be clumsy when they are overdone.

All the mentioned items constitute what is generally regarded as music, which explains to us that the definition of what is music among African is much more complex than the Western definition of music. *Umaskandi* performance is a composite presentation. It is one performance item with a variety of African styles. This performance is truly a depiction of what a Zulu homestead looks like, where there are a number of huts, which are not regarded as houses but separate rooms, because the whole complex is taken as one *umuzi* (homestead) (Ndlovu 1996: 185).

The overall performance of *umaskandi* has, therefore, been influenced by *ingoma*, *isiShameni*, *isiChunu*, *uMzansi*<sup>74</sup> that is also known as *Dabuluzwane*<sup>75</sup>, and others. These dance styles do not only influence the singers, but the instrumentalists are also influenced because they have to play, in sound, what they visualize with the eye.

#### 4.5 TRADITIONAL HOME LOSES ITS CULTURAL ETHOS

The setting up of schools as learning centres, industry as economic bases, the churches as custodians of morality, and concert halls as centres for music performance, deprived the home its dignity and overall significance in the life of the Zulu people. Before the advent of urbanization on one side and missionization on the other side, the home was a great institution for learning. All the homesteads worked hand in hand in upbringing children to consummated adulthood. It is for this reason that this document has to occasionally look into the activities of the school, which omitted all forms of traditional education. Schapera says:

The young people no longer look to their parents for guidance in everything, but are tending more and more to do as they please (Schapera 1937: 381).

In the tribal tradition, outside the homestead, that is, at functions that involved the wider community people knew how to behave themselves. Those that attended for the first time would watch and copy the good behaviour of those that were ahead of them. The Zulu phrases: *Kwenziwa nje* (This is

<sup>74</sup> All these terms have been explained in Chapter One (1.3).

<sup>75</sup> *Dabuluzwane* (tear the toe), because they dance with naked feet. They hit the ground so hard that one might think that the toes will be torn and split apart.

how things are done) and *Akwenziwa kanjalo* (That is forbidden) emanate from such situations. In the same way music practice had its ideals and paragons, which could be followed. These were entrenched into the people's minds as standards to be emulated. That was how the arts were able to sustain themselves, as mentioned in Chapter Three:

Before the coming of the European, education was an integral part of the Bantu social structure. If viewed only as the passing on of culture to new generations, the education of the Bantu child was efficient (Jones 1973:48)

The Western culture of creating new institutions for specialization deprived the home its role of being at the centre of the life of the people. Economically, people looked into getting employment in industry. For food, the supermarket today is today the ultimate. For moral leadership, there emerged the church. For music, a new culture of a concert hall came into being. But what became remarkable was that the young African male, who was absorbed by city life, did not leave his musical skill behind. As a result, when he came into contact with Western musical activity in the cities, in the mines, new musical styles were born. Thus was seen the emergence of *isicathamiya*, *mbhaqanga*, *mgqashiyo*, African jazz, finally, *umaskandi*, which began to flower towards the end of the nineteenth century.

Those that spent more time in schools were influenced by Western four-part harmony in the hymn tune style. Many of these educate Africans easily adapted to the new form of vocal singing. Some even went to the extent of composing

in the style of hymn-tune harmony (Huskisson<sup>76</sup>, 1969). The cultural changes mentioned by Impey (2001) in a research paper in her "Preliminary survey of Zulu Music and musical Instruments", refer specifically to changes in music practice:

Significant cultural changes occurred with the onset of urban migration at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which led to the adoption of western instruments such as guitars, concertinas, accordions, and violins, and experimentation with a range of neo-traditional performance styles, for example (Impey 2001:01).

It has to be explained at the outset that musical changes in any community are always the final stage in any social change, because music always acts as a reflection of the activities of the people. Similarly, the appearance of *umaskandi* on the repertory of African music was a result of a great social upheaval that took place and transformed the whole life pattern of African people in the beginning of the twentieth century. This particular social revolution in the country was brought about by the advent of industrialization which had brought about urban migration, the arrival of Christianity, coupled with western civilization which came with missionization, and the school as an institution that immediately contended with traditional African education<sup>77</sup>. Summarizing the loss of the good times of the old social and structural order of

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<sup>76</sup> This whole of this publication is about African composers of a number of Western musical styles and not African traditional music.

<sup>77</sup> For instance, some incompatibilities of African and western philosophies have been carried along for over a century. Disagreement on western and African methods of punishment is one such area. Today (Ilanga, June 10-12 2004) the Department of education has explicitly stated that there should be no corporal punishment (*kayishaywa ingane*), which was totally not the case with African culture.

life in Zulu life, through urbanization, industrialization and the new forms of socialization, those that knew the beauty of the past would be heard pronouncing the words:

*Lafa elihle kakhulu.*

Dead, the very lovely one.

These are uttered not to condemn the economic, industrial, and the scientific progress that has been achieved by civilization. But it is generally felt that had the Zulu people been able to maintain their moral culture, things would have been much better.

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## 5.0 ANALYSIS OF THE SUBTLE ASPECT IN UMASKANDI MUSIC

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

All the arts are, by nature, subtle. This means that the artistic quality of an art is that which is not immediately elaborate. This description, therefore, implies that in a work of art there should be more than one view. There should be an outside picture of design that can be viewed by any one who comes across the particular work of art, whether it is an article, a sound of music, a physical act or even a narration. What is artistic in a creation is that inner quality which stands beyond the prima face or initial view of an artistic article. It is, on the other hand, an artistic eye that should be able to read a second or even a third meaning that may lie hidden in the particular work. Subtlety lends a poetic consequence to a created work. The beauty of any artistic object on the eyes or the mind of the beholder is the discovery of that hidden, indirect but shrewd statement lying below what is immediately apparent. All the arts, in one way or another, do possess this quality, which excites imagination. In Read we read:

The structure of a work of art is not always obvious; it may be a subtle balance of irregularly disposed units (Read, 1972:69)

Subtlety is a necessary element of life that dislodges boredom and lends exuberance and vitality to life. Music

possesses this quality in a number of ways and these will be discussed later on under the relevant topic.

## 5.2 SUBTLETY OF THE ARTS IN GENERAL

All the arts demonstrate this quality of subtlety in their own different ways. The visual arts possess this character. It is for that reason that when artistic eyes look at a created work, they never tire. In music, classical works never go out of fashion because they always have something artistic to offer.

The very phrase or adage that says "The essence in art is the absence of art" does explain that for a work of art to be artistic, it should not display or parade its artfulness.

The presence of an artistic character in a created article also implies the ability, by the beholder, to identify that character. If the beholder does not realize art in a created work, he will miss nothing because, as far as he is concerned, there will be nothing new. That is why there are people who may stay with a work of art for years without recognizing anything novel about the creation.

In ordinary discourse, a serious decision can be communicated in an obscure behaviour or can be hidden between nice words. In subtle words, an instruction may look like a nice question, as it happens if somebody were to say:

"Would you like to open the door for me?"

Although the words sound like a question, they, in fact, constitute no question but an instruction.

Another example is the following set of words that sound like a question:

"Would you like to leave this room, now?"

These words are, in fact, an instruction that has been put very subtly in the ears of the targeted person.

In a conversation, a very serious subject can be raised in a very unnoticeable manner. Sometimes, a figure of speech may be used to avoid a direct statement. This character of speech is an indication that speech is also an art, which offers people an opportunity to enjoy playing with words and deriving pleasure from living.

To be artistic is to make a little shift from the obvious, the direct and the forthright way of doing and to assume an obscure approach to one's expression. The purpose is not to conceal the meaning of words but to achieve a greater effect. In Zulu culture, this behaviour is contained in their language of respect known as *Ukuhlonipha*<sup>81</sup> language. To them, to be subtle is a way of demonstrating respect, especially to the elder people or the people in authority. It is not taken as proper to be frank, brief and to the point. An elder person may not be bombarded with a

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<sup>81</sup> Language and behaviour that display the extent to which people, the young and old, respect each other among the Nguni people of South Africa as explicated by Mncube (1981: 3).

forthright statement. All speech is cushioned, as a way of respect, no matter how urgent the message may be. For that matter, in proper Zulu culture, an elder person like a father, a mother, an uncle or even a brother, is addressed in the third person. This manner of approach ensures a greater deal of efficacy to the communicated information.

To be able to identify something subtle in a work of art always elicits pleasure to the beholder. The discovery makes life more pleasant. The discovery of such subtlety encourages the beholder to look towards the brighter side of life. The arts, therefore, promote the aesthetic side of life, which is the essence of education. People get educated so that they may live a more enjoyable life.

### 5.3 SUBTLETY IN POETRY IN GENERAL

The purpose of this chapter, as it has been the case with the previous chapter on the subtlety of the arts in general, is to show that the artistry possessed by the arts of Africans are as universal as all the human arts in general. It is for that reason that there is a working assumption that the arts of the Africans too are endowed with academic merit. That being the case then, the arts of Africa should be appreciated beyond their indigenous boundaries. This confirms the interest that was shown by the European musician, Hugh Tracey, who has been discussed in chapter four (p 177), and Daniel Miles in chapter one (p 42).

The essence in poetry is that it does not spell out everything for the listener or reader. Its interest lies

in the fact that it involves the latter in arriving at the final meaning. At times the reader may come out with his own imagination, without offending the composer. In fact, if such a diversity of ideas arises in the interpretation of a poem, that spells out tremendous victory to the composer of the particular verse. It is that ability to conceal or harbour more meanings below that which is obvious that constitutes poetry. That there is beauty in the hidden meaning is perceived only when the hidden has been discovered. That is the essence of subtlety.

The ability to interpret poetry activates the mind. Seeking to know the meaning becomes a joy to the reader. It is that opportunity to use one's freedom of thought, in discovering the truth that becomes a pleasure. This idea is aptly expressed in the first two verses of John Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn". In this poem, this idea is conceived from both the poetry and also from the artistic carving on the vessel that is at the centre of the poem:

The whole poem explains how subtlety can be an enjoyable form of communication. In lines 2,3 and 4, the poet says that the vessel carries more ideas than the poet can express:

Thou foster-child of Silence and slow time,  
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express  
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme;  
(Untermeyer (ed.) 1960: 374).

What he means is that there are more subtle meanings in the carvings on the vessels than have been described in the poem. In other words, this poem has not been competent

enough to explain the presented story. That is the essential quality of subtlety in the arts. The same idea is expressed in lines 10,11,12,13 and 14. He says that there is more joy when the beholder interprets the contents for himself than when he hears another person's explanations:

What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?  
 Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard  
 Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;  
 Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,  
 Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:  
 (Untermeyer (ed.), 1960:374)

The "soft pipes" allude to music. He says that although music can be played and be enjoyed through the sense of hearing, music can still be enjoyable by being simply imagined or conceived in the mind, from what the beholder sees before him.

In this poem is also seen or perceived the effect of subtlety in the area of pottery or clayware. Although the design on the pot speaks to the beholder by the images, there is still some other subtle understanding that the beholder has to access, which is the spiritual understanding of the whole scene that has been carved outside the urn. In spiritual matters, some scholars give an explanation that hearing, in fact, alludes to understanding - in the mind (Potts 1978:265 [Hear and hearing]).

In the above poem, we have seen the indistinctness of meaning in two related artistic objects, which are poetry

and clayware or pottery. In this written poem implicitness in poetry is indeed explained with the sense of sight. Above that, incompleteness in pottery, which is normally conceived with the eyes, is in this poem, again described in words. So, the subtlety of poetry has explained the subtlety of pottery. It is a vicious circle that churns out anticipation. In both instances, ideas are left unfinished and the conclusion is left to the beholder.

Just as in poetry, subtlety is a tool that is used in music in a big way. No two people can derive the same meaning in a single musical phrase. Each person enjoys music in his own way. The extent of joy in the case of music that expresses joy, is a personal matter. In the same way, music that is meant to motivate soldiers that are going to more may not inspire the fighters to the same extent.

Reference to poetry is made so as to demonstrate that poetry and music belong together, and, to show that what is achieved by poetry can also be achieved with music. In both these art forms there is obviously, an amount of pleasure that can be achieved. But what is significant is that pleasure is derived from what is obvious and as well from that which is not immediately noticeable. There can be more pleasure in the latter.

#### 5.4 ZULU MUSIC: BOTH FORTHRIGHT AND SUBTLE

It has been said that *umaskandi*, like other artistic genres of other cultures, possesses a lot of musical worth that can be accessed by those that have interest in it. The music is not simply a casually created edifice. Zulu music

stems from the activity of the people's lives. It is an extension of the people's way of life, musically and socially. These two qualities can be explained in the following paragraphs:

- (a) Musically, the rise and the fall of the tone in African singing lean very much on human speech. That is why it may not be easy to annotate the sound of African song in the Western notation, which uses tones and semitones. In African singing, the prosody of speech has a great influence on the prosody of singing. The singing sound can just be between speech and singing, and still be singing.
- (b) Socially, the music of Africa is part of all the social activities of Africans. That is the reason why the topical nature of African music is an elaborate issue. To be specific, in Zulu culture, a music performance can mean or explain, or confirm or seal a social event. The following song by Caluza protests about the injustice of the Land Act of 1913, which deprived Africans the right to own land, in their country of birth:

I Land Act (R.T.Caluza)  
(English translation by Fatima Dike.)

*We are children of Africa  
We cry for our land  
Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho  
Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho unite  
We are mad over the Land Act  
A terrible law that allows sojourners  
To deny us our land*

*Crying that we the people  
Should pay to get our land back  
We cry for the children of our fathers  
Who roam around the world without a home  
Even in the land of their fathers.*

Songs of rebellion or dissatisfaction will come in a libretto that spells out the action. Even when the words do not fully explain the situation, a poetic summary of the words is sometimes sufficient to explain the activity of the day.

## 5.5 METAPHOR IN UMASKANDI MUSIC

As a megaphone, *umaskandi* music reaches a very wide listenership. Those that understand the performer's language are in a position to grasp the prima face meaning of the delivered information, which, in most cases may not be explicit. It is, therefore, very likely that not all the listeners may be aware of the extent of the metaphor below some of the spoken words in *umaskandi* poetry. In actual fact, it is the understanding of this invisible poetical side of the creativity of the *umaskandi* musician that extends the academic merit of the *umaskandi* art beyond the musical creativity. This following section is an analysis and explanations of some of the libretto from the popular items from the repertoire of some salient *umaskandi* musicians:

### 5.5.1 ANALYSIS: FIRST ITEM

TITLE OF RECORDING: PHUZEKHEMISI NO KHETHANI - IMBIZO.  
(RPM RECORDING CCTIG 456) (Track 1)

COMPOSER: PHUZEKHEMISI MNYANDU.

ITEM: IMBIZO

ARTISTS: PHUZEKHEMISI and KHETHANI MNYANDU (Brothers).

INSTRUMENTATION: Lead Guitar, Bass guitar, Concertina,  
Percussion.

This composition comes in three sections:

SECTION ONE: LOMHLAB'UYATHENGW'UNGABONA S'HLELI KUWONA.

Opening statement in unison- by all singers:

LOMHLAB'UYATHENGW'UNGABONA S'HLELI KUWONA.

*Lomhlab'uyathengw'ungaboni s'hleli kuwona,*

This land is paid for, as you see us dwelling on it,

*Lomhlab'uyathengw'ungaboni s'hleli kuwona,*

This land is paid for, as you see us dwelling on it.

*Njalo ngonyak'skhokh'imali yamasim'enduneni,*

All the years we pay money for agricultural land to the headman (induna).

*Lomhlab'uyathengw'ungaboni s'hleli kuwona.*

This land is paid for, as you see us dwelling on it.

SECTION TWO: NJALO NJENA KUKHON'IMBIZO

(LEADER ALONE - AS HE CONTINUES THE SUPPORTING SINGERS SING  
THE THIRD BELOW, IN COUNTERPOINT.

*Aw! Njalo njena, k'khon'imbizo!*

Oh! all the time, there's a gathering!

*Aw! Njalo njena, k'khon'imbizo;*

Oh! all the time, there's a gathering;

*S'hlale s'bizw'emakhosini;*

We're always summoned to the king's place;

*S'hlale s'bizwa phezulu.*

We're always summoned up there.

*S'hlal s'bizw'es'koleni;*

We're always summoned to the school;

*Bathi k'khon'imbizo.*

They say there's a gathering

*Sihlales'bizw'emakhosini;*

We're always summoned to the chiefs;

*Sihlale s'bizw'eyinduneni.*

We are always summoned to the headmen.

*Nithi siy'thathaph'imali?*

*Where, do you think, we get the money?*

*Nithi siy'thathaph'imali?*

*Where, do you think, we get the money?*

SECTION THREE: UNGABONI SIPHILA KULOMHLABA SIYAWUKHOKHELA

(Sung by ACCOMPANYING GROUP in counterpoint to Section TWO above and is sung as an ostinato bass melody against the soloist).

UNGABONI S'PHILA KULOMHLABA, SIYAWUKHOKHELA.

As we live on this land, you should know that we are paying for it.

On the surface, that is, the immediate explanation of this song is that the musician is protesting that the local government structures are ripping money from rural people unnecessarily. People are always called to gatherings at which they are asked to pay illegal taxes.

Eventually, the song got Phuzekhemisi into trouble with his local chiefs who felt that he was exposing them.

The disclosure was bad enough for the chiefs. But deeper still, the most serious message, that the chiefs could not read, was that the chiefs themselves were victims of the laws of the apartheid system and colonialism, that deprived Africans the right to own land, in the country of their birth. The chiefs were agents of the government, which made them to believe that they (the chiefs) were the owners of the land, whereas they were overseers of the land on behalf of the system that exploited Africans. They were eventually the instruments of oppression:

The invented traditions imported from Europe not only provided whites with models of command but also offered many Africans models of "modern" behaviour. The invented traditions of African societies - whether invented by the Europeans or Africans themselves in response - distorted the past but became in themselves realities through which a good deal of colonial encounter was expressed (Hobsbawn and Ranger, 1983:212).

In fact, what the musician announced has always been universally true. Nobody can own land without paying for it. Even when land has not been bought, as it is the case in inherited land, there shall always be costs of rates, water, or rent, which have to be paid.

IZIBONGO (PRAISE POETRY): by Phuzekhemisi Mnyandu.

*Aw! bayihlaba ngempela Phuzekhemisi noKhethani, Madoda,*  
Oh! they really stab it, Phuzekhemisi and Khethani, men,

*Khona phans'eMkhomazi, ses'buya khona, khona kwaDumisa;*  
There down at Mkhomazi, we've been there, there at Dumisa;

*Hhay' ngabatshele mfo kababa, Khethani, bathi:*

No! I told them, son of my father, Khethani, they said:

*B'oy'thint'imamb'is'emgodini.*

They will touch the mamba in its hole.

*Ngath'iyon'limaza uma ike yaphuma.*

I said, it would injure you if it gets out.

*\*Wobhasobha nsizw'ungami ngezansi;*

Be careful, young man, do not stand below;

*Is'xgabhane<sup>79</sup> les'esizayo<sup>80</sup>.*

This is a dangerous tractor, this that is approaching.

In the praise poetry, the sting of attack is retracted from the oppressive practice of the local government and is directed towards his contending musicians.

On the surface, a student of Zulu language would appreciate the poetic imagery, representation and the figures of speech used in the construction of the verse. For instance, the metaphor of the mamba is very effective.

But what is more about the verse of the *umaskandi* musician is the sustenance of the philosophy of the competitive culture in the lives of the Zulus (Pewa, 1995: 33).

The competitive spirit was not for a negative course, but for the growth, potency and capacity in the lives of the people. It is the contention that was seen in the bull-fighting games of the herd-boys, the *umthimba* group and the *ikhetho* group in a wedding ceremony. For instance, the contention that would go with the eating of the lungs of an

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<sup>79</sup> This is a huge and powerful tractor, that is pulled with chained wheels so it can drive in rugged and rocky surfaces for the opening of new roads and the leveling of slopes.

ox among herd-boys (*ukudla iphaphu*), was not meant to perpetuate cowardice. The ultimate was to create a generation of bold, courageous and chivalrous stalwarts from the young men of the district that would be trusted warriors during those days of the survival of the fittest.

It was the same spirit of competitiveness that promoted sportsmanship in the success of the soccer between the years 1916 to 1970 in Durban during the days of the Durban and District African Football Association in the then province of Natal.

The exposition of competitiveness in *umaskandi* music is reminiscent of Zulu nationalism and bravery rather than a mere man to man execution of a musical instrument. It is about the courage and valor that was demonstrated by the Zulus at the battle of Bloodriver on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1879 (Interview, Simon Maphalala: 16<sup>th</sup> December 2003).

#### 5.5.2 ANALYSIS - SECOND ITEM.

TITLE OF RECORDING: IZINGQUNQULU ZOMHLABA - SXAXA MBIJ' -  
(GALLO MCGMP 40711) (Track 4).

ITEM: NGIYEZA

COMPOSER: HHASHELIMHLOPHE NGCOBO.

PERFORMERS: HHASHELIMHLOPHE, MFAZOMNYAMA AND PHUZEKHEMISI.

#### NIN'ENIYA NGASEMAKHAYA NIZOMBON'UMTANOMUNTU

*Nin'eniya ngas'emakhaya nizombon'umtanomuntu'*

You, who are travelling home, you'll see the person's child,

*Maningambon'umtanomuntu, nisize ning'khonzele kuye we!*  
If you see the person's child, greet her for me.

*Nisize nimtshel'ukuthi nami ngis'endleleni ngiyeza;*  
Help, Tell her I'm also on my way, I'm coming;

*Anomtshel'ukuthi ngisendleleni ngiyeza.*  
Tell her I'm on my way, I am coming.

*Nisize, ning'khonzele kuye;*  
You help, greet her for me;

*Nisize, ning'khonzele kuye.*  
You help, greet her for me.

*Ngizom'bona,*  
I'll be seeing her,

*Ngis'endleleni ngiyeza.*  
I'm on the way, I am coming.

This above is the main theme of the song. As usual, African music is topical. The libretto is derived from the social life of the people. What is obvious is that in this song the male singer who is taken to be working in an urban area, far from home, has given a message to his colleagues who are already going home, in the far-off rural areas, to greet his sweetheart for him. He asks them to further inform her that he too shall soon be coming home.

That the said sweetheart is an *umtan'omuntu* (a person's child), entrenches the fact that this story is about a human relationship, and that the person who is in the rural areas is a human being who has been made to suffer by not seeing his lover.

The painful side of the story here is the unsaid story that African males were doomed by white expatriates to work in

the mines and urban areas without provision for their wives or relatives to be accommodated. They would stay there for months until they got leave to go home, perhaps, at the end of the contract:

Further restrictions regulated the coming and going of African contract workers as the basis of the migrant labour system, and the distinction between migrant and townsman became fundamental to the structure of urban African society (Coplan, 1985: 22).

Those were some of the oppressive traditions that were created by Europeans by which they would turn Africans into a voiceless labour force:

.....many parts of Africa became colonies of white settlement. This meant that the settlers had to define themselves as natural and undisputed masters of vast numbers of Africans. They drew upon European invented traditions both to define and to justify their roles, and also to provide models of subservience into which it was sometimes possible to draw Africans (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983:211).

It is also in this that *umaskandi* practitioner possesses some academic merit. He narrates a history by identifying a present day act that represents what happened in the past.

### 5.5.3 ANALYSIS - THIRD ITEM.

TITLE: IZINGQUNQULU ZOMHLABA - SXAXA MBIJ' 4;  
(GALLO - CDGMP 40875) (Track 4).

ITEM: BASIGWAZEL'ETHENDENI.  
COMPOSER: PHUZEKHEMISI MNYANDU



In the words of Phuzekhemisi:

"Ngisho nabelungu bayazi: KUSEBENZA THINA, KUDLE BONA

*"Even whites know: WE WORK AND THEY REAP THE BENEFITS"* .

The net seems to encircle more culprits. Here, the whip hit at the whites, because they are still reaping the benefits of the efforts of African Artists. Whites, who inherited the opportunities of the past, own the studios and the sophisticated electronic equipment for manipulating the sound. "They charge us exorbitantly for booking the studios, for doing the recordings and for distributing the discs. They then pay us for food, and transport, after which we have to wait for about six per cent of the overall profits" (Interview - Phuzekhemisi Mnyandu: 19<sup>th</sup> June 2004).

In short, being overcome and engulfed while in a tent describes how Africans were deprived of their possessions after having been hoodwinked with the foxy tricks of colonists in all life situations. Many African artists who were not remunerated equitably for their recorded music sustained a great financial loss. For many years, not only the private recorders, but also the South African Broadcasting Corporation of the apartheid government, did not pay them impartially. Phuzekhemisi explained that even the white person who was operating the electronic recorders could not understand the metaphor of this statement, even though he himself was perpetuating the damage. This is an example of the subtlety of *umaskandi* language. Indeed, during the apartheid era things were even worse. Artists used to sign unexplained agreements that would cede all the

to rights of ownership of the recorded music to the recording studio (Interview - Phuzekhemisi Mnyandu: 10<sup>th</sup> April 2004).

The exploitation that Phuzekhemisi is complaining about has existed from as early as the 1930's. African artists would be looking forward to good living, which they would not achieve after the recordings had been made:

Many experienced this contradiction, but none articulated it as clearly as the remarkable Wilfred Sentso, vaudeville artist, jazz musician, troupe and band leader, composer and educationist. Focusing on the record companies - the institution through which the contradiction was felt most acutely - Sentso gave the typical example of studio paying a group four pounds<sup>80</sup> (British currency) for a double-sided 78r.p.m. record. That fee would also purchase all rights to the music (Ballantine - 1993:46).

This is just one example. There were many other forms of tricks and deception.

#### 5.5.4 ANALYSIS - FOURTH ITEM

TITLE: PHUZEKHEMISI noKHETHANI - IMBIZO  
(RPM RECORDS CCTIG 456) (Track 4).

ITEM: SIGIYANGENGOMA

COMPOSER: PHUZEKHEMISI

ARTISTS: PHUZEKHEMISI AND KHETHANI MNYANDU (Brothers).

THE TEXT: SIYALUHALALISELA LOLUHLELO

*Siyaluhlalisele loluhlelo lukaBhodloza,*  
We appreciate this programme by Bhodloza

<sup>80</sup> The nearest equivalent of a single pound in South African currency (Rands) would be approximately twelve rands. But, as currency, this is never stable.

*Sigiya ngengoma, phans'eThekwini, egagasini.*

We dance by singing, Down in Durban, at the wave.

*Sicela kuBhodloza, "kawudede, sibulalane, Ngengoma,*

We're pleading with Bhodloza, "Give way, let us kill each other, with song,

*Nzimande".*

Nzimande"

*Bengicela kuBhodloza,*

I'm pleading with Bhodloza;

*Bengicela kuNzimande:*

I'm pleading with Nzimande.

*Sithi "deda, sibulalane ngengoma", sithi "deda".*

We're saying: " Give way, so we can kill each other with song", We're saying: "Give way".

For a long time, *umaskandi* was, aesthetically, an arena for competitive performance. Each musician was sustained by declaring himself a champion above other champions. The above words are a tribute to Welcome "Bhodloza" Nzimande, the radio announcer who promoted *umaskandi*. By broadcasting their music, he allowed them to be heard by all South Africans and the people of the world.

The words: "*deda sibulalane*" [move away, so that we may molest each other] conjure the bull-fighting games of herd-boys where bulls would be allowed to fight. Pride and honour would go to the boy who was herding the winning bull. The whole spectacle might even end up with stick-fighting among the herd-boys themselves.

The four analysis given in the last four paragraphs explain the topical nature of the music of Africans. It also

explains that African music is part of the people's culture. To Africans, music is not simply a case of how sound is manipulated, but it is a matter of how music promotes the activity of life by mingling it with the actual life situations.

#### 5.5.5 ANALYSIS - FIFTH ITEM

TITLE: PHUZEKHEMISI noKHETHANI - IMBIZO  
RPM RECORDING (CCTIG 456) (Track 3)

TITLE OF SONG: WOKHULUMA UWABALE NSIZWA AMAGAM'AKHO,  
SINGABAS'EMKHOMAZI.

ARTISTS: PHUZEKHEMISI AND KHETHANI (Brothers).

THE TEXT: WOKHULUM'UWARALE NSIZWA AMAGAM'AKHO  
SINGABAS'EMKHOMAZI

*Wokhulum'wabale, Nsizwa, amagam'akho,*  
As you speak, count your words, young man,

*sabas'eMkhomazi; [singabas'eMkhomazi]*  
We are from Mkhomazi;

*Wenzani? Wathint'amabhenanyawo<sup>81</sup>,*  
What are you doing? You have touched the broad  
and bare-footed dancers,

*Awaz'eMkhomazi;*  
Of Mkhomazi;  
*Wenzani? Wathint'amabhenanyawo,*  
What are you doing? You have touched the broad  
footed

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<sup>81</sup> Traditional Zulu dancers of Dalton Road Hostel, who used sandals for dancing, used to taunt the rural dancers of Mkhomazi as bare-foot dancers, who would eventually develop broad, clumsy and misshapen feet.

*Sibuy'eMkhomazi.*  
From Mkhomazi.

*Thin'ingoma siy'thath'amashans',*  
We, with the song, we do not take chances:

*Thin'ingoma eyakith'eMkhomazi.*  
With us, the song is from our place, Mkhomazi.

*Eyakith'eMkhomazi, say'ncela komama.*  
It is from our place, Mkhomazi, we suckled it  
from our mothers.

*Thin'ingoma asiy'thath'amashans' ,*  
With us, we do not take chances with the song,

*Thin'ingoma eyakith'eMkhomazi.*  
With us, the song is from our place, khomazi.

Obviously this text was composed before the ISXAXA MBIJ' project. It was against such pronunciations that the clubbing of Mfazomnyama, Hhashelimhlophe and Phuzekhemisi was meant.

The very first line, "Count your words...", is a very sensitive challenge to war. After such words have been pronounced, the challenged either takes up arms or surrenders.

In short, the musician, Phuzekhemisi, explains to us, very poetically, how traditional contentious disputes, which might end in traditional stick fighting, have now been transferred to music contests. The performance of music is now aesthetically a continuation of traditional contention. It s not a real fight.

During the times of violence in KwaZulu Natal, when tensions were high and the overall mood very electric, Welcome Nzimande would not allow such items that bordered on discord and violence to be broadcast. The theme of ISXAXA MBIJ' and the collaboration of the three powerful *Umaskandi* exponents was that the musicians were to be seen to be rubbing shoulders in amicable partnership, literally.

To be able to answer the call that was made by Welcome "Bhodloza" Nzimande to do commissioned compositions of the Izingqungqulu project was another angle of scholarship that was displayed by the said musicians.

#### 5.5.6 ANALYSIS - SIXTH ITEM

TITLE: IZINGQUNQULU ZOMHLABA - SXAXA MBIJ' 4.  
(GALLO - CDGMP 40875) (Track 4).

ITEM: ZUL'OMNYAMA, NGEKABANI LENGANE ?

COMPOSER: MFAZOMNYAMA

PERFORMERS: MFAZOMNYAMA, HHASHELIMHLOPHE AND PHUZEKHEMISI.

TEXT: ZUL'OMNYAMA, NGEYAKWABANI LENGANE?

*You Zulus, who are black, from which family is this baby?*

The text consists of a single question. That the question remains unanswered makes it more effective. It is loud and clear that it is an

attack on infidelity, which always comes with serious confrontation, dispute and argument. The question: "Ngeyakwabani lengane?" (*From which family is this baby that you are carrying?*) is often put before a woman when the paternity of her child is controversial. If such an altercation arises, it is always a very sensitive issue. It is not just the father that is accused, but the whole family of the alleged father has been blemished by the act.

Addressing the question to "Zu'Omnyama"<sup>82</sup> also heightens the seriousness of the crime in that this is not just a question of the Zulus as a community of a race, but the use of the vocative case suggests that to authentic and traditional Zulus, who are known to be the custodians of culture, morality is of prime importance, and, such cases where there could even be a doubt in the paternity of a child born out of wedlock, are a defacement on the whole community and race.

The use of the adjective "OMNYAMA" is not a negative assertion, but an appraisal and a reminder that authentic Zulu people were the custodians of high cultural values in the Zulu community. In the execution of the music, the continuous repetition of the question enhances the seriousness of the message. The understanding of the question, on the other hand,

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<sup>82</sup> A researcher who is an outsider could find difficulty in understanding the subtlety of this implication.

lends a symmetrical balance to the performance, which is the basic essence in Zulu music.

## 5.6 RHYTHMIC ANALYSIS

While the above analysis dealt mainly with the philosophical content of the text this paragraph is presenting some rhythmical breakdown of the phrases. This serves to demonstrate the basic rhythmical structure of all Zulu music, regardless of the mood and social context in which the music is taking place. The nature of the social context in which a performance is made is defined by the words and, in some instances, by the tempo of the performance in the Zulu. That is why it may not be easy, among the Zulu traditionals, to ascertain the social setting of a performance without first hearing the words of the song.

### 5.6.1 IMPACT OF AFRICAN RHYTHM

When the Western hymn was introduced to Africans, inexplicably the latter fell in love with the three common chords, which are the Tonic, the Sub-Dominant and the Dominant harmonies. By the use of these three chords, the African is able to maintain his songs short, cyclic and rhythmic. Most of the wedding songs, political songs, and gospel songs that are sung by the urbanized Africans demonstrate these features. For instance, a single tune in Chords I - IV - I<sub>6\4</sub> - V - I progression can be used for a wedding song, for Christian worship, and for political mobilization. In other words, the music remains the same, while the words and the mood change. In this instance

Western harmonization has been adopted and has been employed in African style. Using the same tune for a different set of words is not regarded as theft, because, after all, musical tunes are not a single man's property. The following sixteen-pulse phrase, with the same melody, can be used for different and unrelated social settings:

Line (a) can be sung in a gospel revival gathering:

Line (b) is usually sung at political gathering:

Line (c) is usually sung at funeral services:

Line (d) can be heard at wedding ceremonies:

The accented syllables in all the four lines are at similar points:

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|

(a)

|  |    |    |    |    |   |   |    |     |   |     |   |    |   |   |   |
|--|----|----|----|----|---|---|----|-----|---|-----|---|----|---|---|---|
|  | Vu | ka | Jo | na | - | - | si | tha | - | nda | - | ze | - | - | - |
|--|----|----|----|----|---|---|----|-----|---|-----|---|----|---|---|---|

(b)

|  |    |    |    |     |   |   |   |    |   |      |   |    |   |   |   |
|--|----|----|----|-----|---|---|---|----|---|------|---|----|---|---|---|
|  | so | no | se | thu | - | - | u | bu | - | mnya | - | ma | - | - | - |
|--|----|----|----|-----|---|---|---|----|---|------|---|----|---|---|---|

(c)

|  |      |    |    |    |   |   |     |    |   |    |   |    |   |   |  |
|--|------|----|----|----|---|---|-----|----|---|----|---|----|---|---|--|
|  | S'yo | bo | na | na | - | - | kwe | li | - | za | - | yo | - | - |  |
|--|------|----|----|----|---|---|-----|----|---|----|---|----|---|---|--|

(d)

|  |     |      |       |    |   |   |    |    |   |    |   |    |   |   |   |
|--|-----|------|-------|----|---|---|----|----|---|----|---|----|---|---|---|
|  | Tha | th'u | mthwa | lo | - | - | si | go | - | du | - | ke | - | - | - |
|--|-----|------|-------|----|---|---|----|----|---|----|---|----|---|---|---|

It is the words of the different songs that tell us where the song belongs, that is, the contextual environment of the song:

- (a) *Vuka Jonah, Sithandaze.*  
Wake up, Jonah, so we can pray.

This is a gospel song. The words come from the scripture.

- (b) *Sono sethu ubumnyama.*  
Our sin is that we are black.

This was a common song among the Black people during the strikes, against the White Nationalist government.

- (c) *S'yo bonana kwelizayo.*  
We shall meet in the next world.

To console themselves, the mourners sing this song to bid farewell to the dead: "We shall meet in the next world.

- (d) *Thath'umthwalo, sigoduke.*  
Pick up your baggage and let us get home.

This wedding song is usually sung by the groom's singing group, to tell the bride that she has to move to a new home.

A question may arise as to where this rhythm of eight pulses is derived. While African expositions and inclinations of African rhythm in relation to *amahubo* singing style are explained in Chapter six(6.14), It can be mentioned in this paragraph that there is indeed something

peculiar about Africans and eight-beat phrases. Traditional Africans have always come out with a ready-made eight-beat phrase whenever they are asked to create a musical composition. For instance, they have been able to ascribe a phrase rhythm even to a persistent regularly sounding beat, like the sound of a railway steam engine. In doing so, they easily break the sound into equal eight-beat phrases. In doing this, the beating sounds of the steam engine get their syllables from their tonal relationship with the speech sounds of human beings.

Here are some of the phrases that would be recited:

|   |
|---|
| 8 |
|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

|     |
|-----|
| Um' |
|-----|

|      |    |      |   |       |   |      |     |
|------|----|------|---|-------|---|------|-----|
| Faz' | ka | Gad' | u | phek' | i | Tiy' | Um' |
|------|----|------|---|-------|---|------|-----|

The above rhyme starts on an anacrusis.

In ordinary speech these lines would stand as follows:

*Umfazi kagadi upheka itiyē,*  
The wife of the guard is making tea,

*Umfazi kagadi upheka ikhofi.*  
The wife of the guard is making coffee.

(Interview – Moses Shange: 15<sup>th</sup> December 2004).

Another set of words that would be used for the same rhythmic phrase was the following:

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

|    |      |    |    |      |   |        |   |
|----|------|----|----|------|---|--------|---|
| Ma | tshe | ke | La | gez' | i | bhodw' | u |
|----|------|----|----|------|---|--------|---|

|     |     |       |   |        |   |     |    |
|-----|-----|-------|---|--------|---|-----|----|
| Bhe | she | ngan' | A | chuth' | i | nku | Ku |
|-----|-----|-------|---|--------|---|-----|----|

On the above examples the rhymes start on the accented first beat.

In an unpunctuated text the full text stands as follows:

*Matshekela, geza ibhodwe,*  
(You) Matshekela, wash the pot,

*Ubheshengana achuthe inkukhu.*  
(While) Beshengana prepares the fowl.  
(Interview - Nkalipho Nxele: 9<sup>th</sup> December 2004).

Reacting to the sound of the steam engine in this fashion shows the flight of imagination in those that composed this verse. The sound speaks to them and reminds them of the activities of their social chores. This reaction to sound is also explained by Merriam:

Language clearly affects music in that speech melody sets up certain patterns of sound which must be followed at least, to some extent, in music, if the music-text is to be understood by the listener (Merriam, 1964:188).

The phrases are automatically grouped into one phrase of eight beats or two shorter phrases of four beats each.

It is in a similar manner that African rhythm found itself imposing on the western hymn and regrouping the notes into rhythmic phrases, instead of singing the hymn through as it had been originally composed.

## 5.7 AESTHETICS OF UMASKANDI MUSIC

Africans practised music throughout their lives long before the advent of the school and also before the culture of cities and urban areas. In rural areas there is hardly a function without a music performance. To them it is the music that makes the function. For Africans a music performance is for all that are nearby. It is a communal activity. All who attend are likely to take part in one way or another. The singing method of Africans, the Zulus in particular, is such that a song is learnt on the spot. The pattern is that, with each peer group, be it men, women or children, it is understood that in the singing, somebody has to lead. The leader is, on the other hand, aware that the song that is to be sung is most likely not known. He therefore has to take each part separately, since each singer thinks horizontally, that is, melodically, when he travels a path of his own. Ndlovu explains this path phenomenon of the Zulus:

...the path (*indlela*) is melodic direction. But the Zulu path is always horizontal. They do not think of footprints vertically as in block form hymnodic style, but horizontally, as a path (Ndlovu, 1996: 202).

It is also interesting to note that even the voice parts in part songs are not viewed harmonically, but as individual paths:

Missionary terms for denoting voice parts, soprano, alto, tenor, and bass were indigenized to indlela yokuqala (soprano\first part), as it is led by the ifolosi\ivulandlela (pathfinder - performers say the leader is the trailblazer), followed by i-alitha or indlela yesibili (alto\second part) (Ndllovu, 1996: 202).

Therefore, the LEADING OF A SONG is automatically the TEACHING OF A SONG. In authentic African culture there would be no rehearsing a programme before the day of the function.

The aesthetic value of art has always two sides to a society. Some people do appreciate the beauty continuously while others take the beauty for granted. It is those people who appreciate the beauty continuously that will go to the extent of paying a fee to enter a concert hall to listen to some good work of art. Those that take it for granted will not be convinced to the extent of paying a fee for them to be exposed to a work of art, whether it is a musical art or a visual piece of art.

So is the case with Africans, particularly Zulus, whom I have had an opportunity to observe. To them music is second nature. Every person is expected to sing, to the extent that there is a special word for a person who cannot pitch music correctly. That person is known as an *ibhimbi*, and indeed, such people are very rare. Evidence for that is observed in the singing of Zulu music. There are two sensational phenomena that can be observed in a truly Zulu musical performance:

- (a) All the people who are present at a function are expected to participate in the singing.
- (b) The song, which is usually in a call and response texture, is learnt on the spot. The singer, who becomes the leader of the singing, starts by singing his call section of the song and, when he comes to the response section, the participants easily identify their lines.

Another phenomenon which is evidence to the fact that all people are expected to take up singing as a normal activity is the fact that every girl who gets married is expected to sing a final song, which should be composed by her, sometime in the wedding programme. Her song becomes even more enjoyable if the words relate to an event that can be identified by the greater part of the audience. This song is referred to as the *Inkondlo kaMakoti*.

It was that closeness to music that caused them to take time to be convinced that music could be a commodity that should be paid for. As a result, they became open to exploitation by record companies and they too could not establish themselves profitably as music sellers in their own communities.

The aesthetic value of music made Africans, who had not been orientated into music business because of the oppressive laws, not to consider that it was a product that could be sold. Although theatres had existed in South Africa as early as the beginning of the twentieth century,

there were no performing opportunities for Africans. Although the government owned the said performing venues, they were reserved for Whites, by South African law. That explains why those who were ignorant of the intricacies of apartheid considered it a privilege to get a slot for being heard over the radio, without getting paid for it. They did not look at it as a provision for which they should have been paid.

### 5.8 LEARNING AND TEACHING OF UMASKANDI MUSIC

The Call and Response pattern, which is the prevailing texture in Zulu music, makes the teaching of a song very progressive. The leader simply starts by singing the full sequence of the structure. As he does that, the participators, who are aware of the pattern, are listening very carefully. When the leader comes back to pick up the first line for the second time, the larger group is already set to take off at their rightful points. The performance goes on until the singing simmers. They would say:

*Yiphinde ize ivuthwe.*  
Repeat it until simmers.

Therefore, to be musical for an African is not simply a case of singing well but it follows that one has to be a good listener.

Such traditional methods of performing music reach the urban areas through African traditional functions, like the celebration of King Shaka's day, which are not confined to rural areas. The political nature of such functions

compels the political leaders to put up these gatherings even in urban townships, which are residential areas for African traditional people, most of whom are still linked to their rural homes. At all king Shaka's celebrations I have noticed that the leader of the singing does not necessarily come out because of his prowess in singing or music leadership, but the singing of *amahubo* music is always done by the political leaders. In such an instance, the singing becomes a vehicle for the promotion of political leadership. In that instance, therefore, the leader has to display the two characteristics, which are musicality and political disposition. That is one way in which African music is culturally entrenched in the lives of African people.

Although the radio, television and the recording of African music seem to be continually encroaching and threatening the sustenance of African music, those music-providing mediums do not completely fascinate and captivate the Africans, who enjoy music by ultimately participating and becoming part of the performance activity. Complete enjoyment is derived by actually becoming part of the performance. Being an audience only is not enough.

The concept of *AMAGODUKA*<sup>83</sup> is really there and is effective in relaying and transmitting music and other forms of art between the rural areas and their contiguous urban areas. The role of *amagoduka* in their constant sojourning between urban and rural areas should, theoretically, strike a balance between the music activities of both areas,

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<sup>83</sup> A derogatory term used by township African to describe those workers who work in rural areas and very often travel to their rural homes on either week-ends or every month-end.

although that never happens because people's likes and dislikes are never constant. What happens is that while they visit their rural homes from bigger cities, they return home to join home activities. This act helps to sustain traditional styles. But, in doing so, they may not come home empty-handed. As artistic people, they are very likely to bring urban influences into country life. This is the act that could neutralize African traditional life. On the other hand, the constant traveler between urban and rural areas is likely to bring to town some ideas about traditional music. That was how *umaskandi*, *mbhaqanga*, *mqqashiyo* and *isicathamiya*, which are in essence a blend of the two areas, achieved their heredity. That is why the libretto for these mixed styles may come from any of the two environments. Phuzekhemisi Mnyandu sings:

Bas'gwazel'ethendeni<sup>84</sup> (SXAXA MBIJI 4 - GALLO CDGMP 40875).

*They attacked us while we were within the marquee]*

Both the urban and rural population use a marquee lately, because of its convenience in housing guests. The *amagoduka* practice, therefore, culturally enriched both ends of the stick (Interview - Phuzekhemisi Mnyandu: 10<sup>th</sup> April 2004).

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<sup>84</sup> This example refers to the literal side of the marquee, whereas a philosophical significance of the venue is given in Chapter Five.

## CHAPTER SIX

### 6.0 THE WORLD OF UMASKANDI MUSIC

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the entire practice of *umaskandi*. It consists in unpacking the whole composite performance style, from its conception, organization, execution and its relevance to the community to which the musicians belong. The chapter, therefore, explains how all the items are organized, juxtaposed and dove-tailed into one performance.

*Umaskandi* music is accessed primarily by listening to it from records, compact discs, cassettes, radios and television. All the above are reproduced performances. Live performances can be reached by attending functions where such music is in the programme.

The main environment that surrounds the existence of *umaskandi* today is, unlike that of the past, very supportive. The whole country, South Africa, is now legally accommodative of all its people's cultures. Socially, *umaskandi* is aesthetic and relates to people's lives. It is a form of socializing. Politically, as a people's culture, *umaskandi* enjoys all the rights of existence and it would be a crime to castigate it for any reason. Economically, *umaskandi* musicians and a host of other people who are in the music industry are profiting on *umaskandi* music through the sales of the recordings.

Ultimately, *Umaskandi* music is today free from official prejudice and condemnation that was meted on the music by the Western colonizers, who cursed it as uncivilized, without critically examining the aesthetics thereof. The colonizers tended to:

...overlook the people's values and to believe that the colonizer's values are the real values, and that those of the colonized are primitive (Robertson, 1973:10).

Today, the above attitude is officially a thing of the past.

Condemning parochial arts and cultures was a convenient tool for the colonizers in that it destroyed the self-confidence and identity of the colonized. The latter would then find themselves transferring their appreciation onto foreign arts. So heavy was the impact of this cultural destruction that the Africans found themselves condemning their own arts, castigating their own brothers, and, in some cases, even denouncing their nationality. That was how the idea of exempting some Africans from "Native Laws" came into being. Such Africans would be exempted from the laws that affected Africans at large, although, politically, they, like other Africans, did not have a franchise, because they did not belong to any constituency. They were still Africans. In actual fact, such people were created so as to become a support base for the colonizers. They would be negative to their own people, and yet they were not wholly welcome in the community of the Whites

(Interview - Simon D. Ngcobo<sup>85</sup>: 21<sup>st</sup> August 1999). It was such people that would go to the extent of condemning their own music.

## 6.2 LEADERSHIP IN UMASKANDI GROUP.

Leadership in Zulu traditional activities is not bestowed upon a person, but it is achieved. The leader is not elected or appointed, but the wish to lead is engendered within the person. Even among those that proclaim to be divinely appointed to lead, the rootstock is self-appointment. Such striving relates to the social structure in herd-boy culture, where the leader has to show himself up by beating the others. Just as the herd-boy trains himself in the art of stick fighting, the apprentice *umaskandi* musician forges ahead in learning the instrument. He looks for those who play the music and learns from them. When he has mastered the trade, he invites other musicians to play with him. In that way, the group of players becomes his group.

In a good number of Zulu group leaders, while talent can be identified in the prospective leader, there is also usually some family appointment or even ancestral linkages in the making up of a leader. These explanations discard any arguments and questions about the legitimacy of a leader. In the case of Joseph Shabalala, he had a dream that occurred for more than six months:

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<sup>85</sup> S.D. Ngcobo was principal teacher at Ohlange High School during the years 1957 – 1980, and he later became an inspector of schools in the Durban Circuit. His father was one of those Africans that had been exempted from Native Laws – at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century .

The first dream took place in 1964. It then occurred almost daily for six months. In his sleep he would hear beautiful harmony from sonorous voices the source of which was not clear... (Thembela and Radebe - 1993: 17).

In the case of *umaskandi* musician, Phuzekhemisi Mnyandu, the first guitar that he played on was his uncle's. He therefore honours his uncle for having introduced him into this world (Interview - Phuzekhemisi Mnyandu:10<sup>th</sup> April 2004).

Administrative leadership goes hand in hand with musical leadership and compositional productivity. The leader is the composer, the director and manager of the group. That is the consequence of ethnicity wherever music is practised within such a culture. The leadership of the group is in the hands of the founder.

Whenever there is an *umaskandi* performance, the leader of the group is always conspicuous by being at the centre and in the front row. The team is known by his name. In many cases when people refer to the group, they mention the name of the leader only:

- (a) The group that is led by Phuzekhemisi is known only by the leader's name.
- (b) The group that is led by Mfazomnyama Khumalo was known only by the leader's name. In fact, people never refer to the supporting group; they only speak of a single man. That was one reason why Mfazomnyama's group disappeared after his demise.

- (c) In referring to Thwalofu, *umaskandi* musician who was popular in Durban in the 1980's, people would always mention his supporting group that was known as *amankentshane*<sup>86</sup>. Therefore, the group was known as *Thwalofu namaNkentshane* (Thwalofu and his wild dogs).
- (d) MFAZOMNYAMA was known only by his name. It was only him who would mention his daughters that were part of the group. He would say: *Mina Mfazomnyama and his children* (I, Mfazomnyama and his children) [Not that he referred to his children in the third person].

In the actual performance, the leader can be easily identified, as he is the only one that gives cues for the various items of the performance. He cues the "call" in Call and Response songs. In most cases, leaders are founders because of their musical expertise. Most of them are usually very musical. This has been seen in the case of the Ladysmith Black Mambazo. Their leader, Joseph Shabalala, is a very prolific composer (Thembela, A.J. and Radebe, P.M. 1993: 57-67). It is just unfortunate that when such leaders pass away from this world, the group has no guarantee for survival. This was seen in the era of Solomon Linda<sup>87</sup> and his Evening Birds that became a closed chapter after his passing away.

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<sup>86</sup> Amankentshane – Wild dogs.

<sup>87</sup> One of the earlier leaders of isicathamiya (Male voice singing).

It would not be very proper to put forward African ethnicity as the reason for the sudden disappearance of a group after the death of a leader. Neither can this be attributed to the lack of education only. There could be other reasons. For instance, The Glasgow Orpheus Choir of England, a choir of academics, decided to "call it a day"<sup>88</sup> when their conductor and leader, Sir Hugh Robertson retired. They all agreed to disperse (Record Sleeve- HMV-The Glasgow Orpheus Choir DLP 1128). The disbanding of a group is not always an honourable event.

There are, however, leaders who may not be very musical. This has been seen in music groups that do not develop remarkably in their performance. Such lack of music insight is seen in those groups that have only remained in name and have had no impact in their musical presentation. Such incidents have been observed in all types of music groups, like *umaskandi*, *isicathamiya*, *mbhaqanga*, *mgqashiyo*, and even in dance music bands.

### 6.2.1 MUSICAL LEADERSHIP

It is always a befitting co-incidence if the founder of a group is also a good musician, who is able to compose and perform his compositions. The three *umaskandi* musicians who were involved in the SXAXA MBINJ project, that had been organized by Welcome "Bhodloza" Nzimande have demonstrated their befitting musicality and leadership in their respective groups. These were Phuzekhemisi, with whom I have spent more time in compiling this document, Bheki

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<sup>88</sup> The reason for the disbanding of the Glasgow Orpheus Choir, instead of continuing with a new conductor, was that with the new conductor, they would eventually be a different choir from they

Hhashelimhlophe Ngcobo, and, Mfazomnyama Khumalo [who is now late].

Such musical administrative leaders are always composers for their groups. Such a musical leader has an opportunity to check and promote his flare for music development. Such skill was seen on Mfazomnyama, who could play his guitar, while dancing, and even make somersaults and lie on his back, while continuing to sound his strings.

While composition is badge for leadership, a clever leader will practise the liberty of allowing a group composition. This is a way of extracting some good ideas from other members.

Some *umaskandi* musicians have made it a point to have a good understanding of the process of composing and recording. This knowledge is a bulwark against financial exploitation that was experienced by the earlier Zulu musicians. Indeed some *umaskandi* leaders have become producers and directors of their compositions. This is the case with Hhashelimhlophe, who is now quite clear about the business intricacies in the recording business. Besides his own recordings, he has produced a number of groups, like Abalayezi and Sukas (C.D. Record Sleeve-CDGMP).

#### 6.2.1.1 LEADERSHIP BY PERFORMANCE

In the actual performance, it is only the leader who starts the singing. He is the instrumental as well as the vocal leader. Should anyone have to play his instrument

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had been whilst they were led y Sir Hugh Robertson. Theirs was an artistic reason.

elaborately, he has to be cued by the leading musician, who always stands at the centre of the front line. This demonstrates that the leader is not voted into the position, but is self-appointed.

### 6.2.2 ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP

The leader is both the policy-maker and decision-maker since he is in touch with the outside world. People who require the services of the group communicate with the leader. For performance contracts, when a group gets hired, deals are concluded with the leader. For this business of arranging performances, we have one case where the wife of the practitioner becomes very handy. This was the case of Hhashelimhlophe, who teamed up with his wife, Ebony, so that the group does not fall into the mistake of having too many middlemen between them and the record sales (Interview - Ebony Ngcobo: 16<sup>th</sup> December 2005).

### 6.3 SOLO PERFORMANCE

In a SOLO performance, the instrumentalists play either the instrument only or play and sing with his instrument. This can happen in the case of a guitar player, concertina player or violin player. Obviously, in the case of *imfiliji* (a mouth harp), the performer cannot do both.

In the earlier years, an instrumentalist would simply play his instrument regardless of the extent of appreciation from passers-by or those that he himself met as he walked around with his instrument. Whether in a township or in

rural areas, a sound of the instrument would be heard and nobody paid much attention to it except for little children, who would gather around, for sometime, as the player passed along.

The musicians would be so taken up by their instrument that they would appear oblivious of other life activities around them. The early concertina player, who was still tossed between the old Zulu tradition of carrying a stick whenever one walked out of home, would carry his stick under the armpit while the hands were busy with the concertina. This rural tradition of carrying a stick wherever one went around was still seen in the early years of township life:

When I was a young boy at Highflats, my father played the concertina. He would disappear for long periods from home and when he came back we would hear the sound of the instrument, and it was only then that we would remember all the instructions that he had given us in the morning (Interview - Welcome Nzimande:15<sup>th</sup> June 2003).

In the 1980's an *umaskandi* guitarist, Nkindlane Buthelezi, from KwaDlangezwa in the Ongoye district, did not want to say that his instrument was accompanying his singing. He would say that:

*Ngicula naso isiginci Sami.*

[I am singing with my guitar].

(Classroom workshop by Nkindlane: On invitation by Prof. Mngoma at the University of Zululand: 10th May 1987).

This above remark gave us an impression that the guitar was his companion.

In the 1970's, a guitarist, Max Mankwane, was very often heard on the radio and, in singing with his guitar, he had a popular song that had some lines that referred to the very guitar he was playing:

*Isiginci sami siyakhuluma;*  
My guitar talks;

*Sithi 'Awa, awa'.*  
[t says: 'Awa, awa'].

(Interview - Welcome Nzimande - 15<sup>th</sup>. June 2003).

Welcome Nzimande, who recorded this song in the studios of the South African Broadcasting Corporation said that this musician, Max Mankwane, would roll a bottle on the strings as he played the chords that accompanied the words that have been quoted above. The instrument would then give an unusual sound that would rise or fall in pitch, depending on the direction in which he performer rolled the bottle. This event tells us that to an *umaskandi* musician the instrument is a "living companion". That explains the extent of the musical commitment (Interview - Welcome Nzimande:15<sup>th</sup> June 2003).

On the other hand, to the traditional African, the companion was not in form of an instrument, but it was the practice of actually sounding the music. Music for Africans has always been contained in some life activity. This phenomenon is perceived in the fact that there is usually a relationship between the activity and the sound of the performed music:

Generally, there is an effervescence of work songs among the Zulu people, whether the work is done by men, women or children. Work with continually repeated rhythmical movements is easily transformed into the terms of a work song. The people thus sing readily when they are chopping or sawing wood or harvesting, and while these work songs are being sung, the Africans practise carefully to do their job properly. They are conscious of the meaning of the song and its function and they sing this whenever the occasion calls for it (Weman, 1960: 20).

The *umaskandi* performers of yesteryear, who would play "walking guitar music" or accompany their own vocal solo songs as they walked across a valley, did not have opportunities for performing in concert halls and music festivals. They therefore did not become as popular as today's *umaskandi* players that present their music in mixed bands of instruments. Above that, people in rural areas took a little longer to accept the sound of a guitar as commonplace music. Initially they associated *umaskandi* music sound to with a beer-drinking environment.

#### 6.4 COMPETITIVENESS IN UMASKANDI PERFORMANCE

Another aspect of this feature is that *umaskandi* music has always been a competitive world. Although *Umaskandi* musicians very seldom meet and perform together in the same programme, each *umaskandi* musician is fully aware of the existence and abilities of other musicians and will always be attempting to surpass them in the execution of his music. This competitiveness is a direct legacy of the "stick-fighting" practice among the herd-boys. It was through this form of contention that the boys would know the boy who could beat them all. That was the boy who

would then be taken for their *ingqwele* (champion). This event demonstrated that in the community of herd-boys, a leader would not be appointed, but he would exhibit himself.

This system of presenting one's self is seen in *umaskandi* musicians, who announce their presence and challenge to all musicians of his class. Thus, although the event of stick fighting may not take place in the present social environment of today, the idea of contesting has not died out among the Zulu people. It is now carried on in a different social arena, which is the sound of music. This idea of competitiveness encourages the musicians to produce more music. Although, in the fighting culture, it would have been hailed as brilliance *ukushaya umuntu ngezinduku zakhe*<sup>89</sup>, (hit him with his own sticks) it is but viewed as cowardice (lack of creativity), among the traditionals, to sing a song that was composed by another musician. That is why, among them, a composer's song will always be performed by the composer only.

## 6.5 GROUP PERFORMANCES

It was the advent of performances like *mbhaqanga* and *mgqashiyo* groups that overtook instrumental solo performances. It was the advent of performances like *mbhaqanga* and *mgqashiyo* groups that overtook instrumental solo performances. *Mbhaqanga*, which was a mixture of African vocal styles, Zulu dance combined with a variety of Western instruments, like leading guitars, bass guitars, clarinets, guitars, double bass, violins, saxophones and drums. The use of electric

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<sup>89</sup> "To hit him with his own sticks" - This is a metaphor which means "To defeat an opponent by using his own tricks".

amplifiers for the guitars gave a very dramatic mood for the performers on the stage. The essence of *mbhaqanga* is in the mixed rhythms, which gave the dance an African flavour. This Zulu term was brought into music terminology by a Zulu, Michael Xaba, who should have known the original meaning of the word (Coplan, 1985:161). The solo performer who relied on acoustic sound felt threatened.

*Mgqashiyo*, another urban concocted jumpy dance style, included dance patterns collaborated with African traditional styles (Coplan 1985:267).

The two styles, *mbhaqanga* and *mgqashiyo*, which included both male and female dancers, were popularized by being commercial, as the groups performed on Saturday nights and strictly for a fee at the door (Interview - Welcome Nzimande: 15<sup>th</sup> June 2003).

Expanding the *umaskandi* presentation from a single performer into a band lent some presence, command, personality and balance of the performance. The various composite items also extended the variety, and thus creating more interest. Spreading the performance also gave main musician a chance to breathe.

The *umaskandi*-supporting band is quite a huge and expensive undertaking, with speakers, microphones, amplifiers, synthesizers and all types of electronic sound engineering gear. The big sound has, indeed, made *umaskandi* music very popular. The electronic sound-producing instruments have made a great contribution. Welcome Nzimande, the radio presenter of the programme "*Sigiyangengoma*" in the 1980's was

the first to broadcast *umaskandi* groups in the radio in the Durban studios. He remembers that John "Phuzushukela"<sup>90</sup> Bhengu was the first *umaskandi* to make the shift from being a single performer to a larger group:

"Phuzushukela" Bhengu, a famous *umaskandi* musician of the sixties and who played around Durban, was among the first to organize a group performance of *umaskandi* music. Group music performance has been heard in one of his recordings of the song: "Iqoma KwaNdabula" (Interview - Welcome Nzimande: 15<sup>th</sup> June 2003).

There is still some uncertainty as to the first musician who used the *umaskandi* method of two-finger picking (*ukupika*<sup>91</sup>) instead of vamping all the strings. Veit Erlmann (1996:208) recalls that "Phuzushukela" was the first to use the style in the late fifties, while Nollene Davies (1995:29) states that an earlier guitarist, Robert Mthambo, used this style before Phuzushukela. Davies agrees that it was, however, Phuzushukela who apparently popularized it.

The ability to organize the band, whether it was by coincidence or trial and error, came out with a meaningful and interesting combination.

### 6.5.1 IRREGULAR RHYTHMIC SOUNDS

It is true that some of the items in the music context of music defy Western notation. Although that may be the

<sup>90</sup>. The name "*Phuzushukela*" (Drink the Sugar) is a praise name, which he got from his peers.

<sup>91</sup>. Sipho Mccunu refers to this style as "*Ukuncinza*" (to pinch).

case, the musical value of the style is in no way reduced. Notation is for use to those who can decipher it. Music being an aural art has to be heard in order that it may be appreciated and does not have to be necessarily written. There are a number of sounds in the music of Africa that are aesthetic in the performance of the style and those sounds may not necessarily be put on pen and paper. For instance, the punctuation of "Grrrr..., Grrrr ... " that was done by the bass section in the singing of the Black Mambazo was very effective as a rhythmic intervention, although those sounds might not be put into music. In *umaskandi* performance is also found the phenomenon of emitting sounds that are somewhere between speech and singing. Some sounds can be sliding, from a higher note to a lower note, or vice versa. Some uninitiated observers can easily say that such sounds have no music in them, which may not be the case. In other words, the melodic rise and fall in song is interacts between the rise and fall of the speech tone. This phenomenon is described in Weman as follows:

The languages of the Bantu are so-called tone languages. The words have their special melodic line and it is the correct melodic line, which makes the words comprehensible in the first place. Correct word intonation plays a much greater role in the Bantu languages.... Among peoples who make use of tone languages, melodies normally follow the melodic line of the text (Weman 1960: 55).

A similar outlook should also be given to scooping.

### 6.5.2 THE PENTATONIC SCALE

The pentatonic scale is a group five step-wise notes that are arranged in the following sequence of intervals:

doh : ray : me : soh: lah), or  
soh : lah : doh : ray : me).

This scale is one of those that are used by the Zulus. It is used in *umaskandi* and is conveniently applied for its suitability in the use of Zulu prosody, that is, the rise and fall of the tone in the speech or singing sounds of a language.

Singing in the Zulu language is derived from the singing of the Zulu *amahubo* (Interview - Clement Sithole<sup>92</sup>: 10<sup>th</sup> August 2004). The latter are well contained in the pentatonic scale, although not all the sounds or pitches can be represented in the degrees of the pentatonic scale and also within the gamut of the scale. Some can be found between the conventional levels of the Western scale, while some may not be heard as fixed pitch items, but as upward or downward gliding sounds.

Borrowing from the Western chord progression cannot be completely avoided in the performance of *umaskandi*. This is because of the influence of the hymn-singing culture that flourished in mission stations when the Western church arrived in Africa. *Umaskandi* music, therefore, does not preclude the use of the: I - IV - (I 6/4) - V - I Chord Sequence of the Western major and minor scale. Mfazomnyama

uses this sequence abundantly and also very effectively in his: "Sengikhathele ukuqonywa", an item which was recorded jointly with Phuzekhemisi and Hhashelimhlophe (SXAXA MBIJI 4: CDGMP 40875).

It should, however, be stated that in addition to the pentatonic scale, the IsiZulu tuning makes it easier for the performer to achieve the African traditional harmonizing practice of using the intervals of fourths, fifths and octaves, in the guitar.

### 6.5.3 THE CALL AND RESPONSE TEXTURE

The Call and Response pattern is the main texture of Zulu music. In *maskandi* music, it is used in a variety of ways in that, although the main singer of the "call" section is the leading singer\guitarist, there are no cut and dry restrictions that can confine him to the enunciative phrase only. For instance, the guitar may sound the initial melody and also respond to it. The leading singer may do the same. He may also sing the initial phrase and wait for the bigger group to make an answer. The initial phrase can sometime be done twice. The instrument, that is, the guitar, sings the melody or may only provide an accompaniment. All that depends on the main musician.

The concept of Call and Response can still be clearly audible in instrumental music:

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<sup>92</sup> A Catholic catechist, he grew up at Ngoje (Louwsberg District) in the midst of Zulu indigenous way of life.

- (a) The first phrase or first section of the music can be identified and, as soon as this wanes, there comes a responsive phrase, which sort of complements the first phrase.
- (b) In case the performer is singing to his own accompaniment, he may either sing both the call and the response vocally while he is accompanied by his own guitar, which may also sound the same tune that he is singing.
- (c) He may sing both the call and the response while his instrument accompanies him in a tune that does not relate to the prevailing call and response pattern.
- (d) He may also sing the call section and let his own instrument sing the response.
- (e) There are a wide variety of tunes. This is concluded from the fact that they do also sing traditional tunes, which are not in the call and response pattern.

Call and Response can also be visible in the dance patterns, where one of the dancers can initiate a dance phrase and the rest of the dancers can answer by a combined dance phrase.

## 6.6 THE TUNING OF INSTRUMENTS - IN GENERAL

Normally speaking, the tuning of an instrument is a specialist's knowledge for which specially trained people are apprenticed. It is indeed remarkable that Zulu musicians believe that they should be able to do the job

themselves. This self-commitment by the musicians stems from the practice that in the African community an instrument is not bought, but is made. The belief is that the player is also a maker of the instrument that is to be played by him. This explains to us that since music is associated with the whole life of an African musician, making music is a assortment of a number of artistic cultures that have to be performed by the musician himself (Conversation - Khabi Mngoma: 6 December 1998).

#### 6.6.1 THE GUITAR AS A POPULAR UMASKANDI INSTRUMENT

Although the *maskandi* musicians make use of a number of different instruments, the guitar has been highlighted in this chapter for its popularity. The other instruments generally played by *maskandis* are the concertina, the piano accordion, the piano, the violin and occasionally, the banjo.

The guitar is easy to access and also easy to handle. Some musicians play it while they are walking and the player walks in the rhythm of the melody that he is playing. To walk with the instrument, a string for hanging it around the neck is provided. This hanging takes the place of the foot-stool, which is for lifting and supporting the leg when the instrument is placed on the thigh, which is the normal position when one plays in a sitting position. This sitting posture provides the easiest access to the instrument, without feeling the weight of the instrument. The player relies very much on hanging the instrument around his neck since music to an African is complemented

with body movement. He, therefore, dances while he plays the instrument. Although sitting would give him more concentration than standing and dancing, *umaskandi* musicians have no choice. Hanging the instrument around one's neck is an added advantage in that the instrument does not tie the player down to one environment.

In comparison to the banjo, another stringed instrument, the guitar is rather mellow and rich in tone. The former has a sharp and cutting sound and the effect of short and very tight strings is audible in its sound, whereas the guitar is rich in sound and also suitable for soft playing.

During the days when traveling by train was popular, Dalton Sithole would bring his guitar with him when he traveled from Durban to Newcastle, a journey that would take him close to twelve hours, overnight. Dalton remembers that with some soft playing the travelers finally enjoyed his music (Interview - Dalton Sithole - 15<sup>th</sup>. June 2004.)

Young men in the country carry their guitars when they move about visiting friends and also when they are visiting their friends and girl friends.

#### 6.6.1.1 THE TUNING OF GUITAR STRINGS

The essence of *umaskandi* music is in the order tuning in which the strings have been tuned. This is the case with all guitar patterns. Without this having been suitably done, the required musical style will not be achieved.

### 6.6.1.2 ISIZULU TUNING

The guitar, as a Western instrument, has six strings and these are set to suit the Western approach of the major and the minor scales. From the lowest to the highest note, the setting of the six strings is E A D G B E. This is the setting of the modern "classical" guitar<sup>93</sup> as it is played by the Westerners. The Zulu musicians came out with their own approach, which became known as the "Zulu" setting, known as isiZulu and the notes are E A D G B D. The difference is in the last or the highest string, that is, the highest interval. In the Western setting, the interval is a perfect fourth, and, in the Zulu style, the interval is a minor sixth.

All practitioners of *umaskandi* musician play in this setting. The "IsiZulu" tuning style has been confirmed by all the *umaskandi* musicians that I interviewed, declaring that *umaskandi* music was created by the Zulu musicians, although the creator has not been identified. Whether the creator of the style was a Zulu or a "foreign musician, the style has been passed on in the African oral tradition. One person learns the art and passes it on to the next by explaining it.

When the traditional musicians talk of tuning the strings, they do not conceive that in terms of the intervals E A D G B D, as the Westerners do. Instead they simply "know" the order of those pitched sounds as definite sounds but with no name. Phumlani Mdlalose explained this understanding to me. He, however, has an advantage over other *umaskandi*

players in that he also plays the guitar in the classroom classical style. So, he understands both the classical and the *umaskandi* approach. Mandla Hadebe, a practitioner of the KwaZulu Natal Indigenous Music Project, also explained that as an *umaskandi* practitioner, he knows the sequence of the strings as the first, the second, the third, the fourth, the fifth and the sixth strings. He also confirmed that he and many other musicians identify the pitch of the strings by first establishing the correctness of the first string and then build the other pitch levels relating each string to the previous one. What they never miss is the sequence of the intervals, starting with the highest pitched string. So, when they speak of *ifesi* (the first string), they mean the highest pitched string, which is the "d" string. In other words, they read the instrument from the highest string to the lowest, unlike the Westerners that read the pitch sequence from the bass note to the highest (Interview - Mandla Hadebe:21<sup>st</sup> October 2003).

### 6.6.1.3 ISIGEYANE TUNING -

The *iSigeyane* style is an offshoot of *isiZulu* and is produced by a certain rhythmic emphasis that relates to the *iSigeyane* dance of the people. In other words, both styles are played within the same guitar tuning and the differences are in the chord formation, the chord sequence, and the rhythmic patterns (Interview - Phumlani Mdlalose: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2003).

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<sup>93</sup> Modern classical guitar tuning: (Randel -1986:357)

#### 6.6.1.4 ISICHUNU TUNING

The *isiChunu* style has its own tuning pattern, which stands as follows: D : A : D : A : B : D.

#### 6.6.1.5 ISISHAMENI TUNING

From the *isiChunu* setting can also be played the *isiShiyameni* style. These two styles, like *isiZulu* and *isiGeyane*, are based on one and the same tuning and the difference is in the chord sequencing and also in the rhythmic patterns that are employed for each style. The exponent of these two styles is Siphon Mchunu of the Kranskop area.

It should be noted that the names of some of these aural genres emanate from the dances that are performed while the music is played. The music has, therefore, to follow the rhythm of the dance. Therefore, the *isiShameni* guitar style has to give the rhythm of the dance, as explained by Johnny Clegg (Clegg, 1983:8-11). Clegg further explains that the people's dance movements are further based on the people's body movements and gesture operatives in the daily lives of the people. He says:

Thus our overall comprehension of the dance will be guided by a combination of historical, structural and cultural perspectives" (Clegg, 1981: 8).

It should be noted also that the open strings of the Western classical guitar and that of the *isiZulu* guitar are tuned in such a way that the player easily achieves the pentatonic scale in the manipulation of the instrument.

This is indeed necessary because Zulu vocal music basically employs the pentatonic scales besides the curved and gliding sounds that either rise or fall through a number of pitch levels. Phuzekhemisi Mnyandu aptly summarizes this relationship between the sound of a Zulu singing voice and the sliding\gliding sound of the guitar:

*"Umaskandi nomculo wesizulu kuyinto eyodwa"*.

[Umaskandi music and Zulu vocal music are synonymous]

(Personal interview - Phuzekhemisi Mnyandu: 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2004).

#### 6.6.1.6 ISIMANDOLINI TUNING

Josiah Shelembe the leader and guitarist of a gumboot dancing group plays a different kind of tuning in his guitar. His strings are tuned in the following sequence of intervals, from the lowest to the highest string:

|   |                 |   |                 |    |                 |                          |                        |   |
|---|-----------------|---|-----------------|----|-----------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---|
| X | x               | x | x               | x  | x               | x                        |                        |   |
| 1 | 5 <sup>th</sup> | 2 | 8 <sup>th</sup> | 3  | 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 4 down a 5 <sup>th</sup> | 5 up a 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 6 |
| E | B               | B | C#              | F# | G#              |                          |                        |   |

1. Between the first and the second string the interval is the 5<sup>th</sup>.
2. Between the Second and the Third string the interval is an octave.
3. Between the Third and the Fourth string the interval goes up by a Second.
4. Between the Fourth and the Fifth the interval goes down by a fifth.

5. Between the Fifth and the Sixth, the interval is a second.

What happens between the Fourth and the Fifth strings, that is, the pitch going down by a fifth, very unusual. Normally, the different intervals keep on going up in the same direction. He calls this *isimandolin* (*Like the Mandolin*), although it appears that this naming has nothing to do with the tuning of the mandolin, which is tuned differently. The music that he plays from this tuning, to the accompaniment of the Gum - boot dance is quite interesting. What should be noted is that these open strings for this tuning constitute the pentatonic scale, but, in a different order of notes.

There is another phenomenon that exists in the tuning of *ISIMANDOLINI*. When I made two subsequent visits to this musician, Fleymaan Shelembe, I found that the tuning was slightly different from what they were on my first visit. When I asked him about this feature, he said that he had no problem, because he could easily manoeuvre his fingers to get the notes that he wanted. The following figure shows how the strings were arranged, from the lowest to the highest:

|   |                 |   |                 |   |         |   |    |                 |    |   |
|---|-----------------|---|-----------------|---|---------|---|----|-----------------|----|---|
| X |                 | X | X               |   | X       |   | X  |                 | X  |   |
| 1 | 5 <sup>th</sup> | 2 | 8 <sup>th</sup> | 3 | down5th | 4 | up | 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 5  | 6 |
| E |                 | B | B               |   | E       |   | F# |                 | C# |   |

Indeed, Shelembe had no problem in playing from both these settings. He could change from one to the other. This was very unique.

## 6.7 THE "BRIDGE" AND PITCH CHANGES IN THE GUITAR

The Westerners, who are the creators of the guitar, refer to this gadget, discussed in this paragraph, as the CAPO or CAPOSTATO. African musicians simply call it the "BRIDGE". The bridge for the Westerners is another gadget that is just behind the sound hole on the belly of the instrument. Both the Westerners and the African musicians have the same purpose for the two gadgets in the guitar. The crossing of names is merely a matter of terminology. This "bridge", the capostato, is a wooden BLOCK which is shaped and placed between any two frets for the sake of shortening the strings of the guitar, thus raising the pitch of the strings with the same intervals between them (Randel - 1986:138).

*Umaskandi* music, like Zulu vocal music, does not have modulations, from one key to another. Once a song has been started, the singing goes on to the end of the song. Shifting from one key to another within a performance has never been conceived. The *umaskandi* musician, like wise, does not bother about changing from key to another because he does not need it. However, there can be a need to raise or lower the pitch of a song when the accompanied singer demands it. To achieve this, the *umaskandi* need not understand what the new key is. He will simply shift his "bridge" (capotasto<sup>94</sup>), on the face of the fingerboard, to a position, between any two frets, that will suit the key of the current song. If the first attempt does not work, he will keep on moving to a different fret until the

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<sup>94</sup> Technically speaking, this is not the bridge, although the African maskandis call it so. The actual bridge is on the belly of the guitar, which keeps the strings away from the body of the instrument.

convenient key for the singer has been reached. The instrumentalist will continue manipulating his instrument as he normally does. The key change will not affect his physical execution. This instrument acts as a MODULATOR, and it changes the pitch of the entire strings while the intervals between the strings are maintained. In other words, the bridge helps the instrument to shift from one key to another whilst the hand of the performer remains playing at the same area of the fingerboard. This phenomenon is another example that explains *umaskandi* method as a short cut to instrument playing, just as tonic solfa is a short cut to music reading. A change of key in staff notation means reading music at completely different letter-names, whereas in tonic solfa notation the reader maintains the same vocabulary, but at a different pitch.

The FRETS or the division on the fingerboard of the guitar are marked in semitones. So, a shift from one fret to the next means a movement of a semitone. For a tone, on the same string, there should be a shift of two frets.

Initially, the African musicians would not spend money to buy such a bridge, but would make their own by simply shaping up a piece of wood to the size that would relate to that of the fingerboard. This would then be tied firmly with a string. Nowadays, the musicians have become sophisticated and the urgency to perform forces them to obtain ready-made parts from music shops.

*Umaskandi* musicians very seldom have to change keys. This is because their songs are usually done within the same range of tessitura. By singing regularly, Zulu traditional

singers are able to sing a song at almost the same key each time they start singing, without necessarily understanding that there exists a concept of "absolute pitch".

## 6.8 SOUND PRODUCTION IN THE GUITAR

When a musician says that he is able to play an instrument, he does not merely mean that he can merely identify it from other instrument. To him, knowing an instrument means knowing how the sound is produced in the instrument, how sound is amplified and how other musical effects are achieved. In short, to a musician, knowing an instrument refers to the understanding of how music is produced on or with the instrument and also knowing the organization of the pith of notes.

Nkindlane Buthelezi was known popularly by his nickname, "Nkindlankindla zebululu" (superabundant like the body of a puff adder). Although he used an ordinary six-stringed guitar, he doubled his highest string and these doubled strings performed independent contrapuntal melodies, a feat that baffled other *umaskandi* performers, although they always heard the difference. Initially the other musicians, who had not noticed the doubling of the highest string, were stunned, as they could make out, from hearing, that there was something unusual in the sound of the highest string. Ultimately this performer, Nkindlane was nicknamed "Udabul'ifesi" (doubled first-string) (Interview - Zama Khumalo: 7<sup>th</sup> November 2003).

It was Mfazomnyama Khumalo who first introduced a twelve-stringed guitar into *umaskandi* music. This meant that each

of the six strings was doubled (Ndlovu, 2001: 17). In spite of the twelve strings<sup>95</sup>, Mfazomnyama was a wonderful performer on stage, dancing, jumping, whilst he is playing. He would sometime carry his guitar behind his neck and continue playing. He could also play, jump, lie on his back and continue playing without getting interrupted by the various changes of his physical positions. Hhashelimhlophe also uses a twelve-stringed guitar.

## 6.9 FINGERING

For plucking the strings, the classical method recommends the PIMA method, a system that employs four fingers for the production of sound from the strings. The word "PIMA" is formed by picking up the first letters of the names of the four fingers that are involved in the picking of the strings. This system was designed by the Spaniards. Spain has had a great influence on the guitar technique, around the world:

The PIMA method stands as follows:

|       |         |   |                        |
|-------|---------|---|------------------------|
| PIMA: | PULGAR  | - | Thumb                  |
|       | INDICIO | - | Index Finger           |
|       | MEDIO   | - | Middle Finger          |
|       | ANULAR  | - | Ring Finger            |
|       |         |   | (Noad, F.M. - 1976:10) |

Only the four fingers, mentioned above, are employed in the playing of the guitar. The little finger is not used.

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<sup>95</sup> In each set of the twelve stings, the two strings in a single set are tuned at an octave apart.

In the left hand, that is, the fingers that perform the stopping of the notes, the thumb is excluded from participation. Only the other four fingers are used to create the required note, by choosing the string and also by stopping the string.

Although the first person that conceived this method could not be identified, it is apparent that the fingering of the *umaskandi* guitar was practised in a crisis:

- (a) The *umaskandi* guitarist uses only two fingers, that is, the thumb and the index finger for plucking all the strings of a guitar. While the other three fingers are used for balancing the hand against the guitar, and to maintain the leverage, with experienced musicians, the other three can be simply relaxed (Discussed under 6.5.2).
- (b) With those that are not well experienced, the free fingers are sometimes used to rest the hand on the body of the guitar to give leverage for the two that are playing the strings. Experienced players need not keep their free fingers stuck on the belly of the guitar.
- (c) Only when all the strings are struck or vamped can the player use all four fingers.

That is an extraordinary ability to be able to use only two fingers to take charge of all the six strings. Even though *umaskandi* comes to our ears in monophonic, homophonic and also in polyphonic combinations, it should be noted that all

that conglomeration of sound comes from two fingers only. Although the African traditionalist limits himself to two fingers only, the application of the latter should be commended as highly skilful.

#### 6.10 STOPPING THE STRINGS \ CHANGE OF PITCH.

Stopping the string means shortening the length of the strings by holding each string against the fingerboard. The string becomes shorter and the pitch becomes higher.

The African guitarist, who taught himself, devised his own method of producing the sound of a guitar. While in Western classical playing the player uses four fingers for stopping (shortening the length of the string by pressing the string on the fingerboard) called the PIMA method:

- (a) *Umaskandi* players use all five fingers for stopping the strings. This means that the thumb is also used to perform the stopping of the notes
- (b) The thumb, while it holds some weight of the guitar by its neck, is also used for stopping the lowest string, which is at the top.
- (c) The other four fingers, which appear from below, are used for stopping the other five strings.
- (d) In addition to the stopping of a string by holding firmly on the fingerboard, the left fingers can also be used to slide or glide on a string while the latter

is held down. This act helps performer to produce an up or down gliding sound, which passes through a number of pitch levels. This feature enables the guitar to imitate the human voice. An experienced *umaskandi* will know the fret at which he has to start the glide and the fret at which to stop.

As it can be seen from the explanations above, the method used by the musicians is slightly different from that which is used by the trained classical guitar players. They have no problem with this method because they know of no better. To them it is efficacious. Even those *umaskandi* players, like Phumlani Mdlalose, who have had an opportunity of learning the classical guitar at university level, in addition to his earlier *umaskandi* knowledge, still prefer the *umaskandi* approach of fingering for playing *umaskandi* music (Interview - Phumlani Mdlalose<sup>100</sup>: 21 May 2003). That he has accessed the Western approach makes him aware that *umaskandi* fingering is more demanding (physically) than the classical approach.

#### 6.10.1 LEFT-HANDED VIRTUOSITY - THE GUITAR

For a left-handed person, the guitar can be transferred to the left hand and the strings are altered so that the lowest is at the top position, next to the thumb. The only difference would be the shape of the bridge, below the sound hole. In some guitars this gadget, which is stuck to

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<sup>100</sup> Phumlani Mdlalose has obtained a B.A. (Mus) degree at the University of Zululand. Classical guitar was one of his major subjects. Before he enrolled for the degree he was highly involved in maskandi music. He now enjoys playing in both styles, and, sometimes using his academic knowledge to enhance his maskandi style.

the body of the guitar, seems to slope slightly towards the little finger. Should the guitar be placed under the left arm, this little piece of wood or plastic will have to be turned downside up.

Khabi Mngoma<sup>97</sup> did not see any problem whether a guitar student was right-handed or left-handed. He used to tell his staff that both hands can be trained and both could achieve equal dexterity. He argued that if hands could achieve equal proficiency on the piano, they should also be able to team up successfully on the guitar, regardless of which hand plays the strings.

Steve Pienaar, a guitar lecturer at the University of Zululand, says some left handed guitar students have insisted that they be taught to play with the left. He sees this as a psychological decision. Pienaar believes that:

Academically speaking, a right-handed player should play with the left hand and that a left-handed person should play with the right hand. (Interview - Steve Pienaar: 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2003).

Mr Pienaar's argument is that for a right-handed person, the psychomotor activity is better developed with the right hand than with the left hand. Playing with the left hand would, therefore, give an opportunity to the right hand to deal with the stopping of the strings on the fret of the guitar, which is a more demanding activity than the picking

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<sup>97</sup> Professor Khabi Mngoma who was Professor and Head of Music at the University of Zululand (1976-1987) was both a musicologist, a hard-working teacher, and a disciplinarian, who expected his first year learners of instruments to reach Unisa Grade Three level at the end of their first year at university (University of Zululand -B.A.(Music) Handbook - (1976 -2000).

up of the correct string when playing. To be consistent with this argument, the left-handed player would have to play with the right hand and leave his active left hand for the creation of the right notes on the fingerboard. Pienaar is convinced that in playing the guitar, there is more mental demand on the hand that deals with the fingerboard than on the one that hits and picks the strings (Interview - Pienaar: 31st July 2003).

Mfazomnyama Mphatheni Khumalo is one successful *umaskandi* who is left-handed. When asked whether that had any hindrance to his performing act or whether he himself does get any odd feeling in such an execution, he answered that he had no difficulty.

#### 6.11 THE MUSICALITY OF THE CONCERTINA.

The concertina as a musical instrument is not popular with Africans who are involved in classical music. The piano accordion is almost unknown to some Africans. It is only the *umaskandi* performers who make use of the concertina as their instrument.

Many Western musicians have been seen playing the piano accordion, which is in the same family with the concertina, in that the notes of the instruments rely on air being sucked in and pushed out of the instrument, and in the process, the notes being sounded.

Both instruments have been seen in use in the performance of the Afrikaans music, which is referred to as Boere musik. Besides these being seen in such group

performances, the instrument have also been seen played on the streets by jolly performers. In other words, the instruments have not been seen in what is termed "serious" music on the stage as it happens with Andre Sergovia's performance of Bach's suites on the guitar, or some form of clarinet music on stage. It appears that these instruments, that is, the concertina and the piano accordion, are instruments that are closer to the daily social lives of the man in the street than those instruments that are played mainly on an organized performance stage for the concert-going public.

The concertina and the piano accordion seem to be more acquainted with the socializing street performer than with the "serious" musician just as the *umaskandi* guitarist is when viewed against a classical guitarist. In short, the *umaskandi* guitarist, the concertina player, and the performer of the piano accordion seem to be providers of music that reaches the general public much easier than the Western classical musicians. The styles could be said to be in a similar social level though at different communities. These musicians are, therefore, of great advantage to our different communities.

#### 6.11.1 THE TUNING OF THE CONCERTINA AND THE ACCORDION.

These instruments have been dealt together in the same chapter because they seem to belong to one category. They are similar in that:

- (a) The fixed keys that produce the sound inside the body of the instruments are similar.
- (b) The body of each instrument is a box that houses and release air for the production of sound.
- (c) The manner in which the sound is produced is similar in that they both need a continuous sucking and release of air for sound to be produced.
- (d) They both have a keyboard, although the designs are different.
- (e) They can both be walking instruments, in that the player is free to move as he pleases.

Since the concertina is greatly used by the *umaskandi* musician, a greater emphasis in the discussion of the musicality of the instruments shall be made on the concertina.

Tuning the concertina is not simply like the tightening of the strings of a guitar. The keys are inside. Sound is produced by the escape of air through the brass quills or blades that are pushed into slots that are inside the instrument. It is the varying length and breadth of these blades that give the varying pitch of the notes. The old principle of acoustics applies:

The thinner and shorter the vibrating object is, the higher the pitch of the note will be: The broader and longer the body of the vibrating

instrument, the lower the pitch of the note (Randel, 1995:7).

Although the classical tuning of the instrument is ready-made, the *umaskandi* has to rearrange the order in which these are presented, so that he is able to access the relevant *umaskandi* sounds in the order that he wants them. Fortunately for the concertina player, he does not have to tune his instrument each time he plays.

Some brilliant shopkeepers, like the one at Queen Street in Durban, take the responsibility to prepare their products for the relevant market. The tuning of concertinas by shopkeepers is to make sure that the *umaskandi* who buys the instrument finds it ready for use. Unlike a guitar, once a concertina has been serviced, it will never need any other service. One such shop that used to tune the instruments for the customers was Bam's Furnishers (Mr Farouk) of Number 158 Queen Street in Durban. As soon as an order of concertinas arrives from China, where the instruments are ordered, a Zulu man from Port Shepstone, who is skilled in this practice, would be summoned to come and do half of the new stock, for the consumption of his *umaskandi* customers (Interview - Farouk - 158 Queen Street, Durban:10<sup>th</sup> July, 2000). He has now discontinued that practice.

## 6.12 VOCAL MUSIC IN UMASKANDI MUSIC

In the vocal music of Africans the focus is not mainly on the personal scholarship development of the individual's vocal technique, but it is on how much the performer links

up with his societal environment that matters. The African differs from the Western-trained music scholar, who pays attention to voice production, phrasing, a wide tessitura, agility of the voice, and other technical features. What is primary in vocal music is that the spoken word has to relate to the listeners' experiences. It has to be relevant to the lives of the people. Even instrumental accompaniment has to help in the promotion of the meaning, by sounding like the meaning of the word. That is why at times the African vocal singer has been seen to be only speaking the words to the accompaniment of his instrument, as it is the case with the music of Vusi Ximba, whose singing consists mainly of spoken words to the accompaniment of his piano accordion. In fact, Vusi Ximba is known for his libretto, which is a comment on the lives of the people, than for the musical virtuosity on the piano accordion.

Although the *umaskandi* musician sings his tune, the singing may occasionally waver between a singing voice and a speaking voice, even before he starts with the spoken *izibongo*.

The tessitura, or the range of the singing voice in *umaskandi* music is not very wide, although the phrases seem to be long drawn as if they are curved like the rainbow. Mfazomnyama's song "Sengikhathele" (Gallo-CDGMP 40875 [1]) is the best example of this type of these nostalgic phrases. The RANGE or COMPASS of the singers' voices has also been observed in the same disc mentioned above. The musicians are the three *umaskandi* guitarists who recorded their music together in the SXAXA MBIJI project:

(a) MFAZOMNYAMA KHUMALO SINGS BETWEEN THE FOLLOWING INTERVALS:

| <u>Track</u> | <u>Title</u>  | <u>Range</u>             |
|--------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| 1            | Sengikhathele | G-A (8ve+onetone= 9th).  |
| 4            | Zul'omnyama   | A - B (8ve+1tone = 9th). |
| 8            | Hamb'uyogana  | A - C (8ve+2tones =10th) |
| 11           | Ntombenhle    | G - C (8ve=3tones =11th) |

(b) HHASH'ELIMPHLOPHE SINGS BETWEEN THE FOLLOWING INTERVALS:

| <u>Track</u> | <u>Title</u> | <u>Range</u>              |
|--------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| 2            | Wezinsizwa   | G - A (8ve+one tone=9th). |
| 5            | Ngiyamthanda | A - F (Sixth only).       |
| 7            | Easy Come    | D - A (Fifth only).       |

(c) PHUZEKHEMISI SINGS BETWEEN THE FOLLOWING INTERVALS:

| <u>Track</u> | <u>Title</u> | <u>Range</u>            |
|--------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 3            | Usizi        | A - A (one 8ve)         |
| 6            | Banovalo     | G - A (8ve + one tone). |
| 9            | Siy'ePitoli  | G - A (8ve + one tone). |

From the above, it can be observed that the widest interval that has been done by these musicians is the eleventh, by Mfazomnyama Khumalo and that the narrowest is the fifth, by Hhash'elimhlophe Ngcobo. But, on listening to all the voices, one gets a feeling that the ultimate vocal ability of the musicians has not been exploited. At the level at which they perform, they just sing comfortably (Gallo - CDGMP 40875).

The aspect that the musicians are riding on emphatically and energetically is the rhythm, especially in the guitar accompaniment.

### 6.13 RHYTHM IN UMASKANDI MUSIC

This section is, in fact going to refer to the rhythmic growth of all Zulu music, because the music of *umaskandi* does not appear in isolation, but it is an ultimate eventuality of the growth of the rhythm in Zulu music.

If we were to be consistent with the study of African music "within the context of traditional African life" (Bebey - 1987:5), we should be able to relate African musical rhythm to the African's way of life, and, in this particular case, the life of the Zulu people.

### 6.14 AMAHUBO AS THE BASIS FOR TIME AND PHRASING

It appears that pulse sub-division and the length of phrases in Zulu music is derived from *amahubo* singing.

All the *amahubo* songs had a rhythm of some kind and the tempo of the rhythm would be determined by the nature of the function for which the *ihubo* was sung. For instance, an *ihubo* sung at the death of the *Ummumzane* would be very steady. A hunting *ihubo* would be brisk, but not very fast.

*Ukhuba* (infinitive verb), that is, the performance of *amahubo*, by the elderly, would be a steady and dignified form of singing, conforming to their age. For them, the pulses would neither be seen or heard, but would be felt in

the sound of the music. The movements would not be vigorous at all, but suave and graceful. By all means, they would be "steady but sure", as a PROLONGED ANACRUSIS of a NUMBER OF BEATS which would eventually land together with the foot-tamping. It is the meter in the long-drawn vocal phrases that suggests the underlying pulses in the music. The pulses are evenly distributed throughout the length of the phrase, with the heavier beats given some stronger weight. The fewer syllables that are given more weight synchronize with the foot-stamping.

The eventual foot-stamping in the steady singing gives an idea that the music drives itself to coincide with the movement of the performers and not that the performers achieved it by chance. That is the beauty of watching the performance of *amahubo*, and, it is in watching the performance that the one sees and feels a sense of continuous time keeping, although the pulse is not continuously sounded.

Some authentic Zulu performance of *amahubo* is still upheld by the Nazareth Church, known as the Shembites.

*Amahubo* were steady, and the pulses were not vigorous as they are in today's dance music. But, in spite of that gentleness and steadiness in the singing, the novelty in this music is that an interested listener could feel the pulse. Finally stamping together simultaneously, after a number of internalized pulses, as it appeared to be, gave a feeling of victory, unity, togetherness, and a form of a little climax and final arrival for the vocal performer on

one side and the unseen, but felt pulses on the other side. This is what brings a feeling of relish to the performer.

Time or pulse in the singing of *amahubo* was not "ben marcato", but would flow as if the beat would synchronize with the foot-stamping as against the idea of the performer looking forward to beat in the correct time.

This steadiness in the rhythm of *amahubo* gave a feeling of some form of virtual time rather than actual time.

Even when the elderly were singing the *amahubo* whilst they were seated, perhaps after a meat eating party, a feeling of rhythm would still be felt in the emphasis of the words of the song.

*Amahubo*, therefore, have a well-felt rhythm although it is not pounded in strong audible beats. The steadiness grandeur in the singing of *amahubo* by the elderly people reflected the steady life of the Zulu people.

Nevertheless, the younger folk and the warriors would not maintain the steady pace of the elderly people in the performance of *amahubo*. *Amahubo*, sung by the younger population would not keep to the tempo of the elderly singers. For instance, *ihubo* (singular) for the war would be performed with brightness and briskness and a forward thrust of urgency and anxiety. In this case the feeling of a pulse would be even more stronger as there would be a lot of pulses with the feet, the movement of the shields, the gesticulations with shields and other instruments of war in the hands of the warriors.

Semantically, the word *ihubo* is another word for *iculo*, which is a song. Ultimately, the word is onomatopoeic and the emphasis of the meaning is on the sound element of the music. This word *huba* can be used to describe the sound that is heard at the initial stages just before the water starts boiling. It is said that the water is singing (*amanzi ayaHUBA*) (the verb). When *ihubo* is performed, the listeners enjoy the texture, the shape, and the brimming flow of the phrases. Of course, the beauty is also enhanced by the meter, which may not be well marked, but is felt in the elocution of the words.

#### 6.14.1 TIME IN MAKHWEYANA PERFORMANCE

The main factor for mentioning *umakhweyana* performance is that the time that is silent in the performance of *amahubo* was sounded and became elaborate in the performance of *makhweyana*. In *amahubo* it was felt inwardly, and in the *makhweyana*, it became heard. That it got to be heard was a step towards making Zulu time beat vigorous and elaborate. Time in the performance of *umakhweyana* performance is well-marked by the continuous beating of the string, although the singing may take its rhythm, that may be different from that of the instrument. In the performance of *umakhweyana*, the most elaborate features are the continuous equal beats of the instrument and the ad libitum phrases of the vocal message. Time in *umakhweyana* is the archetype of pulse subdivision in Zulu music. This instrument gives us the basic eight-pulse phrases that are described in chapter 5.6.1. This is the basic musicality and inventiveness of the Zulu musicians that lends them the capacity to

indigenize the guitar and other *umaskandi* instruments. The rhythms in *imfiliji* (mouth organ), *umaskandi* guitar and in the gumboot dance guitar are typical of *umakhweyana* gourd bow rhythmic patterns (Interview C.M. Ndlovu: 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2004).

The art of emitting the sound in *umakhweyana* performance is a little different from the singing of, say, Western art music, where the speech (vowels and consonants) have to be properly articulated. In *umakhweyana* performance, the voice vacillates between speech and singing. This means that at one time the words are sung, and at other times pure spoken words may be sounded. A listener may get a feeling that the accompanying sound of the instrument gives the performer both license and protection to either sing her words or speak them, ad libitum. This type of singing is well expounded by Princess Constance Magogo kaDinuzulu (GALLO SGALP. 1678).

#### 6.15 RECITATION (SINGING) OF HIS OWN IZIBONGO (PRAISE-POETRY)

A Zulu person has, in addition to his *isibongo* (surname), a clan name. A clan name can be simply one word like a surname. People of one and the same surname share all the clan names that may be for that surname. Using a clan name, instead of a surname, is meant to give a serious pat on the back to any person. It can be done when a person has made an achievement. Using a clan name elates a person and gives a feeling of being loved and life becomes more enjoyable.

While clan names are shared by all the person of the same *isibongo* (surname), *izibongo* (praise-poetry) are sung to show recognition to an individual person for his own personal achievement. They are longer than clan names as they (the former) are supposed to tell a story. They take the form of verse.

Self-praise in Zulu culture is not a shame. A person may sing his own praises. *Umaskandi* performers have a slot for singing their own in their performance style. It has been established that with every one of their songs there is an opportunity for the main instrumentalist, who is also the main singer, to sing his own praises. This is a display of the performer's musicality and also a celebration of the singer's musical conquest.

Praise singing is a tradition of *umaskandi* musicians, and not for ordinary guitar players. For instance, Tu Nokwe, a woman guitarist from Kwa Mashu, does not sing praises when she performs her music. The main reason is that she does not play *umaskandi* music but plays a different music culture (Interview - Tu Nokwe<sup>98</sup> - 15th July 2004). Besides that, that Tu Nokwe is a woman, she would not be a praise-singer because that is a dominion for men. As a woman, she would be limited in that, although a poet has licence, she would still be stifled by the Zulu cultural *hlonipha* system from pronouncing certain words in the language:

*Inkosikazi kayinakuma ithi "thwi", phakathi,*  
[A woman may not stand up "astute" amongst

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<sup>98</sup> Tu Nokwe, born and bred in a township—Plays guitar in the ordinary major scale. Although she is supported by BASS GUOTARS, her mainstay is the Western acoustic sound of the instrument. This can be heard in her own recording: TU NOKWE-AFRICAN CHILD-SSCD 076.

*futhi phambikwamadoda, ibongele inkosi*  
and in front of men and sing praises to a king]

(Interview - Princess Gwalisile Zulu [Mrs Kabanyane] - 8<sup>th</sup> August 2004).

*Izibongo* (Praise-poetry) is, therefore, a male-dominated world. This idea has also been expressed by some music critics, like Fiona Paul, who have shown interest in *umaskandi* music (Fiona Paul: The Daily News [26.04.91 - P12]).

Tu Nokwe really tries to put finesse in her guitar music and is able to attract the elite' community into her shows (Sowetan - 26<sup>th</sup> October 2000).

#### 6.16 TRADITIONAL AESTHETICS

It has now become classical practice that a *umaskandi* performer should sing his own praises in the middle of a song, when he feels that *ingoma seyivuthiwe* (the performance is hot enough) and that it has been well taken. This may look like a new idea, whereas it is not. Singing praises, whistling, or shouts of approval can be made in any event where there is observable success of performance. Even when cocks (fowls) or roosters are engaged in a skirmish, Africans who are witnessing the scene will not immediately separate them, but will start by shouting words that are meant to implore the winner to pour out more lashes. Words like: "*Mnik'isongo lakhe*" (Hand him over his ring) are very popular (Interview - Dalton Sithole: 19<sup>th</sup> June 2004).

Traditional aesthetics among Zulu musicians are an opportunity to display their creativity. Contention in music performance, having replaced inter-district fights,

there has to be more creativity in music-making in order to make it more interesting. As a result, there are cases where contending musicians could create different dance forms or patterns to the same music accompaniment. This means that one song could get different rhythmic interpretations. Johnny Clegg explains how one clever dance leader was able to maintain peace within the district of KwaMiya through such practices (J. Clegg 1981: 10-11).

### 6.16.1 SELF-EXULTATION

Self-praise poetry was part of ZULU AESTHETICS in Zulu traditional life and it was not a shame to compose one's own *izibongo* (praises). Usually a young man would create his own praises, basing them on the facts of his achievements, if the others took too long to compose the praises for him.

This practice was reminiscent of the BULL-FIGHTING CULTURE of the earlier traditional communities. When a bull was about to face another one, the herd-boy would whistle and praise it. In doing so, the atmosphere would be really tense and electric. Doing so would also really heighten the confrontation, not only between the animals, but also between him and the opposing herd-boys, who would be supporting the other bull. In *umaskandi* performance, the singing of *izibongo* is also a way of challenging and defying other *umaskandi* performers who are potential contenders in the field of music. Phuzekhemisi, in all his composition always says:

*Ungaboyithint'imamb'emgodini.*  
Never touch a mamba in it's hole.

Literally he means that one should never attack an enemy in its domain because it will fight tooth and nail. The metaphor means that he may not be challenged when it comes to *umaskandi* performance, because he is the best.

Khethani, the late brother of Phuzekhemisi, in one of his songs, is very poetic in expressing his excellence over other *umaskandi* musicians.

*Sigudl'utwandle,*  
Flying along the coast

*sibambelelemaphikwen'okhozi.*  
Clinging onto the wings of the Eagle (*ukhozi*).

*UKHOZI* is *izibongo* (praise name) for the Zulu service of the South African Broadcasting Corporation.

When I asked his brother, Phuzekhemisi what his brother meant by these words, he explained that his late brother meant that they (he and his brother) were flying high because they were promoted by *Ukhozi*<sup>99</sup> (Radio Zulu) (Interview - Phuzekhemisi: 20<sup>th</sup> June 2004).

## 6.16.2 TRADITIONAL HISTORY

The singing of praises is also a means of recording traditional Zulu history. It is part of the oral tradition of preserving information.

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<sup>99</sup> This is another way in which African indigenous life has influenced urban styles. Radio Stations that serve Africans have adopted the aesthetic African practice of using praise names for themselves. For instance, the Station that serves the Zulus is named "Ukhozi", which means the "Eagle", The Xhosa Service is referred as the "Umhlobo Wenene", which means: a true friend. The Swazi Radio is called the *Ligwalagwala*, which is the name of a beautifully coloured wild bird whose quills are worn by royalty.

Normally when young men praise each other, the praises of each one are a relation of some incidents in which the man has been involved. Those praises would then remain permanent, whether he liked them or not. Although singing praises that the owner did not like might sometimes lead to a stick-fight, the praises would not be dropped because praises would be based on facts.

We would not have known that the father of Mfazomnyama was a traditional healer and that the singer himself is also a traditional healer had the singer not informed us in his own praises:

*Ubaba uyinyanga;*  
My father is a traditional healer;

*Kanti nami futhi ngiyinyanga.*  
I am also a traditional healer;

*Ugogo uyisangoma;*  
My grandmother is a fortune teller;

*Umfowethu ngumthakathi.*  
My brother is a witch.

To his brother, the nickname "*Mthakathi*" (Witch) was further used as a metaphor by his peers, who were alluding to his inexplicable skill in playing *umaskandi* music.

On the other hand, that Mfazomnyama was *inyanga* (healer) was a metaphor. What he meant was that the way people liked his music, the latter was a therapy to them (Interview - Mfazomnyama: 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1996).

It was a common practice among young men to give every peer a praise name (*igama lobunsizwa*) that would be used amongst themselves. The "brother", mentioned above, whose name was Khethani, was also *umaskandi* musician, and, he actually did win *umaskandi* competition at the University of Natal in the nineties (Interview - Zama Khumalo: 10<sup>th</sup> September 2003).

### 6.16.3 ISIZULU PERFORMANCE CULTURE

There was no public stage reserved for the recitation of *izibongo*. This set up was different from what obtained in cultures of the West, where there were theatres and permanent public arenas. In African life, and, among the Zulus especially, the arts were performed as part and parcel of social and cultural activities. The venue where the cultural activity was held would automatically turn into an open theatre. Even religious ceremonies were practised where the people lived, like the *umsamo* (the inside rear part of a hut), or the cattle kraal, where the ancestors would be expected to arrive. So, whenever a communication had to be made with the ancestors, the eldest person in the homestead, who would be a grandfather or grandmother, would move to such an area. From there he or she would start addressing the ancestors. To underline this situation, Biko explains that even when Africans took to Western religions, they would not necessarily wait for a building to be put up, but would practice their religion wherever they were:

We would obviously find it artificial to create special occasions for worship. Neither did we see it as logical to have a particular building

in which all worship would be conducted (Biko, 1998:29).

The crux of the matter was that there were no centres for public performances because such functions were knitted into the people's social activities. There was no particular stage or venue for created dialogues. If there would be a dialogue, it would be a real debate and not an author's creation. For instance, serious debating would be observed in the event of *ukukhonga* ceremony where the sues involved would be negotiations for a marriage. The debate in this matter would be centred on *ilobolo* (bride-wealth). The venue for this debate would be at the girl's home, at any spot where the men would find it convenient. Another function that involved elocution was the *ukuthethelela* ceremony that would take place just before the end of the wedding, where the girl's father would finally present the girl to the new home. In reply to this the hosting family, represented by the bridegroom's father or his representative, would accept the girl on behalf of the family. The beauty of this item in the Zulu traditional wedding would be heightened by the eloquence of the two parties. Each speaker would be expected to highlight histories, likes and dislikes, the achievements and even the conquests of all the fathers and the forefathers of each of the partners. Sentiments and tension would mount as the names of the late ancestors were mentioned and when their deeds of chivalry and conquest were recounted. Such articulated rhetoric would ultimately turn into a very rhythmic speech, which, in turn would lead to *ukugiya* or *ukugiya* dance or *ukugiya* movements.

UKUGIYA

A MARTIAL DANCE THAT DISPLAYS ONE'S PROWESS AT WAR



Although *ukugiya* is complementary to the whole occasion, its success heightens the relish of the whole occasion. In turn the presentation of each speaker is also enlivened by the support of the crowd of guests from his *isigodi*. The girl's father has his *umthimba*, who encourage him by ululating. Similarly, the groom's speaker usually has his *ikhetho* group, which is usually bigger because his usually consists of local people. This aesthetic encounter displays the same competitiveness that has been observed in *umaskandi* music activity when they challenge other musicians.

*Ukugiya* is the culmination of the speech. After all has been said, the speaker then performs his enthusiasm. Weman says:

Finally, he begins to *giya*, running about between the ranks on combat with some invisible enemy, one by one, the members of the party follow suit (Weman, 196): 88).

The chosen spot for this part of the wedding would be known as *esigcawini* (locative). For this venue, *isigcawu* (noun), an open place, convenient for all the guests to have a full view of all the proceedings, would be chosen.

It would be at this venue, that is, *esigcawini*, that the speakers would introduce the families and recount each family's history and lineage. The success and enjoyment of this function depended greatly on the poise, articulation and eloquence of the speakers.

The standard order of recounting the ancestors would be to start with the oldest, from as far as one can remember,

in the sequence in which they were born, until the speaker ends up with the father of the bride or bridegroom, as the case may be (Interview - Zama Khumalo, 20<sup>th</sup> September 2003).

Some speakers tend not to be consistent with sequencing the lineage in the order that has been explained in the above paragraph. They would rather start with real father of the bride of bridegroom and proceed until they fade with the last one that could be remembered. In this case of inconsistency people would always defend themselves by saying:

*Senzenjalo ngakithi.*

That is how we do things in our community.

This practice of regional variations is referred to as *isingakithi*. This means that although there could be a standard procedure that is followed in the practice of certain activities, there is finally an allowance for choice that is left to the individual, who could easily say that "that is how we do things in my area" (Pewa, 1966:89).

Recounting the lineage was also a practice that was viewed as a serious item in the activity that was known as the ceremony of *ukujoja umthakathi* (the piercing or the stabbing of a witch).

In this ritual, a wizard or witch would be apprehended by his neighbours, on the approval of the herdman or local *Induna*, and be poked with sharp sticks on the back, until he died. Having been identified, men armed with sharp sticks and spears would surround his hut and challenge him to come

out. He, inside the hut, would prepare himself by making a large roll of sleeping mats and cover these with sleeping skins, and he would choose his sharpest spear so that, should he get an opportunity, he would stab whoever would be in his way, and escape. The bundle of mats would be a pawn so that when he came out, in the dark, he could throw it in an opposite direction, and, in the confusion, escape the attack. Before he went out of the hut, he would sing his *IZIBONGO* and recount his lineage and also recount his achievements and conquests, supposedly for the last time. By singing his praises he would be picking up confidence and fortitude to face the combat, which he, with the support of his ancestors, might overcome (Interview - Siphwo Gumede: 20<sup>th</sup> July 2001).

Although to be accused of wizardry was a shameful state of affairs, the incumbent would still be honoured with praises if he escaped the attack. This explains to us that the achievement for obtaining praises was not based on the ethics of the act, but on the skill with which the incumbent managed the predicament and the crisis that stood before him (Interview - Mashsha Mfeka: 14<sup>th</sup> August 2001).

In the above paragraphs it has been shown how one type of a performance would lead to another and how the smoothness and cohesion of continuity was maintained. A wedding is not the only place where *ukugiya* would take place. Wherever people have grouped for some celebration or commemoration, the pent up joy or anger can be let out by doing *ukugiya*. Very often graduands on graduating at the University of Zululand have performed *ukugiya* just before they kneel before the chancellor.

## 6.17 UMASKANDI AS A FORM OF COPYRIGHT

Khaba Mkhize, the creator of the SXAXA MBIJI concept, views the singing of the singer's own praises as a copyright for protected ownership (Interview - Khaba Mkhize: 20<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2003).

The *umaskandi* performer, as a megaphone, makes a public statement that becomes known by all that heard it that the performed music belongs to himself.

Indeed, the praises do appear as endorsements for identification or a proud seal for protection against any abuse. For instance, any person who has heard the song, *imbizo*, (a traditional conference) knows that the song was composed and sung by Phuzekhemini and his late brother, Khethani. Above that, any one that may sing that song would be doing the song a discredit if he does not sing the song like a *umaskandi* musician. This means that he should sing the song and have a slot for the singing of praises before the song is finished. Should he sing the song, it would be inappropriate for him to sing his own praises instead of those of Phuzekhemisi. Above that, it would still be improper for the new singer to sing the song and sing the praises of the original composers. That would be tantamount to literary theft and also an insult to the original composer. The singing of praises has something very personal in them in that the verses sometimes relate to the composer's ancestry. Such matters for Africans, in

most cases, border on family privacies, which may not be shared with any other family. Mfazomnyama, in his praises, says:

*Ubaba uyinyanga,  
Kanti nami futhi ngiyinyanga.*

[My father is a traditional healer,  
And I am also a traditional healer].

When Khaba Mkhize comments about this, he says:

*Inyanga ifa nezikhwama zayo.*

[A witchdoctor keeps the secret of his medical knowledge to the grave].

(Interview - Khaba Mkhize: 20<sup>th</sup> Jan.2003).

Indeed, having interviewed Mfazomnyama earlier on about how he, like his father, was a traditional healer, he answered that:

*Ubunyanga bunikwa umuntu okhonjwe yidlozi.*

(Apprenticeship in the craft of being a healer is allowed to someone who has been appointed by the ancestors).

On being asked how his being a healer relates to his musical career, he explained that:

*Ulwazi lwami lobumaskandi lujule njengolwazi lwami lobunyanga.*

[My *umaskandi* knowledge is as deep as my knowledge of traditional medicine].

In short, Mfazomnyama was still boasting that among the maskandi musicians he was an element to reckon with.

The very fact that music behaves as a mirror of its own circumstances and that of the other performing arts is not phenomenal to African music, but this is a universal attribute of all music genres.

Music in all the arts of man, and in all the artistic epochs that have been identified by historians, exhibits itself as a reflection of the main features of the social life of the people of the particular period of time. In a similar manner, music does not talk only for itself only. First, it states its own case. As it does that it also reflects on the situation of other performing arts. Thirdly, music explains or reflects on the state of both political and social situation of its environment. Byerly, I.B. refers to music as a mirror, a mediator, and a prophet of the social order. In other words she says that while the music is a mirror, it is itself also an instrument of change and, thirdly a harbinger that announces the changes that are to come. She goes on to say that the fusion of genres within the same culture and also from different cultures was significant in that it promoted intercultural communication:

The collective crisis that South Africans were experiencing in the final years of apartheid prompted the conception of numerous creative strategies towards inter cultural communication (Byerly - 1998:23).

#### 6.17.1 SYNRETIC FUSION OF STYLES UNAVOIDABLE

The fusion of styles from the different cultures in South Africa was unavoidable, because the people have lived

together for a long time. On the other hand, the appreciation of many of these syncretic styles was another factor that promoted multiculturalism in the country, and people from different racial groups continued composing and making music together:

This trend had begun in the 1970's already with the bands like Harari and Malombo, became locally prominent with the success of individual collaborations like that of Johnny Clegg and Sipho Mcunu of Juluka in 1980, and of course became internationally visible with the collaboration between Paul Simon and Ladysmith Black Mambazo in the 1986 Graceland album (Byerly, 1998:213).

A very subtle exemplification or illustration of social acceptance between two opposing cultures in South Africa, is the symbolic fusion of the two opposing anthems: "Nkosi Sikelel'i-Afrika" with "die Stem". The two melodies are juxtaposed in a parallel motion and are supposed to be sung simultaneously, with the initial entry of "Stem" starting on an anacrusis, a single step ahead of the African melody. This was done by Hubert du Plessis, in 1966 (Byerly - 1998:24).

Ballantine, in his *Marabi Nights*, referred to those new integrated creations as healing and curing:

It was what these integrated discovered and made possible that was exciting and important, for, like their audiences, the bands were wholly non-racial, rejecting in their behaviour and commitment, centuries of racial and class dichotomy. Their music was an alchemy, helping in this way, to corrode the old social order and to liberate the new (Ballantine - 1993:9).

In the same way, *umaskandi* does not consist only of one artistic genre, but is a composite composition spanning some different cultures.

*Umaskandi* music has penetrated the South African society. Some of these musicians, like Mfaz'omnyama, Phuzekhemisi and Hhashelimhlophe, have been invited to perform at international gatherings, locally and overseas, unlike in the past, when their music was appreciated only by the rural orientated Africans.

The libretto in *umaskandi* singing is never far-fetched, but consist of topical information that refers to some local event. In other words, *umaskandi* music still continues to relate its environment.

Even in areas outside Africa, music is known to possess this quality. For instance, at the conclusion of the renaissance period in Europe, when the arts, like literature, had started to abandon the tyranny of liturgical publications and were absorbing the spirit of humanism, music compositions finally reflected the general inclination of the time. Music started to reflect human life and aspirations, that is, the spirit of humanism, instead of reserving all music for the worship of God, as it had been the case in the preceding eras (Grout, 1962:107). In a similar manner, the social order of the eighteenth century classicism is also well demonstrated in the various but compatible movements of composite classical music compositions of the period.

GENERAL SEQUENCE OF MASKANDI PERFORMANCE

Repeat\continuation  
Recapitulation-song  
and close

IBONGO  
(Praise Poetry)

INGOMA  
(Zulu dance)

Response from  
Backing-group -  
Till the singing  
simmers.

Instrumental  
Solo - Main Theme  
Or accompanying melody-  
to the main vocal theme.

Izihlabo  
Preamble  
By guitarist

While the above sequence is taken as general procedure, it is not a fixed practice. In the actual staging of a performance, there is a lot of freedom.

*Umaskandi* has made a great contribution in the move to revive the music of Africa. There is a flare of freedom in the sound of the singing, the dance, the recitation of *izibongo* (praise poetry) and the instrumental accompaniment.

The recitation of *izibongo* among Zulu musicians is not confined to *umaskandi* musicians. The practice is a general means of letting out the tension of exuberance whenever there is delightful excitement in a public event. For instance, *izibongo* are still a mandatory requisite whenever a Zulu monarch makes a public appearance. *Izibongo* have also

been part of *Isicathamiya* male voice choirs as early as the 1920's. The singers would make some shorter recitations, which were a form of identifying themselves (Erlmann - 1996:209). The King Star Brothers and the Ladysmith Black Mambazo Choirs would also make some shorter spoken words just at the start of the song (Erlmann - 1990:208). In all the mentioned events, there are aesthetic variations in the manner in which they are executed.

### 6.18 AN EPITOME OF COMPETITIVENESS

In *umaskandi* performance, the reciting of *izibongo* is an open challenge to fellow musicians. The item epitomizes the fact that the musician is dauntlessly participating in an "on-going" contention. That competition is an on-going practice is taken for granted, because competitiveness permeates all the social life of the Zulu people. It is perceived in the games played by the boys and girls, the bull-fighting and stick-fighting games among herd-boys, the verbal contention in the *ukukhonga* ceremony by adults, and, in several other social activities of both the young and the adult members of the community (Pewa, 1966:33).

The appearance of *izibongo* in the performance is a threat that is meant to ward off other contenders. This recitation is meant to instill a sense of fear among fellow musicians. Therefore, whenever *umaskandi* musicians recite their *izibongo*, the practice is a defense mechanism and also a show of strength to other musicians who are continually striving to be among the best.

## 6.19 THE CLIMAX IN MASKANDI PERFORMANCE

The recitation of *izibongo* is the climax of the whole performance. The last heavy item that is done before these is *ingoma* dance, which is done mainly by the backing group. *Izibongo* may also be repeated after *ingoma* dance. This repeat gives the group leader, who is the main guitarist, to improvise. The latter is also at liberty to drop his instrument and join in the dancing. In short, there is freedom in performance.

The sketch that is given in page 258 shows the general sequence of *umaskandi* performance. As seen from this, and also as mentioned above, *izibongo* do appear to be the climax of the performance, after which there can be shorter repetitions of the main song and dance until the performers feel that they have delivered their message. The opening preamble, known as *izihlabo*, consists of short incomplete phrases that sound like an improvisory check on the correctness of the pitch of the strings, and the unity of the melody. Nothing can stop the main musician from rhythmically saying a few words of welcome to the audience, which can be a short introduction of the singing group, while playing this introduction.

For instance, when Mfazomnyama visited the University of Zululand in 1996, he greeted his audience just when he had started with his *izihlabo* (introductory preambles) of the second song:

Performer:        *Sanibonani!*  
                      Hello!

Audience:        *Yebo*  
                       *Yes!*

Performer:        *Hawu! Ngiyajabula ukuthi namuhla*  
                           *ngizodlalela izifundiswa. Bengingazi ukuthi*  
                           *kanti nezifundiswa ziyawuthanda umculo*  
                           *kamaskandi.*

Oh! I am pleased that today I have come to perform for the educated people. I did not know that educated people do also like *umaskandi* music.

As Mfazomnyama said these words, his guitar was sounding the introductory phrases, with ease and without any inaccuracy or faltering in the execution of the instrument. The *izihlabo* (preambles), at the opening, are the lowest point while the highest peak of the performance is reached in the recitation of *izibongo*.

## 6.20 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MUSICAL SOUND AND PEOPLE'S BEHAVIOUR.

Jophnny Clegg's assertion, quoted above, explains to us that instrument tuning of styles like the *IsiShameni* of the amaChunu people, the *UmZansi* of the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast, the *isiZingili* from the Northern Coastal Zululand, is not an independent academic formulation but is derived from people's behaviour. People also dance these behaviours, in song and rhythms. When *umaskandi* plays his instrument, he has to bring out these rhythms. He then maintains the human element by imitating the spoken prosody as much as possibly can. Axelsson of Zimbabwe refers to this as a:

1. Down-drift of melody and
2. An adherence to the tonal pattern of the language, especially when necessary for the understanding of the thoughts expressed (Axelsson, 1983: 2).

Khabi Mngoma referred to such adherence of the tonal pattern to the human physical action as:

The thought-force of the spoken word.  
(Conversation - Khabi Mngoma: Dec. 1997).

That some of the music terminology in the spoken language does relate to other social activities can be perceived in most of the terms that are found in the music. For instance, the term *UmZansi* that has been explained by Clegg as a dance style is also found as a manner of speech among the people, who come from eZansi, that is, (The Southern part of KwaZulu-Natal). Their articulation of some of the Zulu words is completely different from that of the Northern Coastal region. For instance:

(a) Where a Northerner<sup>100</sup> (*Abasenhla*) would say:

*Bas'ekhaya* (They are at Home),

The UmZansi (Southern<sup>101</sup> people) would say:

*Bak'ekhaya.*

(b) Where a Northerner would say:

*Umfana uye koninalume* (The boy went to his uncle's place),

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<sup>100</sup> Northerner - refers to the Zulus of Northern Natal.

<sup>101</sup> Southerner - refers to the Zulus of Southern KwaZuluNatal

The Southerners would say:

*Umfana uy'ekhakonina.*

(c) Where a Northerner would ask: *Ukuphi? Uphi?*

A Southerner would ask: *Ukephi, usephi or umaphi?*

The three examples above do not explain a musical point only, but also serve to confirm that there really are non-musical patterns that are referred to as *umzansi*. Beyond that, musically speaking, there are also those musical styles that are named after certain types of human behaviour. For instance:

(a) *Umzansi* (Southern Natal) style of Zulu dance is *indlamu* style that does not allow the dancer to lift the foot very high (not higher than the knee level), although he has to hit very hard on the ground. Physically, the dance is very demanding.

(b) The above is different from the Northern KwaZuluNatal style of *Indlamu*, where the foot is lifted sometimes beyond the dancer's own height. The leg is forcefully stretched before stamping the ground. This style is found in the areas around Vryheid, Newcastle, and Dundee. This is the area that is sometimes referred to as *ABaqulusi* area.

(c) In *isiZingili*, a style danced by the African people of Mozambique origin, while the knee is lifted quite high, the foot does not rise above the knee. This means that the leg is not fully stretched. As a result, the downward stroke of *isiZingili* dancer is quite

short and brisk and demands a quicker movement of foot-stampings, from a shorter distance.

- (d) Rhythm in *umgonqo* is not very vehement, but the emphasis is on the uniformity of the choreography, which suggests a uniformity of attitude, outlook and behaviour for the entire peer group.

*Umgonqo* songs are isiZulu singing style for girls at the stage when they come of age. These are sung at menstrual rituals. The singing style is named after the act of *ukugonqa*, which is a practice of staying in seclusion (indoors) from society just after the girl has had her first menstrual experience. This is the time when elderly women start to advise the girl on proper sexual behaviour. Concurrent with that, her peers, who have already gone through the same stage, and the local *iqhikiza* (the girls' leader), come around to warn her and give her constructive advices for proper behaviour by singing sarcastic *ingcekeza* songs. These and *umbhino* songs are also hurled as very forthright insults on the face of the girl. Although they are heard as very rude, on the outside, they are very effective. From the forthright utterances of the wording, one can read that the instructions leave no compromise for misbehaviour (Interview - Vusabantu Ngema: 4<sup>th</sup> July 2004).

The above items confirm that the name of the type of song may come from any environment of the people. This could be from social practices, geographical environment, or from practical behavioural incidents.

It can, therefore, be seen that Clegg's assertions about human activity, as one of the basis for the creation of some musical styles, can be actually perceived in human action.

#### 6.21 CONTENTION (AESTHETIC OPPOSITION) - A WAY OF LIFE IN ZULU CULTURE

To Zulus, contention is a principle of social interaction. Even today, such contention is manifest in most of the music activities of the people:

- (a) The schools competitions, which have sustained a degree of music learning among Africans are still a popular event throughout South Africa.
- (b) Whenever *Isicathamiya* choirs perform, they perform by competing against each other.
- (c) In a typical mode, when the *umaskandi* musicians perform their music, they are always conscious that there is another *umaskandi* somewhere else, who could be a rival to his performance.

In other words, the stick-fight that would have taken place in the cattle fields has now been transferred to a music performance stage itself. The singing is one such area in which a musician's superiority over other musicians is vocalized.

Clegg says that with the urbanized Africans inter-district stick-fights, like *Uphenge* and *Umgangela*, in the hinterland of

KwaZulu-Natal, have been replaced by musical inter-district dance competitions). He says that they now fight their dance instead of fighting a fight. (Clegg, 1983:9-10).

Overtone of contention can still be perceived in the performance style of *umaskandi* musicians. These can be identified in the words of the music and also in the *izibongo* of the recitations that are made in the middle of a performance. For instance, when Phuzekhemisi says "*Ungaboyithint'imamb'emgodini*" (Never provoke a Mamba in its hole), the metaphor explains that his music can be a form of a sting against other contending *umaskandi* performers (Interview - Phuzekhemisi James Mnyandu: 19<sup>th</sup> June 2004).

In his *izibongo*, Mfazomnyama makes mention that his father was a traditional healer and that he himself is also one. This metaphor explains that he is a force to be reckoned with just as a traditional healer holds power, with his medicines and magic, over the community. This exposition is an expression of his confidence and also a challenge to other *umaskandi* musicians (Interview - Mfazomnyama Mphatheni Khumalo, 21<sup>st</sup> May 1996).

## 6.22 PEOPLE'S CONCEPTS ABOUT UMASKANDI MUSICIAN

All *umaskandi* musicians are regarded as simple traditional people who perform indigenous music. Traditionally, such people are trusted for their commitment to the people's culture. They are taken to be the exponents of culture in that:

- (a) Their music is authentic traditional music.

- (b) Sincerity and prima facie commitment in what they sing about can be read in their faces.
- (c) Whenever they sing they put on traditional finery, which is a stamp of belonging to the culture of their community.
- (d) Most of those that we have come across are willing to talk are willing to talk about their music on a personal base.
- (e) Their's is not simply a case of the sound of music. They also infuse traditional dance and *izibongo*, to match the sound of music.

As is the case with Hhashelimhlophe and Phuzekhemisi, two Zulu musicians, anyone who might have spoken to them knows that they do not want to be exploited in the job that they are doing. They are, therefore, trusted and respected.

While everybody knows that whenever these musicians sing they challenge each other, they also know that such loud challenges are an aesthetic challenge for the promotion of their practice. It was such confidence and trust that the people had on each other that caused people to respond favourably when the SXAXA MBIJ musicians<sup>106</sup> called for peace among the people of KwaZulu-Natal.

The above project proved to the people that deliberate and positive confrontation in the life of the Zulus is part of

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<sup>106</sup> Three musicians, namely: Mfazomnyama, Phuzekhemisi and Hhashelimhlophe were invited to demonstrate unity, love and peace, by playing their music together. The project became a success.

their moral injunction that ensures success and underpins responsibility in whatever task that may have been prescribed for any member of the community.

For instance:

- (a) Very serious matters, like the marriage of two lovers, have to be deliberated and argued by a specially invited and trusted. At the end there should be peace, for life to go on.
- (b) The people have confidence in them and they know that the musicians could be used as reliable intermediaries<sup>107</sup>.
- (c) Aesthetic competitiveness, among men, women and children, is a way of life. This can be found in serious talk and also in the games of the younger folk.
- (b) For instance, in isiZulu traditional life, women would compare the sizes of their planted fields, or the bulk of firewood that they would carry home on their heads from some distant wilderness.
- (d) Herd-boys would bump their bulls against one another so as to cause them to fight. Each herd-boy wished his animal to emerge as the strongest. Ultimately they themselves would fight so that their leader would emerge straightforwardly.

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<sup>107</sup> Weman, 1960:85.

(e) Even in the eating of a slaughtered beast, after the meat has been delivered to the herd-boys, the best piece of meat, that is, the fatty portion of the heart, would go to the toughest guy and, who would beat them all. This champion was known as *ingqwele*). It was from this event that the isiZulu expression: "*ukudla ubhedu*" (To eat the choicest) was derived. After all the above skirmish, life should go on peacefully.

Eventually this traditional competitive spirit would spill over to the performing arts. That was why people would always look for the best performer wherever there was any artistic performance. They still do so even today. Eventually, a culture of relying on competitions as a measure fore musicianship has developed among Africans, even in cases of Western choral music.

### 6.23 DEVIANT MUSICIANS

As mentioned in Chapter One (1.2.3), that music involvement can be a disease, indeed, the practice of music affects people differently. Some get inspired and produce melodies and admirable poetry. To some, reminiscing about the past frustrates them and leads them into making wrong decisions. Such people are likely to go into deviant behaviour by hiding behind the music. Music then becomes a scapegoat for justifying their eccentric and unacceptable ways of life, alcoholism, drugs, and sexual immorality. True musicians do not sympathize with such behaviour. Zulu traditional musicians have always sung about such deviant conduct, to condemn it.

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

### 7.0 THE AESTHETIC AND COGNITIVE MERIT OF UMASKANDI MUSIC

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves to confirm, to those people who have had an opportunity to access *umaskandi*, that the music does possess cognitive and aesthetic qualities. This means that while the music is meant to entertain, it does, to a certain extent, also appeal to the intellect.

The reader of the document may have identified some of these academic qualities, without their having been specifically described as such. This chapter, therefore, serves to underline some of these and even those that might not have been salient, for the casual listener.

It should be interesting to notice how new musical styles normally emerge. The document has also dealt with instances where a fusion of styles has occurred and how some of these came out as new syncretic combinations. Throughout the document we have seen how a musical style can be created and at the same time be propagated, far and wide, through the migration of the creators, who, in this case, happen to be the performers of the music. The mines and urban areas have been seen to be a birthplace for several musical styles that are performed by Africans even today. This chapter, therefore, helps to identify such features that initiate creativity and cerebral growth, for both the performer and listener. Another

interesting feature about this amalgamation of musical styles is that it is the indigenous people who came out with new music creations and not the expatriates. The latter, that scrambled into the country to appropriate the management of the country to themselves, were not prepared to appreciate African arts. Instead, it was Africans who exhibited their aptitude in the fusing of the local and foreign arts and the creation of new ones.

## 7.2 A COGNITIVE ASPECT IN INDIGENOUS ARTS

That the word "cognitive" has always been associated with the schooling culture and scholastic activity may mislead some people into believing that anything outside that area may not be qualified as such. What is cognitive is that which appeals to the intellectual and psychological processes of the brain in one way or another. African indigenous arts also do, in a big way, appeal to such cerebral perception and artistic exuberance. This has also been observed in the activity of *umaskandi* musicians.

### 7.2.1 COGNITION IS IN THE MIND

In the earlier times, mission stations, in South Africa, were centres for social change and cultural transformation. Later on, when urban communities grew in number, townships and hostels became very vibrant in the creation of new urban styles. It is, however, remarkable that, although there were instrument players in the townships and also a lot of others who were sojourning around urban areas and city centres, real *umaskandi* musicians were initially those people who hailed directly from the indigenous countryside into mining areas and city centres with their unaffected

ingenuous musicality. Mfazomnyama Khumalo came from Nongoma. Hhashelinhlophe Ngcobo came from a district of the Empangeni region. Phuzekhemisi Mnyandu came from Dumisa, in the hinterland of Mkhomazi. Mfiliseni Magubane came from Eshowe. This phenomenon explains that *umaskandi* music is, in reality, an indigenous idiom but expressed in a Western instrument. The activity does possess a lot of academic aspects, although it was not physically housed in a formal school environment.

### 7.2.2. AN EXPOSITION OF CREATIVITY

The libretto for *umaskandi* music is in the Zulu language. The formal design or shape of *umaskandi* music imitates the vocal style of isiZulu music, which, in turn is based on the prosody of the people's language. The melody of the instrument, therefore, closely imitates the vocal melody of isiZulu music. This tells us that although the instrument is normally played in a certain Western method, the local people were convinced that they could express themselves effectively in their own isiZulu style of playing the instruments. Since they did not have an opportunity of learning the classical method, they went on in their own way. In their own cognition, they created and developed a method that relates to their scallic pattern of singing. Finally, this became efficacious.

The instrumental section in *umaskandi* music can do either the melody or the accompaniment, depending on the decision of the performer. This *umaskandi* melody is significant in that

it is the authentic remnant of the Zulu *amahubo*<sup>107</sup> music, which is the foundation of Zulu vocal music. *Umaskandi* music has, therefore, helped to retain some of the Zulu heritage, which might have been lost had it not been practised continually. This is because Zulu literature has always been practised, stored and transferred by aural practice. By being effective in this venture of the sustenance of a heritage, the *umaskandi* musical idiom has shown itself as an academic practice.

### 7.3 RESILIENCE GOES WITH ORIGINALITY

The ultimate in the academic enquiry to the resilience of Zulu music, that has been described in the preceding chapters, was to identify and look into the questions of how and what made the music to survive. As the case is, the music has survived and thrived even in negative social conditions. Besides the music's qualities being musically aesthetic, socially acceptable and informative, politically influential, and economically viable, the music has shown that it is academically meritable. The music has justified itself to be enlisted among those disciplines that possess scholarly entitlement.

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<sup>107</sup> Amahubo music does seem to be the earliest form of Zulu music. Mntwana Magogo Constance Buthelezi sang the light-hearted amahubo to the accompaniment of her musical bow (*umakhweyana*). Prince Gideon Zulu gives us different versions of amahubo for going to war, for hunting, for political maneuvering, for feasting parties, and for various other social gatherings. These instances explain to us that in Zulu culture vocal singing was contained in the singing of amahubo. It appears that the most salient and effective deciding factors in the pattern, rhythm, tempo and libretto of amahubo music, is the circumstance and environment for which the ihubo is performed. For instance, a bride has to have her own bridal ihubo, which she has to perform so as to seal her commitment to the marriage. This ihubo is sometimes referred to as inkondlo kamakoti (the bridal song) (Rosemary Joseph – 1983:69).

These ideas are, today, worth examined since it has been observed that more people are paying attention to the style than it was the case twenty years ago. These people's original creations that have nourished generations, have been taken as culturally authentic, and have been finally inherited as veritable in the history of the African communities. The songs, the dances and the traditional and cultural ceremonies that have been inherited by the people are taken to be the nucleus of life around which all Africanness should rotate. Some of these highly valued cultural issues have been heard in the songs of *umaskandi* musicians. Mfazomnyama sings the song:

*Zulu Omnyama, Ngeyakwabani lengane?*

(You) black Zulus, from which homestead is this baby?

This question suggests that although the baby was biologically fathered, she is nevertheless, socially fatherless.

This song conjures the morality of the whole Zulu nation. It is questioning the decline of what was highly valued in the lives of the Zulu people, that is, the birth of all children within wedlock. In this instance, he is implying that the child who is born out of wedlock has no sanctioned or approved base of residence. The musician is, therefore, wailing the loss of pride that is experienced by the Zulu nation. The community will not easily discard such songs because they invoke and refer to the nation's pride that has been inherited from generations. Topicality in the choice of a libretto in Zulu music, therefore, helps in preserving the original ideas of the people.

#### 7.4 PITCH ORGANIZATION IN UMASKANDI MUSIC

*Umaskandi* music is unique in its pitch organization for both the human voice and the accompanying instrument. Although the overall sound of the singer is contained in the pentatonic scale, not all syllables are sounded on a single pitched note. Some syllables get contained in a glided sound, which smoothly runs through a number of pitches, without identifying any one level of the pitch. This is a form of pitch gliding, curving or scooping<sup>105</sup>. What happens in this vocal singing is the general pattern of Zulu vocal singing.

#### 7.5 RHYTHMIC CONTENT

The rhythmic organization of *umaskandi* music provides a highly scholastic challenge. The music abounds with highly cognitive characteristics that lend authentic classical attributes and academic merit to this musical genre. Of all the instruments that are involved in *umaskandi*, the guitar displays the most complicated rhythms, especially when the instrument is sounding accompanying melodies and not accompanying with chords. Such bristly melodies, in shorter motifs, accompany long drawn vocal melodies that are sung by the same performer. It is in such voice-instrument combinations that scholarship and academic perspectives are displayed in performance. This is perceived in sense of the libretto, the feeling of the singer and the empathy of the accompanying instrument, all coming from one source, that is, the performing *umaskandi*

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<sup>105</sup> Scooping should not be viewed negatively in explaining the curved gliding of the voice that actually does

musicians also perform with the advantage that they are not reading the music. They are playing it from memory, which affords them the opportunity to express his feelings with utmost concentration and focus in the execution. The success in expression by a single *umaskandi* performer might be viewed against the success in executing a performance by two performers, where, perhaps a pianist might be accompanying a vocalist, in which case unity in expression comes from two minds.

The rhythmic content in the music is also sometimes useful in that it teams up with the walking rhythm of the musician, who sometimes walks as he performs. In this instance, the two rhythms support each other. It is apparent that while the singer might, in his long drawn melodies, be expressing the overall people's anguish and pain or the joy and pleasures that go on in life, inwardly he still feels the basic rhythmic beat, as we can feel the beat from the continuous beat of *umakhweyana*<sup>109</sup> rhythm.

## 7.6 UMASKANDI MUSIC - A COMPOSITE STYLE

On the part of the musicians, the ability to combine all the artistic performances that are included in *umaskandi* music is an indication of insight and acumen into the arts in general. This is an exposition of the latent talent that is in the mind of the traditional artists.

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take place around and from either below or above the final sound (pitch).

<sup>109</sup> Umakhweyana confirms the basic time rhythm in the music of the Zulu people.

We have to be positive about the composite nature of *umaskandi* music. First, musically speaking, *umaskandi* contains a number of musical and artistic styles within one umbrella.

Secondly, *umaskandi* music links itself up with the social lives of the people in several ways. While the music is entertaining, the verbalized information delivered by the performer is very significant, mainly because it is always the theme of the libretto. Being the theme, the spoken words lend their rhythm to the music of the composition. By conceiving their music from the linguistic content of the libretto, *umaskandi* musicians follow a procedure of creating music for words whose tonal movement is derived from speech, which is a natural process.

The continuous repetition of the poetry in the topical libretto, and its literal context gets familiar to the ears of both him and his listeners. As a result the topic gets associated with singer. Ultimately, the whole song becomes his personal property. It is for that reason that Khaba Mkhize refers to *umaskandi* songs as a form of a copyright tag (Interview - Khaba Mkhize Pietermaritzburg: 10<sup>th</sup> January 2003).

The seriousness of the information that the singers disseminate in their song gives them a significant role in society. This characteristic of *umaskandi* music tells us that besides enjoying the sound of the music, *umaskandi* musicians have other roles in society.

Thirdly, that this style of music mixes both the African and Western vocal and instrumental elements, the performers do not view it as a hybrid texture, but as a musical growth and extensions of the same thing. This view was expressed by Dalton Sithole, one of my interviewees, who has participated in *isicathamiya*, Western choral music, traditional Zulu dance and gum-boot dance. When asked about this combination, Dalton never expressed a view that the musical styles are a mixture of different cultures. Not one of these styles made him feel as if he had shifted from his traditional culture (Interview - Dalton Sithole: 19<sup>th</sup> June 2004).

Similar ideas have been expressed by Sibongile Khumalo, who has been able to combine opera singing with traditional Zulu *amahubo* singing. Sibongile first came into contact with *amahubo* before she was ten, when she visited Princess Constance Magogo with her father, Khabi Mngoma (Interview: Khabi Mngoma, 1<sup>st</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> July 1998). At the same time Sibongile was surrounded with a lot of Western classical music activity, including that of the Ionian Choir, which was conducted by her father (Classroom workshops on ceremonial songs - Third-year BA (Music) (UZ) Class of 1979 10<sup>th</sup> April, 1979).

In one of her latest discs on *amahubo* music, Sibongile and her piano accompanist, Jill Richards, have made an exquisite combination of classical piano with original Zulu traditional *amahubo* "Uyephi Na?" (Where is he gone?) by M. Khumalo & P.Klatzow. In other words, Sibongile Khumalo and Jill Richards have come out with academic insight into

*amahubo* and have been able to come out with a fusion of this vocal style with Western pianism as an accompaniment.

Although a work such as the one mentioned above might have demanded extensive mental effort on both the pianist and the singer, there are traditional artists who feel that the work was by no means a musicological advancement. Vusabantu Ngema feels that:

The work was a concoction and devastation of Zulu music (Interview-Vusabantu Ngema<sup>110</sup>: 4<sup>th</sup> July 2004).

On the other hand, to a student of musicology, the exercise of combining the two arts, Zulu *amahubo* and Western pianoforte, was a triumph. The combining of Western tonalities (The major and minor scales, and other related Western modalities) with the isiZulu pentatonic singing, which undulates within isiZulu singing prosody and the spoken tonology spells out a great musical achievement. The work is an example of what would be an example of bimusicality in a bicultural society. In support of the fusion of the two styles, Mngoma argued that:

A music that relates to people's daily lives may not be outdated because it is always a mouthpiece of the people. The music will, therefore, find a way of sustaining its social status even when it juxtaposed against other styles. Mission station wedding<sup>111</sup> songs and religious choruses are examples of such isiZulu and Western fusion of singing styles (Interview - Mngoma 1<sup>st</sup> July 1998).

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<sup>110</sup> Vusabantu Ngema is an exponent of isiZulu performing arts. He is a purist, who will not like to see people not performing these in the proper Zulu manner.

The management of the pitch sound in this music is different from any other music. In Western music the movement of sound in the singing scales is like stepping from one brick (pitch level) to another, across the mortar, to another tone. So the pitch-level of each note is well defined, as is the case with the frets of a guitar. As a result the transition from one pitch level to another can be audibly and clearly definable as either tone or semitone. In Zulu vocal music, although the music could be in the pentatonic scale, the transition by sliding or gliding from one pitch level<sup>112</sup> to another is like a very fast and smooth wave. It is amazing to think of how the singer<sup>113</sup> is able to wave his sound through to the next pitch level.

This could be similar (though not exactly the same) to the sort of sound movement that could be derived from sliding a finger on a note on the (unfretted) fingerboard of the violin, without having to lift the finger and arriving exactly on the intended pitch level. Another approximation of this sound movement of Zulu singing would be the sound that is derived from the music sound that can be derived from a vibrating woodwork saw.

Finally, the partnership between work by Sibongile Mngoma and Jill Richards could be viewed as a triumph for race

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<sup>111</sup> Zulu wedding songs that are sung by Zulu people in townships are in the major\ minor tonality although the form and execution is in the isiZulu style.

<sup>112</sup> Any two adjacent levels (two points of pitch) of pitch could be very definite. What is hard to define are the levels of pitch through which the sound glides between the two points. In that manner it becomes hard to annotate African music in staff notation.

<sup>113</sup> . This is the case with all singing in the music of the Zulu people.

relations. Such a collaboration would not have been feasible during the apartheid era.

### 7.7 UMASKANDI MUSIC AS A MIRROR OF SOCIAL LIFE

Sociologically speaking, the combined Western and African elements in *umaskandi* music and the combination of different cultures that has been explicated above seems to mirror the socio\cultural practice and life that is at present being followed by Africans in their social lives.

Africans, like all singing communities, perform their music as music and without any considerations of the cultural origins of the music. Whether the music is originally African or Western does not influence their creativity. In the case of *umaskandi* music, the guitar was easily accessible to the apprentice musicians than the original African instruments. Phuzekhemisi was able to make his own first guitar by using a used five-litre can of oil and fishing line to make his own home-made guitar.

While many Blacks are formally enlisted as Christians, they have not discarded African belief systems in actual practice. In the practice of ceremonial family rites, a good number of Blacks observe both the traditional and the Christian formalities. The following examples will demonstrate the statement:

- (a) For instance, a wedding ceremony among Christians has to be conducted by a licensed priest, who has to solemnize it by the exchange of rings. Meanwhile that takes place in the church, there is also the ritual of

the slaughtering of a beast at home, which is an important item in the traditional custom. Dalton Sithole confirmed that:

I am one of those that follow both the Christian rationalization and the African customary rites, and I do not feel as if I have done any wrong. I feel a void if I leave out any of the two (Interview - Dalton Sithole: 19<sup>th</sup> July 2001).

(b) Reverend Providence Mkhize of the Lord's New Church Which is The Nova Hierosolyma (the Swedenborgians), stated that:

I do not mind proceeding with my Christian service among people who also practice customary rites, as long as the customary rites are designed for good intentions (Interview - 30<sup>th</sup> June 2003).

(c) Advocate C.H.B. Nkabinde feels that:

While the fulfilment of Christian rites before a priest in a church service moves parallel with legal requirements of getting married before a priest, the act also goes along with civilization and sophistication, which people like to display (Interview - Nkabinde: 30<sup>th</sup> June 2003).

The custom of *ukubuyisa umnumzane* (to bring back the father of the homestead), by slaughtering a beast, is still done by many Christians, and this looks very sophisticated when it is done as one function by combining it with the unveiling of the tombstone of the deceased. Dalton Sithole explained that:

While a tombstone is a very unpretentious act of remembrance, a good number of Africans still believe that they have to fulfill all the

customary rites so as to clear their consciences from blame, should there be any mishaps, believed to be stemming from the omission of the custom, in the lives of the people concerned. The fulfilling of the rite makes them believe that whatever happens will be an act of God and not as a result of an omission of a responsibility on their part. The pressure of the cultural rite of slaughtering a beast is still very strong among the Africans to the extent that they still practice it even when they stay in urban suburbs (Interview - Dalton Sithole: 19<sup>th</sup> July 2001).

Dalton Sithole further laughed and added that:

The sale of live goats is a thriving business, and the customers are Zulu people, both the Non-Christian and the Christianized. The animals are not bought mainly for table use, but for traditional customary rites (*umsebenzi*), which they feel they are compelled by some unknown power to fulfill (Ibid. 19<sup>th</sup> July 2001).

From what Dalton said, it is apparent that to many Zulus, the custom is still embedded in their minds and that the coming in of Christianity did not displace it. And from what was said by Advocate Nkabinde, that Africans sign the marriage register before a priest, is a legal requirement. It also appears that the public exchange of rings does not have the pressure of customary belief behind it. Signing is indeed a legal requirement and, like the other acts of sophistication, is an exposition and extension of the progress of civilization. In short, Western cultures have not uprooted African cultures.

The pattern of acceptance of Christianity in the whole of Africa had some notions in the whole continent. Ubom of

Nigeria confirms that Western religions have not necessarily uprooted African belief systems:

... conversion to Christianity or Islam did not uproot traditional belief systems in Nigeria....  
(Ubom, Ebonong Isaac (1992:70).

The above statement is true in many African races and communities, like it is the case in Zulu communities of KwaZulu-Natal.

In highly sensitive confrontational situations as it is the case in disputes between workers and employers, the latter have been seen to have accurately stated their case in song. Zulus very often have been seen to react by singing Zulu *Amahubo* in verbalizing their grievances. I have often seen students at the University of Zululand<sup>114</sup> articulating their complaints by singing Zulu indigenous amahubo. Some of these are war songs, while some of them are tunes that have been used by rebellious political groups. But, what is remarkable is that the spontaneity with which these people spring back to their indigenous music tells us that the musical style is inherent and is a potential possession that is vested in their nationalism. In such strikes, the singing is not meant to entertain but to put forward a point of view.

The words of the music of all songs of rebellion always, therefore, relate to the prevalent environmental social

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<sup>114</sup> The writer studied and, in later years, lectured at the Department of music and also at the Centre for Arts and "Culture the apartheid years (1976 - 1984) Strikes have also taken place during the years of democracy. The latter students were not as rebellious and confrontational as the earlier students at the same university.

mood of the situation. The call and response pattern style is very popular. In all the instances, when the leader of the discontented group starts singing the initial phrase, the larger crowd immediately picks the answering melody, without hesitation. Should the tune not be known, the leader also sings the answering line to them, which they also eagerly pick up. The heat in the music suggests the anger in their dissatisfaction. Anyone who has witnessed such a situation, and who understands the language of the singing group, can easily understand this performance. The words of the song, the rhythm of the music and the communicative nature of the call and response pattern combine to reinforce the communicative effect of the singing.

Another element that makes the guitar user-friendly to Zulu music is the pitch of the strings of the instrument. If the instrument has been properly tuned to the required pitch, all subsequent notes that are produced by the player, whether open strings or stopped with the fingers, will be very effective. This is because of the finger-board, which was designed to make certain that any created note gets its true pitch. All these qualities made the guitar irresistible to the Africans and their isiZulu music. The addition is neither a departure nor a threat to the original Zulu format of a song, nor does it, in any way, change the shape of the interaction of melodies. So, the instrumental addition merely becomes an extension.

The musicality of the leader of the group is also a prominent factor. The more musical the composer, the more interesting the presentation will be. The combination of

the dance and action of the central performer, like that of Mfazomnyama, can be a fascinating spectacle.

## 7.8 UMASKANDI PERFORMANCE AS COMMUNICATION

Communicating with Africans through music has been seen to be very effective, because music is a medium that they relish. Africans love song and rhythm, and the *Umaskandi* musician ceases this opportunity to propagate all types of messages. Biko says:

Nothing dramatises the eagerness of Africans to communicate with each other more than their love for song and rhythm (Biko in Coetzee and Roux [eds.] - 1998:27).

Communicating through music is, indeed, a fascinating feature in the whole performance. *Umaskandi* musicians, like all other artists, are licensed to comment on what an ordinary citizen may not shout about. The alarm at the exploitation of rural Blacks by rural *Amakhosi* still towers above a lot of other messages that have been broadcast by musicians. On the positive side, the pronouncement of peace by the combined "SXAXA MBIJI" recordings was very influential in informing the public at large that bloodshed should not be a way of life. That was one way in which violence was curbed after the first national election in South Africa, after 1994. The maxim, "SXAXA MBIJI" (little by little), a rallying shout that would be used by workers when they had to lift something of considerable weight, for unity in the execution, has been known by

almost all working class Zulus. It is this saying that was expounded by Khaba Mkhize<sup>115</sup>, for unity in action. He meant it to be an attempt to demonstrate to Blacks that by gradually working together, they would be able to move out of the vicious violence that was imposed on the ignorant people by politicians. *Umaskandi* musicians were very relevant and appropriate in this venture because of the topical nature of their style<sup>116</sup>. This time, the message would constitute the main theme in all their song that would be composed for this project.

This particular role of music as a means of disseminating information in a macro situation as it was the case in the violence-stricken province of KwaZulu-Natal in the early nineties, just before the first national elections, had a great significance as a means of educating people. *Umaskandi* music and music festivals became very effective in this venture. The main method used was the subtle introduction and condemnation of topics about violence, by singing the information instead of articulating it in speech, even in the classroom.

Such use of music as communication is not an isolated case in the music of the Zulus. Among the Vendas, the promotion of music is not a concern only for the ordinary people, but rulers and headmen are very influential in the activity:

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<sup>115</sup> Khaba Mkhize observed this idea at the Durban docks- long before the inventing of fork lifts - when human hands were the only tools available for the lifting of the heaviest of the cargo that had arrived by ship. Hands together, at the same time, would enable the workers to move the heaviest load, and cover long distances, little by little, hence the word "XAXA" meaning - a little further and the Afrikaans word "Bitjie" were combined to form one noun, "SXAXA MBIJ" by the Zulus. By working together, moving gradually forward, they would be able to accomplish their task.

<sup>116</sup> Bhodloza Nzimande, who married this dictum with *umaskandi* music, shall be discussed later.

The musical expeditions consolidate both the lineage ties of rulers, who are separated spatially because of their responsibility for district government, and the neighbourhood ties of clansfolk living in different districts, and hence the bonds between these people and their district headmen (Blacking, 1967:22).

The above extract relates to us that music practice in some of the African communities has been a national issue. Some of the information relayed through music could be of a serious nature as it could be the case in circumstances similar to this one:

The music of the boys' and girls' circumcision schools advertises the power of the doctors who sponsor them, and possession dances enhance the prestige and influence of the families who belong to the different cult groups. Within the traditional music system, ambitious commoners are able to attract a following and further their interests by means of the music that is performed under their auspices (Blacking, 1967:23).

## 7.9 UMASKANDI PERFORMANCE AS AN EXERCISE IN ELOCUTION

The velocity with which the praises are articulated is very educative. The whole practice improves one's physical ability of speaking fast and also the mental preparedness of the speaker in maintaining the thought force of the words by executing the correct emphasis of words and the pauses between the phrases. *Umaskandi* performance is an opportunity for a practice in eloquence. Such ability has been observed in the songs of, for instance, Hhashelimhlophe Ngcobo and Mfazomnyama Khumalo, who have

both been able to maintain a very high speed in the articulation of the text. It is always a wish of every *umaskandi* musician to recite the highest number of words in the shortest space of time.

In jobs that include speaking as one of the terms of the requirements, the ability to read or speak a large amount of words in the shortest space of time has always been an advantage.

This paragraph on elocution and the one before it on communication have shown that *umaskandi* music is not only an education in music but that it is also a case of educating with music.

#### 7.10 FLAIR, EASE AND NATURALNESS IN COMPOSING

By composing we refer to the creation of new melodies. That is the case in instrumental music. In *umaskandi* music, which is a combination of instrumental and vocal music, for the musical message to be effective, the created instrumental text should be agreeable to the speech rhythm of the created poetic text. This is indeed a challenging activity.

*Umaskandi* performers and all traditional musicians are prolific composers. Composing a melody seems to be second nature to them in that even when they are commissioned to compose, that is, when they are invited to compose on a special topic, it does not take time for them to produce a song. Composition is an outcome of creativeness. This

means that the composer's mind is able to bring into existence lines of music that have hitherto not been known. Ease in composition is a common factor with all music leaders among Africans. It seems to be accepted that every leader of a group, instrumental or vocal, is expected to manufacture songs for his group. There are also cases where group members do not end by helping in the arrangement of parts, but may also be allowed to bring in their melodies. He is indeed the academic merit that is inherent in Zulu people and which was never exploited and appreciated by expatriates. It was convenient for them to announce that Zulu music is a primitive culture.

Amongst Africans, Zulus, whom I have had an opportunity to observe, seem to have a great ease in composition. This can be seen in the spontaneity they have in introducing new songs, which are then performed immediately after introduction. In fact, as the leader introduces the song, there is always a supporting response from the singing crowd. The fact is that at social functions of Zulus, singing is done without having practised the items that are performed. It is the musical eloquence of the person who leads the singing that determines the smooth and brisk learning of a new item. This practice is established among the Zulus and is normal procedure. As a result, those African musicians who have now climbed the professional ladder have a responsibility to keep on composing, for the market. This is an act of scholarship. It was only a very few foreigners, like Kirby and Hugh Tracey, who took the pains to find out what the truth about the apparent excitement in African music. It was really a form of prejudice to imagine that Africans could be songless.

### 7.11 SCHOLARLY ORDER AND PROFESSIONALISM IN UMASKANDI PERFORMANCE.

In the earlier days of Western instrumental music, like the guitar, the concertina, and the mouth harp or fiddle, the music of these instruments was associated with uncivil and uncouth nocturnal behaviour ghosts and evil spirits. There was also talk to the effect that the instrumentalist would have to spend a night in a graveyard where he would conjure this nocturnal spirits and ghosts to initiate him into the art of playing the particular instrument that he would have brought with him. The spirits would then endow the instrumentalist with enormous instrumental virtuosity (Interview - Phuzekhemisi Mnyandu: 25<sup>th</sup> October 1996).

Mnyandu refuted all these assertions and said that to know the instrument the apprentice should love his instrument and then practise the art of playing very hard. In short, Phuzekhemisi was explaining that there is not miracle in the playing of *umaskandi* instrument and that success can be achieved through hard work.

Mnyandu explained that in his youth he started by making toy guitars from five-litre oil cans which would be stringed with plastic fishing line. Although the young man would derive some enjoyment from this design, the young man very soon bought himself a proper guitar. This incident is an example of a toy instrument inducing a person to shift from learning an art like a child and to graduate into an adult practice of learning. This incidence serves to underline the academic need of toys for children which

should be succeeded by a hands-on learning on real instrument.

The smoothness with which the *umaskandi* musicians shift from one aspect of performance to the other is very professional. There are just no hitches. This is evidence of good and conscientious participation of the members of a group, which is an scholarly approach to learning.

At some Zulu homesteads, the playing of a reed flute within the homestead was not allowed, as the sound of such instruments would disturb the peace among the ancestors (Interview - Thembelihle Gumede: 15<sup>th</sup> June 2002).

So the guitar and other *umaskandi* instruments would not be performed within a homestead. It was the *umaskandi* performers themselves, who, through their insistence, developed and established *umaskandi* music into a single but comprehensive form of entertainment.

Some of those that are well groomed in their art have made *umaskandi* performance their full-time occupation. For instance, HHASHELIMHLOPHE NGCOBO is staying in a suburb that is known as Gerdview - Ekuthuleni, around Germiston (Sunday World, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2003:7). His children are receiving good education. PHUZEKHEMISI MNYANDU runs a small Tea Room next to his house, that keeps him busy, but if a call to go to perform is received, he leaves the shop to the care of his wife and goes out to fulfill the call to perform. Performing gives him cash much faster than the shop, which is in a rural area. He is a popular performer at government functions.

Those *umaskandi* performers that have been able to record their music are likely to benefit immensely from their efforts, depending on the quality of the product. This state of affairs is quite remarkable because *umaskandi* performers of yesteryear, who were producing a good product, were exploited by recording companies. They would receive handouts, something like a "tip", while the company would make millions of moneys. Today, success depends on the incumbent's effort.

Although a person like Mbongeni Ngema did go to school, he did not access the Western method of music literacy. He too plays his *mbhaqanga* music on Western instrumentation like *umaskandi* musicians. The musical possibilities of instrumentation in the recording of Ngema's Woza "My Fohloza" have been highly exploited, although the performers did it without any "schooled" knowledge. Like *umaskandi* music, this recording by Mbongeni has shown the world that such music may no more be left to the unschooled to explore. There is a world of musicality that needs to be investigated. Ngema, too, has been able to live well out of such musical innovations and efforts. It is hoped that art and music institutions that have the financial resources and, provided they adopt the relevant scholarly attitude, will be able to investigate more possibilities about these styles.

## 7.12 THE UMASKANDI THEORY OF PERFORMANCE

*Umaskandi* approach to the playing of music instruments is a definite procedure that has been entrenched among those

that practise it. Its distinction has been observed in the artistic success of the country's best *umaskandi* musicians. When placed against the Western method of playing instruments, like for instance the guitar, it is a short cut that enables a learner to quickly access the sound of the instrument. The comparison should not focus on the shortcomings of the one or the other but on the benefits of either practice. It is a short-cut means of achieving and these are some of the reasons for its utility:

- (a) Although the player does not explore all the keys that are available and which can be reached by a formalized learner, he is able find a convenient key for his voice range by using his "bridge".
- (b) Limiting the singing to a narrow range is convenient for the *umaskandi* musicians. They use the medium tessitura without going too high and also not too low. This is convenient for a singer who has not consciously gone through scholastic voice culture.
- (c) The use of only two fingers for manipulating the strings minimizes the drudgery of using all five fingers. The method came as a rescue to those that did not have the privilege to learn the guitar in the classical style. This apparently short cut method towards accessing guitar music could be viewed in the same light as the tonic solfa music notation, which
- (d) was designed to be a short cut for singing. The Tonic Solfa method is still a useful approach for singers since it evades the use of a large variety of note-

values (from the semibreve to the hemidemisemi-quaver). In this method the singer deals only with the full note, the half note and the quarter note, which makes singing quickly accessible.

*Umaskandi* method can be useful where there is urgency to learn, as it is the case in the following circumstances:

- (a) Adult education centres, where people have to learn merely for enjoying themselves, without the concentration and persistence of professionalism.
- (b) Disabled learners, who should be assisted to sound a few notes, with, at least, two fingers.
- (c) Music teaching in the prisons, where the primary aim of teaching is mainly to rehabilitate the inmates, as fast as possibly.

The approach to music learning that has been used by *umaskandi* musicians has, so far, been used in the oral tradition. It was everybody's way of learning where one person teaches another one by telling. The method has proved itself to be useful as it has produced our most valued musicians.

### 7.13 HUMAN DYNAMISM IN UMASKANDI MUSIC

In *umaskandi* music there seems to be some underlying philosophies that can be related to the people's social life attitudes. Some of these are not necessarily confined

to *umaskandi* music but can be observed in the general African music practice as a whole:

- (a) The prominence of one person, in spite of the whole band of musicians who participate in the performance seems to deprive a lot of other musicians an opportunity for publicity, after giving a lot of contribution towards the success of the performance. The trend seems to dominate in all music groups, African or Western, where the group is known by the name of one person. The other names, that make so much contribution towards the success of the performance, seem not to receive enough recognition. In the case of Hhashelimhlophe, the group is, like all other groups, known by his name. There is but an exception in that the younger members of his cast, Amaponi, are his own children, are not likely to break away and work independently and finally contend with the mother group, which is the fear of most leaders. Similarly, Joseph Shabalala, the leader of the Ladysmith Black Mambazo, created the White Mambazo, that are led by his son. He himself has a great measure of control on them. They may not contend with the mother body, which is the fear of every group leader. The competitive atmosphere under which all African music groups perform make them live under a feeling that the next musician is either a supporter or a contender.
- (b) There seems to be a forward surging urge to perform amongst Africans which makes them to be pleased by performing. It appears that it is this desire to do

the music that makes them even take longer to realize that music performance should also be a profession. Recording companies exploited them. The South African Broadcasting Corporation of the apartheid era also made them sign declarations that the recorded music would be the property of the South African Broadcasting Corporation. It seems now as if it is the other artists that are making a fortune by putting up their names in broad letters while the supporting members of the casts are not fairly recognized. They will have to wait until they form their own groups before their names are fully blown on advertisement boards. In South Africa, where people have been plagued by apartheid for a long time, this state of affairs seems to be a perpetuation of the oppressive procedures of the time.

On the other hand, highlighting only one person may result in the paying of attention to the only person whose name has been mentioned. As a result, the music provided by the supporting cast may even elude the attention of untrained listeners, who could be focussing only on the one artist, Phuzekhemisi and not taking heed of the music that is produced by the supporting artists. It is very likely that some listeners may not have been trained, or, may not be aware that the music has to be listened as a whole unit.

#### 7.14 UMASKANDI MUSIC METHOD

It should be emphasized that by advocating for the recognition of *umaskandi* music as a means of acquiring musical practicability does not meant that learning in non-

school environment should be terminated. Learning, as a process of acquiring knowledge is as old as mankind. The significance of the school is to promote and not to stifle progress, no matter how little it may be. This knowledge can, therefore, be housed in a school situation as an extension of the means of acquiring more knowledge. Any method that has been identified is also open to growth or development to include some other approaches that might have eluded the creator of the method. Thus, *umaskandi* method that has been identified in any of *umaskandi* instruments, has, like all other methods that have or are still likely to come, may also still be open to improvement and further development.

Teaching music in the whole ability-range, as it is the case with the teaching of music in schools and in the whole community, means that the whole range of methods should be available for application, if a need arises. Today there is a great campaign by music educators to enable all human societies to access music. Inability to teach music to the disabled is easily viewed as prejudice. In our country, South Africa, human rights are extended even to prisons, where music is used as a means to re-humanize inmates, who are expected to get back to society as revived human beings. Wherever there is a human society, there shall always be a process of bringing in new knowledge systems because of the intrinsic dynamism of the human mind. It, therefore, goes without doubt that all available methods should be scrutinized and their potential should be well understood by the relevant educators. That no single method is efficacious for all human conditions and

environments means that an educator should be ready to try more than one.

That the school, as an institution of high learning is a base where all available knowledge can be accumulated, stored, analyzed, quantified and its quality be confirmed. The mission for this document is that the school may no more view *umaskandi* method with arrogance and disdain. That attitude was a form of indoctrination. *Umaskandi* method does provide some valuable music benefits.

That *umaskandi* music can be included in the school curriculum does not mean that it will have to be discouraged from being learnt in the present oral and aural tradition. The roots of *umaskandi* music are in the people who nurtured it like all the other arts. Should the roots of this music be extracted, the style will lose its quality.

All the traditional music forms in our country are, in some way, educative to the people of South Africa and the world. The world has learned something about the nature and resilience of the music of Africa as an art and a living organism. After three centuries of colonization by the Western world, African music has been able to sustain itself, in spite of strong opposition in some cases. The tendency of the civilized world of schools and churches was to ignore African traditional music in favour of the Western hymn. The educated Africans, as musical people, picked up the new art of Western music until they too were capable of creating new compositions themselves. The arrival of Marie Dube, an American black woman who had married Charles Dube, the brother of John Langalibalele

Dube, became a nucleus for the local educated Zulu people the learning of Western pianoforte playing. A click of educated Zulus got interested in Western music. Reverend Benjamin Ngiba, who had learned pianoforte from Professor Belvaux in Durban, opened the Ngiba's School of Music at Victoria Street in Durban. Faith Caluza learned the art of pianoforte playing from Marie Dube. Victor Mcunu who started learning singing from the same lady finally sailed to London to further his singing studies. These names represent a big number of Zulu musicians who had been completely swallowed by the new music culture, to the total exclusion of any form of isiZulu indigenous music. The influence of such Zulu academics is still realized today in some of the present-day Zulu musicians whose musical education stemmed from the Marie Dube heritage<sup>117</sup>.

#### 7.15 THE ACADEMIC MERIT OF ZULU TRADITIONAL MUSIC

What might have caused some academics to fail to notice the academic qualities of some of the Zulu traditional artistic styles was mere prejudice. Although most of the learning material from the Western civilization is notated, no single notation in the world has ever been applicable in all forms of practical musical knowledge. The dances that are done all over the world are achieved through practical man-to-man tutelage and not book knowledge. In the same way, for *umaskandi* to be appreciated, it may not necessarily be notated. Its academic value can be realized in its

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production and pianoforte playing from private teachers in the Durban Art Centre (Albany Grove). A click of Zulu musicians who fell in love with Western Classical music went on to learn voice production and pianoforte playing from private tutelage in the Durban Art Centre (Albany Grove). These were people like Nathaniel Zwane, Lucas Mthembu, Eunice Doris Duma, Margaret Mzolo, Linda Masango, Patty Nokwe, Esther Makhoba, John Ngcobo and many others.

practicability, as it can be identified in the following sub-paragraphs:

#### 7.15.1 INSTRUMENT PLAYING - A HIGHLY EDUCATIVE PROCESS.

*Umaskandi* music is a composite art performance or a mixed art, since it combines instrument playing, singing, dancing and speech. All these activities require the psychophysical co-operation in each individual person who participates. The fact that *umaskandi* music is without written music does not minimize the educative value of the style. *Umaskandi* is simply another form of scholarship. It is a highly educative, but, subtle process.

Instrument playing is a highly educative process. Although the knowledge of the instrument that has been learnt can be evaluated from the performance given by the learner, the full extent of the learnedness of the learner may not be fully recognized by any person, except, perhaps, the learner himself. There is a tremendous amount of abstract thinking that is done by the players in producing a sound of notes that cannot be seen but can only be heard. So, this study in music performance also becomes a study in thinking. That is one example of the subtlety of the educative merit of *Umaskandi* music.

The focus of this chapter is mainly on music performance as viewed from any culture, African or Western. What is salient in any of these practices is that there are meritable elements of the practice that can be found in any of the two approaches. While the two methods are being

appraised, we should in no way disregard the efforts of the Black unschooled musicians who could not get the opportunity of enrolling in a conservatoire. One reason for presenting this document is to make known the traditional scholarship that has never been exposed and recognized properly by as an academic accomplishment by many learned scholars. Among our academic ranks there are academics that, very often, give a secondary studentship to proficiency in the art of playing an instrument as against scholarship in the general humanities. This is because of the ignorance of the amount of cognitive activity that is involved in the manipulation of a music instrument. It is for this reason that awareness of the academic merit in the arts is the theme for this research.

#### 7.15.2 THE THREE DOMAINS OF MUSIC INVOLVEMENT

Anything that is academic or educative has got to relate to the proper and progressive functioning of the brain and its awareness. Besides being aesthetic, the institution of *umaskandi* has displayed some music amount of musical growth. This explains that in getting involved in *umaskandi* world, there is a good amount of mental exercise that can be achieved. The mere growth of the style from a single player to a large *umaskandi* band is evidence for mental or academic expansion.

Playing any music instrument activates all the psychological domains that are employed by a human being in dealing with the sound of music. The fact that at *umaskandi* musicians did not learn their trade at school does not preclude an extensive application of the brain faculties.

The only difference between him and the schooled musician is that the latter is consciously aware of these attributes, whereas the unschooled is concerned only with the music. Here are the three domains of music activity that are awakened in all music activity, including *umaskandi* music:

#### 7.15.2.1 THE AFFECTIVE DOMAIN OF MUSIC INVOLVEMENT

*Umaskandi* music is thoroughly enjoyed by those that participate in it. They engage in it because they enjoy it. They have uplifted the performance structure of the music to the extent that the genre has earned itself a very large listenership. The ability to raise any musical performance to a highly appreciative level means a depth of insight and perception into the music genre in question. Intellectual growth in any musical style should be accompanied by aesthetic or affective appeal to the listeners of the art. If the work becomes only intellectual, it loses its appeal to the contemporary masses. This, for instance, was the problem that was experienced by the academics of the Twelve - Tone School of the Arnold Schoenberg period in Western music at the beginning of the twentieth century (Joseph Machlis, 1978:334).

#### 7.15.2.2 THE PSYCHO-MOTOR DOMAIN

*Umaskandi* music is one way in which the psycho-physical unity of the body is demonstrated. *umaskandi* performance on stage is a well-coordinated practice.

This character of *umaskandi* music represents real academic excellence in both the practical and the intellectual management of music performance. Psychologists say that the only time when a number of bodily senses are used simultaneously is when one is sight-reading music. In the latter one uses the sense of sight for reading the score, the sense of touch for playing on the keys and the sense of hearing for confirming the execution. In *umaskandi* music, although the sense of sight is not extensively employed, missing, there are a lot of other compensatory activities. First, the whole performance is highly cognitive in that the musicians plays from memory. He learns the song and then memorizes it. Above that there is the sense of touch for manipulating the strings and the sense of hearing for confirming the pitch of the notes. *Umaskandi* further walks around and, very often, dances while he plays his instrument. An added activity is the narration of the praise poetry (*izibongo*), while playing on his instrument. In other words, he adds an art of speech without suspending the other activities.

In the production of the sound of music, the velocity of the action of the limbs, whether in pro-action or reactive action, has never been given a fair recognition. An instrument player displays very well developed reflexes.

#### 7.15.2.3 THE COGNITIVE ASPECT OF INVOLVEMENT

It is the cognitive processes of the brain that initiate the activity of playing an instrument. Whatever action is taken by the performer, it is first born as a thought in the brain. This means that the activity of playing an

instrument has its origin in the brain. The activity of the brain initiates the action of the limbs. Thirdly, whether the person is proactive or reactive in his participation in a music activity, the activity is initiated in the cognitive domain of brain activity. Therefore, when one learns and practices to play an instrument, in actual fact that person learns and practices (in the brain) to:

- (a) Identify the sound that he intends to achieve.
- (b) Send a message to the hands and fingers to find the note.
- (c) Having found the note, to strike it or depress it, with a certain amount of pressure, so that the right amount of volume of sound can be achieved.
- (d) Personalize the sound and makes it his own by interpreting it in the way he feels it should be heard.

*Umaskandi* music is truly cognitive. The academic aspect of playing a musical instrument has not been well understood by those learned members of our society who are not involved in the actual activity of playing an instrument. To many academics, scholarship is confined to the knowledge of using their brains in the ability to speak well, write well and analyze well the knowledge that has been infused into their minds. The ability to manipulate an instrument has, to some, not been recognized as a worthwhile activity. It is this state of learnedness that can be viewed as the

ignorance of the learned. It is the same ignorance that makes a computer-literate typist to think that he is extensively knowledgeable even when he has never considered the brilliance of the person who put up the computer system. Above all, the typist or the operator of a computer has to keep on acquainting himself with the latest developments that are created by the manufacturer, otherwise he remains behind in the operation of the instrument. In other words, by failing to recognize his position, which is subordinate to that of the maker of the computer, he will never be able to identify his position and his level of acquisition in the trade. Although he may think that he is a "crack" in the operation, there is a lot that he has to learn in order to achieve erudition in that area of technology. Such is the ignorance of the "educated" towards cognition in the arts.

#### 7.16 MIXING INSTRUMENTAL STYLES - AN ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Those instrument players, including *umaskandi* musicians, who have succeeded in mixing instrumental styles, have achieved great brilliance. While they have succeeded in bringing styles that have been standing poles apart, they have also been able to bring two social classes that have always been running parallel to each other. The mixing of *umaskandi* music with *kwaito* or with any other form of house music has had a positive social impact on the African population. Musicians have done what sociologists could not do, which is the bringing of two social classes to listen to the same disc. This success has definitely made a change on people's attitudes about other human beings.

It has been common knowledge that *umaskandi* music belongs to that African population that is still attached to their rural roots and who also have not been exposed to school education. It has also been known that *kwaito* music does not appeal to *umaskandi* listeners and that *umaskandi* music is anathema to the urbanized youth that stay in townships. But the insight that has been displayed by Hhashelinhlophe, *umaskandi* guitarist, Oskido, the disc jockey and a *kwaito* group called Mafikizolo has been a very remarkable form of music education.

First, the idea of mixing styles was observed when Oscar Oskido, a disc jockey added some home music rhythm to all the items in the Hhashelinhlophe disc called "Muntuza 2002". In this disc, modern home music rhythms were perched against *umaskandi* melodies and this act threw the whole disc into the arena of the young township listeners who previously thought they had nothing to do with *umaskandi* music (Hhashelinhlophe - EMI L4 DCC [EO] 004).

The achievement has been great. In this instance, the communication has not been a social topic that might be limited to a certain section of the population as it has been the case with the song "*Imbizo*", which appealed to the rural population only. The product that has been distributed is the music itself. Socially, the people have been taught that they belong together. Commercially, the disc, which could not be limited into only one section of the population, widened the horizons for the sales. Academically, music has been used as a medium for educating people.

The second example in this category is a disc by a *kwaito* group called Mafikizolo. In a similar way, in their disc they have been able to present a topic with universal appeal, love, suspended in a traditional melody, and empowered by both *umaskandi* music and modern rhythmic patterns. The music in the whole disc has had a tremendous appeal to Africans of different social classes. This success is an example of the extent of the potential of creativity that has not been tapped. This inventiveness that has found an outlet in the creation of music may not be limited to music. Music is only a mirror of what may occur in other fields. The issue is that human cognitive ability has been revealed through music.

#### 7.17 OMISSION OF INDIGENOUS HERITAGE : A NATIONAL DISASTER

Revisiting the intrinsic cultural values embedded in the heritage of the indigenous people has to be viewed with a more serious attitude than the case has been in the past. Pressure was exerted on Africans to forgo their natural heritage in almost all the spheres of life. The resulting disaster was that the arts and the cultures of the people concerned started to atrophy in those areas that had been invaded with Western cultures. Today, there are Zulu people who can sing neither the Western song nor the Zulu *ihubo*. In fact not too many people, known as Zulus, know anything about what the word "*ihubo*" means. As a result, a new culture has been born: a culture of being cultureless.

Condemnation of African arts by the expatriates has more implications than what has been expressed in this document.

It finally spilled over to non-musical areas. The African eventually found himself rejecting his own nourishing diet that he had inherited from his forefathers and crossing over to join the bandwagon of processed foods that were obtainable from supermarkets. It is only now that the people have come to realize that some of the foodstuffs that have been processed are not all completely wholesome and nourishing. There is today a big upsurge of considerations to return to the unprocessed healthy and well-balanced foods that gave life to the African men and women of yesteryear.

#### 7.18 SUBTLETY IN THE ABSTRACTNESS OF MUSIC

Although the production of music is a physical act, music itself is abstract. The scholarship of the music scholar or the music performer that is involved in the provision of music dwells in the world of abstracts.

The pianist has got to deal with eighty-five notes before him. His responsibility is that out of the black and white keys before him he has to create a musical edifice, regardless of the method that he is using. The extent of his cognitive involvement and exertion may not be evaluated by people who have never been involved in a similar experience.

The case of any other music instrument is even more challenging than that of the keyboard instrument. The notes of all the different keys in which the music is presented are in the mind of the single performer who handles the instrument. *Umaskandi* guitarist for instance,

has to know the pattern of sound that he wishes to create, know which string to manipulate, know the fret on which he has to "stop" the particular string and then strike the string with his other hand. Indeed he becomes a small creator at that particular moment. Had the educative merit of the arts been well understood by the learned, music in its entirety would have long been in the curriculum.

#### 7.19 A GREAT PARADOX

It is indeed a great paradox that even the schools at which the arts of Africans were anathema for the whole of the last century are to today expected to house Arts and Culture programmes for all nationalities, including those of Africans. It is now left in the hands of educational managers and community leaders to organize inclusion of all the arts and all the cultures that are relevant to them in their academic programmes in the respective schools.

The inclusion of a learning area that is referred to as Arts and Culture is a means of addressing the needs of the arts in the whole country. Now that Arts and Culture embraces a very wide gamut of arts and cultures, the programme organizers have to be very prudent in their selection of what is to be the relevant items. This laissez faire approach will be of great benefit to people who are knowledgeable about arts as a form of education and also about arts as a means towards education.

#### 7.20 ALL DOORS OF CULTURE - OPEN TO ALL

It is in the hands of every institution to map out clearly the aspect of Arts and Culture that should be practised in

schools. That everything is now available may cause some people to end up having not done a simple item properly. That all doors of culture are now open to all the citizens of the country can, on the other hand, overwhelm people to the extent of getting unable to identify their needs. Care has to be taken that educators do not get stuck in trying to possibly bite more than they can chew. As a result, learners may end up not having accessed information maximally.

In the past the arts of the indigenous people of the world were undermined because of political reasons. When the Westerners colonized Africa, they despised and spurned the people of Africa and their artistic possessions. They were not aware that they were despising the human spirit. Some Westerners even went further to actually enslave the other human beings, just because the latter were black skinned. Africans were shipped to America in a manner that was worse than the treatment of animals. Africans were packed in ships like sardines to America. More than fifty percent of those that were shipped did not reach the intended destinations. They died from disease and lack of water (Bennett, R. and Burnett, M. 1989:1). All these acts were a result of the Westerners' failure to identify humanity and spirituality in the black people of Africa.

But, surprisingly it was the same slaves that came out with the world's most acclaimed jazz tunes and other musical styles that are now fast getting adopted by the whole world. It is these Africans, who were shipped to America by force, who have created for the world jazz and blues

music that has spread around the globe much faster than the preludes and fugues of J.S. Bach.

When the Africans could not immediately access Western musicology that had been brought to America by the Westerners, they did not wait. There had to be an outlet for their spiritual aspirations.

The final paradox is that after all the artistic deprivation of Africans by the ruling whites of the earlier centuries, the Whites are now fast getting involved in the arts of the Africans, but, for economic reasons. While the Whites have always brushed aside and refused to learn the arts of Africans, even the languages of Africans, it is only now that some Whites are seen to be running ahead to promote African arts mainly as financed projects. At times they go as far as owning the project, hiring those participants who are skilled in the art, finally paying them for their specific roles and finally benefiting from the form the lump sum of money that is provided by the government for the whole project. The main reason for their obtaining the projects is that they have the skill for writing out proposals, without necessarily knowing making how to do the job themselves. At the end, the people who do the job get paid by the people who do not know how to do the job, but who know how to talk about how to access the job. This is another form of exploitation of African musicians that is similar to the case of Solomon Linda.

A similar case obtained at a conference of the Pan African Society of Musical Arts Educators (PASMAE) that was held in

Kenya on 5<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> July 2003. A choir of White singers, the Pallisandae Choir, from the University of Pretoria sang a number of Sotho songs in an item that was expected to be for African music. The fact that all the singers had never spoken Sotho before made the whole presentation become a mockery of African music. At the end of the performance, the visiting scholars from other countries inquired whether African singers were still to come. Nomusa Seleke, who had gone there to represent the University of Zululand, learnt later that the choir had been sponsored from Pretoria to Kenya to perform South African music. For such an august international gathering the South Africans could have cast their net much wider, so as to identify rather relevant musicians for the occasion. The foreigners, who were among the audience wished to hear indigenous African music, which they could not get from the White South Africans. The said singers have not been able to access authentic African indigenous music because their attitude has always been negative towards African arts. The White-controlled Department of Education of the apartheid regime did not include African arts in the school curriculum; not even for Africans (Interview - Nomusa Seleke: 16<sup>th</sup> August 2003).

## 7.21 RAP MUSIC AND ITS AFRICAN ORIGIN

Today the music of Tupac [Amaru Shakur] (1971-1996) fills every taxi rank in South Africa and yet some musicologists still condemn it as a non- - musicological noise. It is mere avoidance to brush the music aside together with the truth that it bears, both in words and in the philosophy.

When the music of the Oratorio, the Cantata and the Masses, has failed to convert the sophisticated and celebrated churchgoers of America and other first world countries, they are now confronted with rap music, which does speak directly, with the minimum of melody, and yet it is still music. Saying that this music is not musical is not going to change the message in the song. When Dyson, an author of books on Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcom X, was writing a book on Shakur, he was accused of wasting time and energy in writing about a thug. Dyson answered that:

Tupac (as he was known) spoke to me with brilliance and insight as someone who bears witness to the pain of those who would never have his platform. He told the truth, even as he struggled with the fragments of his identity (AllEyezonMe.net).

Rap music may not be listed high on the musicological list but it is still music. Initially musicologists condemned it as non-musical. But now, after the most prominent rapper, Shakur, is dead, scholars are beginning to realize some artistic value in Shakur's music. Mark Anthony Neal, an English professor from the State University of New York, referred to Shakur as an intellectual. Murray Forman, a professor of Communication Studies at Northeastern University, remarked that "Shakur's fans have succeeded in resurrecting Tupac as an ethereal life force". Knut Aukrust, a professor of Culture Studies at the University of Oslo and a visiting scholar in the Program on Folklore and Mythology at Harvard, equated the academic value of Shakur's art to the writings of Niccolo Maachiavelli (<http://lookinside-images.amazon.com/Ofs=v35lepOpkmqi7oDBVv8uMMm4J=GJs/.6\19\03>).

Two most salient features in Rap are rhythm and speedy elocution of poetry. It is these two that lend musicality to the style. Both these are products of the social life of Blacks in America. The performers originated in Africa and, like Africans, their music explains their lives, that are down-trodden in America. Rev. Brian Kingslake, a missionary who tried to be realistic about African music, explained that:

African music is rooted in the psycho-physical nature of the African people (Kingslake - 1973:20).

Kingslake says that there can, therefore, be no case of excellence or mediocrity or ordinariness in the case of art. So is the case with *umaskandi*, which is a reflection of the suffering of the Zulu people when they were compelled to leave their homes and families to go to work in mines, towns and cities. Their music has to relate to that.

Rap music and *umaskandi* music are similar in that they are both highly rhythmic and are also highly topical. That tells us that the two genres are African in origin. This further confirms what has been mentioned above, that music in Africa does not exist independently and away from social life. African music speaks about human social life. That this music does not atrophy is because it is based on a societal truth. That African music permeates all aspects of their lives is also well put by Prof. E.J.Krige when she

explains the role of music among the Zulus, which is also the case with all South Africans.

The Zulus are very fond of song, and they seldom do any kind of work without singing. While hoeing and planting the fields, in casual groups, weeding, while thrashing the corn, Zulus sing songs that are suited to the occasion, and the rhythm of the song gives rhythm and uniformity to their movements in the work. Songs are composed by almost everybody; children at play, boys herding the cattle, girls when working in the fields or at home, all invent songs (Krige, 1936: 338).

Nomusa Seleke, a member of the Musicological Society of Southern Africa, says that:

Musicologists are still trapped in the old stance of wielding Western musicology as a tool for political power, for condemning indigenous African music as ethnomusicology, as if the music of the West has no ethnic or cultural connotations, and as if to be ethnic is a crime (Interview - Nomusa Seleke: 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2003).

Indeed Western musicologists seem to put the indigenous musical styles on the periphery as if these were less musical than the music of Western civilization. This attitude has been maintained for some time. But now that the popular styles of African origin seem to be getting on the centre stage, the conservative musicologists may soon find themselves isolated. In fact, the whole world of art is drifting away from the less accessible styles of the elite, like ballet and orchestral music, to the readily accessible rhythmic music, which is popular with the indigenous people of Africa. The disaster was that the

education of Africans was not regarded as an urgent issue whilst the White apartheid government was in power. But now that the Africans are in power, they will promote those arts that are a convenience to them. For instance, Africans were forced to learn to speak the language of the newcomers, and since this is used to advantage by the Africans, the language has not been discarded. But it is now very hard to redress those aspects of knowledge, like the arts, which were deliberately neglected. The people will simply practise those arts that they have been practising.

For instance, rap, as a musical style, has come here to stay. It is indeed a musical style in that it does contain some elements that constitute what is musical. The element that is very elaborate in rap music is rhythm. Then there is poetry that is carried by the rhythmic beat. In some cases there may be a short and recurring melodic line. What remains at the top of all this is rhythmic orality, whose sound may not be the put on paper, on any musical scale. It can only be understood as a spoken message. It is apparent that modern life, whether in Africa or in America, is too slow for the youth of our times:

- (a) It takes a minimum of ten years to train and become a literate musician, who would easily read music and perform it according to a certain prescribed methodology. That is too rigorous for the youth.
- (b) Today's youth are too busy and have too many attractions for them to spend all their youth learning to be, for instance, a ballerina for the Swan Lake or

a Vladimir Ashkenazy<sup>118</sup> to memorize a three-hundred bar long concerto. The urgency to express themselves makes them choose to rather compose some verse of their own and put it into rhythm. They rather tell a story by setting it to rhythmic words than by presenting it in ballet, where the story is told only by dancing it. The message is too urgent to be silent. They rather speak it than dance it.

- (c) In my part of the world today, those that have joined the bandwagon of rappers, may not be blamed. They have taken the shortest route to music performance. In some parts of the world, the arts have not been accessible simply because they were not properly set in the curriculum by the managers of education. Even for those that the arts were provided, the youth is generally impatient. They are in a hurry to commercialize the music. Secondly, all over the world, the tendency is to compromise the most demanding artistic forms with the less demanding forms that, in a way, relate to the former. No matter how much demanding some of our modern dances may be, their demand for psychomotor application in the action and concentration will not exceed such a requirement as needed in the case of ballet dancing. Therefore, it is clear that the modern arts that are taking over from the previous forms are rather a compromise than a development. If they have to dance, the youth rather stick around and bounce a few undefined rhythmic

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<sup>118</sup> A renowned Russian pianist who performs Western classical music.

movements than go through the inflexible figures of a waltz by Victor Sylvester<sup>118</sup>.

We should accept that people's arts will always be changing because of various circumstances and ways of life. This is a universal phenomenon. For instance, in Western culture, although we still have the music of the minuet and the polka, nobody today dances those styles anymore.

Music, being a form or an extension of language, Rap, is then a form of communication. That this style has not been publicized by the learned does not reduce its status. Scholars should accept the fact that to evaluate an academic phenomenon, they should not impose their own academic culture. They should understand the phenomenon in the context of the practitioner. The rhythm in *izibongo*, besides receiving support from the accompanying performance, lends musicality to the poetry. This is the case with RAP.

## 7.22 THE WAYNING OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL CULTURE IN SCHOOLS.

Singing in schools has always been done informally. Although there had always been singing at prayers, and also singing in general, when there are school functions, singing or voice production per se has never been taught as a subject in schools, particularly in African schools. But, since there has always arisen a need to render some music items, knowledgeable teachers have always trained

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<sup>118</sup> This is a world-famous leader of a band that plays dance music to strict professional tempo.

pupils to form a school choir. Singing at morning prayers was a great form of training for singing homophonically, and, sometimes polyphonically, depending on the nature of the song or hymn that is sung.

We hoped that with the coming in of the democratic government things would improve. But, it seems as if the managers are not fully aware of how singing survived in the apartheid era. The unroofed removal of prayers from schools by the Minister of Education, Dr Kadir Asmal (Ilanga, 12.09.2003:1), spells out that vocal singing, which has always been ensconced in the singing of the hymns, will now be greatly affected. The two practices have been supporting each other in a big way. The morning prayers in schools have been one way of setting the tone for the learning process in the classroom and, at the same time, promoting vocal singing. There has never been singing lessons in the classroom, and, the morning prayers have certainly been a permanent singing practice for the whole school enrolment, in African schools. Dalton Sithole, a famous choirmaster from Lamontville commented that:

The huge hymn - singing morning school-choir was a way of making certain that every child linked himself to the others through singing. Since this is now gone, there is a loss of some camaraderie and esprit de corps among the learners. It was this fellowship that would grow, everyday and be established among the learning community through this unwritten curriculum. The group-learning programmes that are part of today's OBE<sup>119</sup> would be far ahead of where they are had the practice of singing

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<sup>119</sup> OBE = Outcome-Based Education.

together had been maintained (Interview - Dalton Sithole: 10<sup>th</sup> October 2003).

Dalton was referring to the power of music as an educating support. People who have not practised music may not be aware of that educating factor in the practice. The decree to remove morning prayers was one area where the Minister of Education, who might not have been orientated in the arts, missed the subtlety of music as a great aid for educating, not only for the benefit of music, but also for the promotion of many other school subjects. Professor Thembela, who had been a schoolteacher, also commented as follows:

...The singing that was done together, by the whole school, in the morning prayers, always had a great contribution in setting the tone of the school and getting the mind of the learners ready for starting. A child who misses the prayers feels as if she has missed a great start (Interview - A.J. Thembela: 19<sup>th</sup> September 2003).

That there shall be no more morning prayers does not work against the singing of hymns as such. The very opportunity to sing at school has always been necessary because of its subtlety in the moulding of the personality of the growing child. Absence of participation in music means that we shall be producing a generation of radio listeners and television viewers, who will have no experience of internalizing the art of singing. It will just be like watching soccer on television without actually experiencing how it feels like to run on the field:

Despite arts and culture being a Learning Area, there is no assurance that music will be taught in schools (O'Connor - 1999:10).

Sean O'Connor says this because Arts and Culture, as a learning area, is not specific but it aims at promoting a very wide gamut of the South African arts. The choice of the specific area will depend on the prevalent culture in the community. Perhaps it is that leverage that might urge some of the hymn-singing communities to continue doing so.

### 7.23 A NEW DAWN ON AFRICAN CULTURES AS A WHOLE

The attitude of the whole world towards the indigenous cultures of the world has been transformed and indeed reformed. The arts and the cultures of Africa are gradually being put in place as people's heritage and way of life.

The freeing of the people's arts and cultures may appear as an independent event when viewed on its own, whereas it is a logical conclusion to the great move that was started by European dominions in the giving of independence to countries that they had forcefully colonized. Setting free a nation means setting free an individual. Without political freedom, there can be no fully-fledged artistic freedom and individual proficiency and refinement would be greatly handicapped. That was why South African-born artists like Mirriam Makeba, Julian Bahula, Dollar Brand, Caiphus Semenya, Letta Mbuli, Hugh Masekela, The Manhattan Brothers and many others remained in exile, until South

Africa gained its independence. The independence of African states started in northern Africa with countries like Liberia (1847), Egypt (1922), Libya (1951), Ethiopia (1941) and Ghana in 1957 (Ranby, 1995: 10). It took a long time before the whole continent could be free from foreign powers. Since the last country, South Africa, gained its independence in 1994, there has been a breath of African nationalism throughout the continent.

A number of events and eventualities demonstrate that there is truly a seepage of national freedom down to the individual in his little corner. It is the arrival of a feeling of a personal autonomy in every individual that finally releases a spirit of artistry and creativity in the individual:

- (a) That the conference of the Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was held in South Africa, (at the International Conference Centre in Durban) in the year 2003 was evidence that all African States were breathing an air of freedom and independence from the encumbrance of foreign states.
- (b) The LADYSMITH Black Mambazo, a Zulu male voice choir, was able to make a world tour in 1987 was already an indication of a better world that was approaching for South Africa:

...In 1987 the fame of Black Mambazo had spread to four continents. (Thembele and Radebe - 1993:41).

- (c) The invitation of Phuzekhemisi to play his guitar at the opening of the Soccer World Cup games in South Korea in the year 2002 was an indication for the acceptance of the music of Africa as part of the musics of the world.
- (d) Protection by Copyright Law, of African musicians from exploitation by recording companies, and even by the South African Broadcasting Corporation.
- (e) That the composition, recording, and producing music can now be a full-time employment and also a remunerating specialization is a great opportunity for African musicians. Hhashelinhlophe has been a producer for top groups, such as Abalayezi and Sukas (SXAXA MBIJI 4 - GALLO CDGMP 40875).
- (f) National institutions for the promotion of the arts, like The Settlers' Monument at Grahamstown, the Playhouse Company in Durban, and many other theatres in the country are now open for all race groups to explore their artistic abilities. These centres were previously reserved for the use of Whites only.
- (g) Government sponsorship is now accessible to all South Africans regardless of colour. During the apartheid regime, funding for the arts was provided for the White population only.

## 7.24 UMASKANDI AS AN EVIDENCE OF CULTURAL ACCEPTANCE

The importance of *Umaskandi* music, as a mirror of the life of Africans in South Africa, it appears to explain more than the ear can hear and offers a much wider view than the eye can behold. In the whole activity of *umaskandi* one can read the attitudes of Africans, not only towards other musical styles, but also towards other cultural forms that are part of the South African way of life.

When I asked Phuzekhemisi whether he had any odd feeling in playing Zulu music to the accompaniment of a Western instrument, he answered that:

*Kimina ayikho into engiphazamisayo,*  
As fore me, nothing disturbs me,

*futhi engitshela ukuthi lesiginci*  
which also tells me that this guitar is

*kasingifanele.*  
not suitable for me.

*Mina ngaqala ngokuzakhela isiginci ngethini*  
I started by making my own guitar from an

*lamafutha.*  
Oil can.

*Ngemuva kwalokho ngazithengela esami isiginci.*  
There after I bought my own guitar.

*Futhi nomalume wayesidlala.*  
And my uncle also played it.

*Mina ngabonela kuye.*  
I copied him.

*Ngakho-ke yinto yasekhaya lena.*

Therefore, this is a family activity.

*Futhi mina ngazalwa abantu abamnyama*

I was born by Black people,

*bezidlala iziginci.*

Who played the guitar.

The above statement explains that to Phuzekhemisi, the guitar is now second nature. A similar state of affairs seems to have prevailed in dealing with other cultures. Dalton Sithole, a choir conductor, guitar player, teacher, inspector of schools and, above all, a catechist in the Methodist Church, says that before he came down to Durban to teach and learn music, he believed, like many other African musicians, that tonic solfa was an African method of learning singing. This belief was heightened by the fact that all the White musicians whom he had met did not like Tonic Solfa. He says:

When I first came into contact with Western music, I thought it was an extension of African music. I never took it as a foreign art. That was why we Africans have been singing both African and Western songs wherever we could because we enjoy all the music. In the same way, we Africans speak both Zulu and English, because we have been thinking that English is an extension of knowledge.

When I went on to ask Dalton about the acceptance of Christianity, he replied:

..We were perplexed when we went into Christianity in that the people who brought this religion to us are not very friendly to us. They spoke of brotherhood and yet they are not brotherly in their daily lives. They are very close-fisted. They cannot take you into

their house if you need a place to sleep. We Africans are very caring. We slaughter a beast and call all the community members, even those that we do not know. That is why I like African culture. Unfortunately those Africans that now live in White areas are now shifting away from Zulu culture (Interview - Dalton Sithole:10<sup>th</sup> August 2001).

Bhekithemba Mkhwanazi, who is a prominent member of the Nazareth Church (The Shembe Church), expressed a similar view. He is the brother of Chief Mkhwanazi, of KwaDlangezwa. He had this to say:

*..Ngangena kumaNazaretha ngoba baqhuba amasiko amaZulu. AmaZulu ayathandana. Bayazwelana. Benza njengoba kusho iBhayibeli, yize lingabhalwanga yibo. Angisoze ngalishiya isiko lamaZulu ngoba amaZulu anobudlelwana. AmaKhrestu amhlophe okuyiwo aletha ubuKrestu, akazenzi izinto ezinhle abazisho ngomlomo. Amasiko ethu bayagxeka. Ulimi lwethu kabalukhulumi, kodwa thina siyaluthanda ohwabo* (Personal conversation - Bhekithemba Mkhwanazi:7<sup>th</sup> July 2002).

[..I joined the Nazareth church because they practise Zulu culture. Zulus love one another. They care for their fellow men. They practise what the Bible preaches, although it did not originate from them. They despise African languages, although we appreciate theirs. I cannot leave Zulu culture because it encourages me to share with my people. That is real brotherhood].

My conversation with these two people above revealed some deep-seated rejection of some of the cultural practices of the people that brought Christianity and the other cultures in this country. It explains to us why many African Christians have not abandoned their traditional religions and beliefs. It is apparent that the gospel that was

preached was not fully practised by those that brought Christianity. But in spite of that, since the Africans are caring, they still do get involved in the foreign arts, like religion, music, foreign languages and dress. Dalton Sithole went on to say that:

I have seen some African women dressed in Indian Sarries, although I have never seen an Asian person dressed in Zulu traditional garb. That shows the amount of caring and acceptance on the side of Africans (Interview - Dalton Sithole:10<sup>th</sup> August 2001).

The willingness of the Zulu people to cross over to other cultures has long been noticed in many sporting cultures of non-African origin:

(a)

A soccer association, the Durban and District African Football Association, was formed by Zulu enthusiast in 1916 in Durban (Magubane - 1963:26 and 144 - 156).

(b)

Zulus have been participating in ballroom dance for more than eighty years in South Africa as a whole (Coplan - 1985: 115 - 120). Hamilton Goba, a retired schoolteacher from Durban started dancing in the early fifties (Interview - Hamilton Goba:20<sup>th</sup> June 2002).

(c)

Ntombi Gasa, a Zulu girl from Durban, got fascinated with Indian Classical Dance and she has had formal tuition in the art to a level that she has been able to perform it on stage (Playhouse Programme: An Evening with the Bhajans - Durban:30-31 October 1998).

That *umaskandi* is adopting a music instrument of non-African origin is further evidence for the out-going and brimful spirit of Africans in the world of the arts.

Indeed, *umaskandi* music is, in a way, a symbol of cultural acceptance with no reservations and without any prejudice. The fact that the *umaskandi* musicians simply think of the guitar as their instrument explains to us that the former consider the instrument only on its musical merits and they do not bother about its historical origins.

#### 7.25 UMASKANDI MUSIC: CONTINUATION OF ZULU VOCAL MUSIC

*Umaskandi* is a mixed art. In this instance it is the combination of Zulu music and the guitar that is relevant in this chapter. That the guitar or any *umaskandi* musical instrument is a Western instrument is not an issue at all. The manner in which Western *umaskandi* musical instruments have been accepted by Africans explains or mirrors the manner in which the Africans have embraced other cultures, without necessarily discarding their own cultures. Biko says:

These are aspects of the modern African culture - a culture that has used concepts from the white world to expand on inherent cultural characteristics (Biko in Coetzee and Roux [eds.] - 1989:29)

Indeed *umaskandi* is one cultural activity that has successfully borrowed from the white man's world to expand its own musical style.

When the Westerners introduced Christianity in South Africa, the intention was that the gospel of Christianity should replace all forms of African worship. Indeed, in some cases there were people who got convinced that they could drop their own cultures, although that did not last. In some cases families were torn apart by the idea. With the progress of time, some would later change their minds.

Biko says:

Yet it is difficult to kill the African heritage. There remains, in spite of the superficial cultural similarities between the detribalised and the Westerner, a number of cultural characteristics that mark the detribalised as an African. ...there are still some cultural traits that we can boast of which have been able to withstand the process of deliberate bastardisation (Biko:in Coetzee and Roux [eds.], 1989:29).

*Umaskandi* music is a people's voice that has come a long way into the urban streets of South Africa. *Umaskandi* music has existed for a long time without making an impact on all the ears that heard the music because of the racial policies of the time that ignored, condemned and berated any artistic creation, concrete or abstract, that had been produced by Africans. The impact of apartheid was so forceful that there was no opportunity of identifying any aesthetic value in the music. Musically, musically speaking, *umaskandi* music is taken as wholly Zulu music. Before the advent of *umaskandi*, the music of the Zulu people was mainly vocal. The main form of accompaniment that they practised was the percussive sound of hand clapping. Unlike in central African countries, the drum was occasional. Weman says:

Sometimes the clapping begins only when the song is well under way. During the first period the listener may well imagine that ye has penetrated into the musical heart of the piece - then the clapping begins and all his pre-conceived ideas of "beat" are upset..... (Weman, 1960: 58).

The authentic singing form of the Zulu people was the *amahubo* singing style. There would be a slight variation of this form of vocal music for the different occasions. The main features that would make *ihubo* (singular) different from another were tempo, change of rhythm and the mood in which the song would be sung. For instance:

- (a) Princess Constance Magogo, born of the Zulu Royal family, was very versatile in that she was able to portray the different types of *amahubo* for the various occasions. She could sing war songs with the vigorous voice of a stalwart. She could also be very persuasive in her love songs.
- (b) In the Church of Nazareth, when they sing their hymns, they would say: "*Siyahuba*" (We are singing). They do their religious *amahubo* with a steady and dignified dance, especially the women.
- (c) There are *amahubo* for hunting. These contain a very strong rhythm, and are meant to motivate the hunters and to imbue them with the necessary strength and courage.
- (d) After a meat-eating party, the elderly men sit and sing *amahubo*. If *amahubo* are done, before and after a burial of a family head (*Umnumzane*), they are sung

steadily and with dignity. But if *amahubo* are sung after a meat eating ritual ceremony in memory of late family head, that is, *ukubuyisa* ritual ceremony (bringing home party), *amahubo* are accompanied with *ukugiya* (the war dance). These dances are very boisterous, tumultuous, and highly rhythmical, since they imitate war.

- (e) The monody that is done by the bride, that is, *inkondlo*<sup>121</sup> *kamakoti* (the bridal song) can be very steady meditative and contemplative, with a slow but definite rhythm. This bridal song is also referred to as *ihubo likamakoti* or *inkondlo yomntwana*.

While this bridal song can be a monody, it can also be in a call and response texture, in which case the bride sings the leading melody that elicits a response from the women who would be in the vicinity.

- (f) When men start to dance, they first sing *ihubo lendlamu* (song for dancing) (*Amahubo* Workshop by Mntwana Gideon Zulu<sup>122</sup>, waKwaZiphethe - at the University of Zululand - 16<sup>th</sup> April 2002).

After the above expositions of *amahubo* singing by an exponent of *amahubo* style of Zulu music, Mntwana waKwaZiphethe, it became apparent that, in the case of *umaskandi* music, *ihubo* picked up a rather very brisk and

<sup>121</sup> Weman, 1960: 88

<sup>122</sup> After an exposition of *amahubo* musical style at a workshop that was led by Mntwana waKwaZiphethe (Gideon Zulu), an exponent of *amahubo* music, it became apparent that *umaskandi* music is a form of *ihubo*, but presented in a rather brisk and forward-moving tempo. Even if an *ihubo* were to be sung slowly, if it is given a guitar accompaniment, the latter would have to be rather very lively because of the nature of the instrument.

forward thrust movement. This was because of the nature of the instrument, that is, the guitar. Even if *ihubo* (singular) could be sung very steadily, a guitar accompaniment for that song would still be quite brilliant, because of the nature of the accompanying instrument, which is a stringed instrument.

## 7.26 HYMNS OF THE NAZARETH CHURCH - DERIVED FROM AMAHUBO

The first hymns of the Church of Nazareth were published in 1940 and were referred to as either *amahubo* or *izihlabelelo zamaNazaretha* (Weman, 1960:111).

Ntuli also says:

*Asizukungena engqikithini yenkolo yaleli bandla,*  
We shall not get into the doctrinal details of this church,

*kodwa sizothinta kuwo amahubo awaqamba,*  
but we shall talk about the songs that he composed.

*Aqala ukugqama nakwabanye lapho esevela*  
They became significant to others when they appeared

*ebhukwini likaDube elithi "Ushembe".*  
In a publication by Dube "Ushembe".

*Aphuma ngokuphelele amahubo akhe ngabo 1940*  
They appeared fully - his songs-around 1940  
*ebhukwini elisihloko sithi "Izihlabelelo zamaNazaretha"*  
in a book entitled "Izihlabelelo zamaNazaretha"

*eliqukethe nemithandazo enhlobonhlobo.*  
Which contains various prayers.

*Yebo, phela izihlabelelo zikaShemnbe zinakho*  
Yes, Shembe's songs do possess

*okwejwayekile emaculweni amabandla amanye,*  
similarities, as found in other songs,

*njengokudumisa, ukubonga, ukunxusa, ukuzisola, nokweluleka.*  
Like praise-giving, thanksgiving, supplication,  
Regret, advices,

*Nawo lamaculo anamavesi, kodwa kuke kwenzeke*  
And verse music, but it happens

*ukuthi amavesi nemigqa kungabi yinto ewuhlobo*  
that verses and lines do not

*olulodwa kulo lonke iculo...*  
remain similar in the whole song...

*Ubugagu balezi "zinkondlo" busekuthini zonke*  
Musicality in these "poems" is found in that

*ziyahutshwa, zisinelwe, buphelele kahle-ke ububona.*  
They are sung, danced to, and thus their  
essence can be realized.

(D.B.Z.Ntuli, Ilanga, January 20-22.2000:15).

The purpose of including the above text is to show that the words "*ihubo*", "*iculo*" and "*isihlabelelo*", in the original Zulu culture, referred to one and the same type of music. The writer also says that these songs were sung and could also be accompanied with dance, as it is still the case with the Shembe religious services. Sundkler views these Shembe hymns as:

...Zulu dancing songs (Sundkler-1945: 1965).

Sundkler might be right in saying that there is no difference between them and Zulu traditional dancing songs. The emergence of the church of the Nazareth has a lot in common with the Christian. The very name "Nazareth" comes from the Christian Bible. The founding of this church by

Isaiah Shembe does seem to be a counteraction against the appearance of the Christian church, and, for Shembe, Zulu traditional hymns was the music that was ready to be used. This act by Shembe does look like an "invention of a tradition" as explained by Eric Hobsbawn and Terence and Ranger (1983). They define this concept as follows:

"Invented tradition" is taken to mean a set of practices normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally establish continuity with a suitable historic past (Hobsbawn and Ranger - 1983:1).

Hobsbawn and Ranger further say that "traditional societies" that have been dominated by Western tradition have been obliged to invent, institute or develop new networks, once in alien environment, resulting in the process of formalization and ritualization (1983: 3-4). So is the music of the Shembe Church. Their mainstay is the sound of the Zulu *amahubo*.

Coplan too has the same idea about the music of Church of the Nazareth. He sees these hymns as ordinary traditional Zulu music in that:

Many of the hymns have an African Call-and-response pattern, with the prophet singing the verse and the congregation responding with the chorus (Coplan - 1985: 81).

*Umaskandi* music practitioners sing the Zulu traditional songs because they want to sing Zulu music. They confirm that by putting on Zulu traditional regalia. By recreating a type

of a performance that embraces tradition a number of styles in one performance, *umaskandi* performers see themselves as custodians of Zulu traditional practice. Dunbar Moodie (1991) explains this practice as a defense against traumatic urban experiences. He says that, the practitioners ware of their cultural background, this idiom provides a projection of the ethnic symbols with the source of comfort amidst a foreign environment (Moodie - 1991: 91).

## 7.27 UMASKANDI - A PROJECTION OF ZULUNESS

*Umaskandi* gave the people hope during the years of depression and oppression. While it was born out of deprivation, it offered an opportunity to show the depth and resilience of human strength and spirit.

*Umaskandi* music underlines the liberation of the African ad the return of the cherished African musical arts as a whole, by incorporating instrument, voice, dance, and praise poetry. The guitar expounds the rhythm of the bow songs on *umakhweyana* instrument, which is the containment of time<sup>123</sup> in Zulu music. The singing sound of *amahubo* music have been well and comfortably accommodated in *umaskandi* music in the songs of Mqgashiyo Ndlovu. We read, in Xulu (1995:172):

When Mqgashiyo Ndlovu, a leading maskanda musician, who has been given the status of national musician by many Zulus, gave an instrumental backing to the popular *ihubo* song of King Cetshwayo, "Bamqal'oka Ndaba", in 1988, he prompted the Zulu monarch to write to Radio Zulu

<sup>123</sup> All Zulu music can be contained in the basic beat of makhweyana timing.

in Durban and indicate that by playing such a song on their airwaves they were then giving Zulu Radio a true Zulu Africanist identity. Since then, Mqgashiyo Ndlovu and many other *umaskandi* musicians have given instrumental backing to many *amahubo* songs and their subsidiaries of *izinkondlo* and war songs.

*Umaskandi* music gives the Zulu musician an opportunity to display his traditionalism and identity, which had been suppressed politically for many years. The skilful *izihlabo* introduction tells of his creativity in art. That the instrument is foreign did not stifle his inventiveness. The full-throated *umaskandi* song, on any title, allows him to announce his presence. The energetic dance displays the behavioural pattern of all young Zulu men, the pride of being a formidable *insizwa* (young man). The praise poetry allows him to introduce himself and his socio-musical world, with brimming self-confidence.

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## CHAPTER EIGHT

### 8.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

In conclusion, I would like to re-state that the main aim of this study was to examine the origin, musical conception and development of *Umaskandi*, an isiZulu musical style that could have atrophied because of the pressures of foreign cultures that came into the country during the scramble for Africa. The intention was also to look into the deeper philosophical content in the music. This would assist in the understanding and the conception of the spiritual relevance and, possibly, other folkloric and cultural ideas that sustained the music and gave it a driving force to live and be part of the social life of the Zulu people up to this day.

Secondly, It should also be noted that no other nationality would find value in isiZulu music better than the Zulu people themselves. That the expatriates condemned Zulu as primitive art was because it was they that could not understand the art. It would only be the creators of the art that would find relevance in their own musical creativity that was linked to the people's way of life that the foreigners would not know. It should, therefore, not be devastating to know that the music would not be appraised. Ignorance about parochial arts has now proved to be a disadvantage to the newcomers, who now find

themselves engulfed in multiculturalism of South African democracy.

## 8.2 THE CHARACTER OF THE MUSIC

Although a lot of things that gave *umaskandi* its character have been discovered, the central issue about *umaskandi* is its intrinsic nature and attributes, as explained in the following paragraphs:

### 8.2.1 THE TOPICAL NATURE OF UMASKANDI

The topical nature of Zulu music causes it to differ from other forms of music. A Zulu song is not just a song, but it is a way of life for the singer. A song in a Zulu social context is not independent, but is linked to the singer's frame of mind, because it speaks about the person's life. It is, therefore, part of his existence because it explains him. The following song is one of the examples of the connectedness of the Zulu people with their music:

*Wamuhle makoti;*  
You bride, are lovely;

*Wamuhl' usafika;*  
You are lovely, being a newcomer;

*Uzoth' ungajwayela,*  
When you get used to this place,

*Uyoyikhahlel'indoda.*  
You will kick your husband.  
(Interview - Phumlani Mdlalose 1<sup>st</sup> June 2002:  
[Unpublished *umaskandi* music]).

This song is topical. It speaks about a people's relationship. What the song alludes to, are happenings that do take place in social life. It is therefore, part of the people's lives. Therefore, it will not be easily removed from the people. That is how *umaskandi* music penetrates the people's social life. It is that reality and human substance, contained in the words of the song, that sustains the music and gives it a place in the lives of the people.

The Western instrument is an accompaniment and the real issue is the vocal music that tells the story. But once the tune has sunk into the people's minds, the tune alone can be enough to arouse the people into a frenzy and excitement. The words of the song will quickly come back, because the tune is linked to the words that they know. So, when *umaskandi* sings to the people, he talks about the people's lives. Therefore, the song of *umaskandi* may not die away too quickly.

### 8.2.2 UMASKANDI MUSICIAN

As it is the case in all the music activities of indigenous communities, *umaskandi* musicians play all the relevant roles in the plight of their musical style. They are the innovators, the promoters, and, finally the executors of their own art on the stage.

The song of *umaskandi* performers, about what was phenomenal, conjuring real events that took place, will always be phenomenal, whenever it is sounded. The music gains ground

in the minds of those that experienced and understood the significance of the original event. The length of time between the social event and the actual sounding of the song may not wipe away the meaning because the event was lived by those that hear the song, even though they may be hearing the song for the first time, long after the event.

The music was created by people who had resigned to leave their own lives, as the people had no opportunities for upward growth. The singers of this music are the people who have been on the receiving end of poverty and political prejudice. The Zulu people who hear the song of *umaskandi* understand the song although they may not have been in the mines. That they too have suffered in the hands of white rulers, although in a different environment, is enough to make them understand the suffering that took place in the mines. We can conclude that a white person who lived during the apartheid era may not comprehend the anguish that is aroused in a Zulu person by *umaskandi* music. Therefore, some good portion of the whole libretto of *umaskandi* music is derived from human ill-treatment and suffering or some form of anxiety.

### 8.2.3 UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

The study has shown that the negative circumstances in the politics and the economy of the apartheid government, one side, and the inherent social qualities of the music of the Zulu people, on the other side, helped to shape *umaskandi* into its present guise. The resilience of the people is observable in *umaskandi* music, that continues to sound in the face of other musics that are performed in the country.

*Umaskandi* was built on the social lives of the Zulu people. The wailing and moaning tones of *umaskandi* music are reminiscent on the cherished culture of the Zulu people that disintegrated on the onset of urbanization and industrialization. Without an insight into the social lives of the Zulu people as they were before the beginning of the culture of cities, one may not be able to perceive the sound of *umaskandi*. This idea also applies to those scholars who try to analyse Zulu music without an understanding of the social context of the music. In Zulu music, the sound of the music and the environment in which it is performed form one whole. Dealing with one aspect will not give a true view of the whole. This is also why song and dance are interwoven in Zulu music.

### 8.3 SUSTENANCE OF AFRICAN TRADITION

The study provides a record of the history of Zulu performance traditions that have been kept alive by those that refused to convert to 'western cultures. By accepting the guitar as their instrument, *umaskandi* musicians have proved a point that there are Zulus that are not merely resisting change, but are striving to maintain their precious arts, customs, moral values and beliefs.

#### 8.3.1 THE ROLE OF ARTS AND CULTURE IN PEOPLE'S LIVES

The issue of tradition in South Africa is still a major concern, first, for the government, that has to cultivate a new rationale and, secondly, for the citizens of the

country, that have to change their attitudes. By its very position in the lives of Africans, the music advocates for these two issues. By establishing a Department of Arts and Culture, the government has accommodated *umaskandi* into the reservoir of African arts. The RDP Arts and Culture policies aim to:

Affirm and promote the rich and diverse expression of South African culture - all people must be guaranteed the right to practise their culture, language, beliefs and customs .... (RDP - 1994: 69).

Above that, the government has spelt it out forthrightly that there has to be a culture of reconstruction, by the legislation of the RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme). The government's intentions are well explained:

Arts and Culture embrace custom, tradition, belief, religion, language, crafts, and all the art forms like music, dance, the visual arts, film, theatre, written and oral literature. Arts and Culture permeate all aspects of society and are integral parts of social and economic life, as well as business and industry based upon the arts (Ibid. - 1994: 69).

The ball is now in on the people's court, to give the arts their rightful place in society, without prejudice. Even with the case of the languages, the RDP states candidly that all should receive the same status, especially those of the previously oppressed communities. This suggests that the South African society should be aware of that there are language purists in all the language groups, who

would like to see that their respective languages are not abused.

The fact that *umaskandi* has to be given scholarly recognition, like all other musics also suggests that the scholarly knowledge of Africans, who have been empowering white scholars with the knowledge of African traditional arts, should be properly acknowledged.

It is not proper to refer to these practitioners as "illiterate", as some academics do, just because they cannot speak the language of the researcher and that they never attended a conventional school, although they are able to supply all the required knowledge. On the other side the ignorant researcher is referred to as "literate" even before he has acquired the knowledge, simply because he can read and write the English language.

Africans have been storing and passing knowledge from one generation to the other through the oral tradition and education for them was not measured through reading and writing. Therefore, knowledgeability for them should not be measured in another man's terms. That is equal to imposing another man's culture on them. Peter Berger says:

People will be able to liberate themselves from social and political oppression only if they first liberate themselves from thought patterns imposed by the oppressors (Berger - 1973: 176).

It may take some time to remove such thought patterns as have been mentioned by Berger, because, in many circumstances on both sides, that is, the oppressor and the

oppressed, the indoctrination has been entrenched for years. For instance, the majority of those schools that were formerly reserved for the white community have not introduced the teaching of African indigenous languages<sup>124</sup> even though Africans may be in the majority in those classrooms (Interview - Simon Mbokazi<sup>125</sup>: 28 February 2005). Those white school managers are depriving African learners the study of their own indigenous language, while both English and Afrikaans are in the curriculum. On the side of the formerly oppressed Africans, there are also still some school principals, music teachers, students and even music scholars who shun and resent the introduction of African music in schools. Such a notion by Africans shows the extent to which deprivation was ingrained in their minds.

Another example of entrenched oppression was seen when African *Amakhosi* turned against Phuzekhemisi Mnyandu, in spite of the latter's profile as musician, when he put to song<sup>126</sup> some consciousness-raising ideas about unfair taxation of Africans by Africans. Phuzekhemisi Mnyandu was protesting against a form of oppression that was then promoting itself, without the hand of the original oppressor (Isolezwe-18<sup>th</sup> January 2005: 9).

This study of *umaskandi* music is relevant in the social lives of all South Africans, because, besides providing affective enjoyment of music, it provides some cognition and philosophy about the lives of the Zulu people for the

<sup>124</sup> In Chapter 2 (29 {1} of the Bill of Rights (Act 108 of 1996), Everyone has a right to his language.

<sup>125</sup> Simon Mbokazi is the Deputy Director General in the Department of Education (KZN).

benefit of all South Africans and all other people of the world that interact with the Zulu people.

That *umaskandi* is a descendant of a Zulu style of performance, and that it is also a product of the blending of different national styles, the music communicates to us the spirit of sharing and the striving to go on with life, in spite of enormous difficulties. Africans, as whole, have experienced a lot of such impediments and barriers and they have been able to overcome them, to go on with life. In spite of the lot of atrocious acts of apartheid, Africans are still able to commiserate with those that meted such deeds. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is one institution that embraces such thoughts of the brotherhood of Africans. The history of *umaskandi*, which is a history of the success of the Zulu people, in spite of political and economical hardships, segregation, enforced separation of spouses, and domination by the powerful, should be commended as a symbol of strength and capacity building among Africans.

#### 8.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Generally, *umaskandi* music is aesthetic. It is pleasing to listen to. While it is entertaining musically, The libretto can be very informative. *Umaskandi* is an indictment to those South Africans who are not getting involved in local languages. Understanding IsiZulu leads to the understanding of the inner philosophy that is contained in the libretto and in the culture as a whole. In other

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<sup>126</sup> Song entitled IMBIZO (OCTIG 456) – He sings about the chiefs who are exploiting their subjects by calling for unauthorized taxes.

words, the contextual nature of the music is very significant. For that matter, researchers who do not speak the language of the researched communities are likely to miss a lot of relevant information.

To *umaskandi* musician, it has proved that it can be a means of livelihood and subsistence. It is just unfortunate that too many business people have commercialized with *umaskandi* music and not necessarily sharing the spoils with the musicians. Nevertheless, today's musicians are able to make much more income from this style than did the musicians of yesteryear. Musicians should, by all means, be part of the management of their performing contracts, just like Hhashelilmhlophe and Lena, his wife, have done.

This research on the seat of *umaskandi* music, which was the traditional structure of the social life of the Zulu people has made us aware of the significance of the Zulu homestead as an institution on its own. Each *umuzi* (homestead) was viewed with high regard for a its contribution towards the high moral virtues with which it maintained itself and also that would be transferred to its up and coming youth. All the individual homesteads of a community had an automatic schedule that linked them as an even greater establishment for the nurturing of the future society. Schapera says:

The laws of the Bantu are to a considerable extent inherent in the social system of the people..... They exist as rights and duties developed through the course of time out of man's efforts to adjust his behaviour in relation to his fellows and the environmental he shares and exploits with them;..... (Schapera - 1937: 197).

This was the original bedrock and foundation of the morality that is expressed in the libretto of *umaskandi* vocal songs. The musicians' topical subjects are derived from historic cultural order. The musicians are therefore, a megaphone that radiates any deviation or ruination of this moral code. Recommendations of this musical style are, therefore, made on the assumption that *umaskandi* academic merit does not end with music, but is also educative in moral issues.

#### 8.4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS - TO THE GOVERNMENT

*Umaskandi* music has elevated itself into an honourable position in the repertory of African arts. Although what is elaborate in the music is the entertainment aspect, there are few other elements that lend seriousness to the music. Participation in *umaskandi* could be by being part of the activity or by remaining as a consumer of the music. Thirdly, the role of intellectualizing about the philosophy of life of the creators of this music can be very momentous.

Music plays a big role in the Zulu society in that it accompanies all social activities. Therefore, a recommendation for *umaskandi* to schools is a recommendation to educate with music. A recommendation to the Department of tourism is to recommend the Department to inform with music.

#### 8.4.1.1 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE

The Department of Education and Culture stands at the top of the list of institutions to which this document should be recommended. Schools should come first in the promotion of *umaskandi* music, mainly because they are teaching institutions that took over from traditional educating teachings. It is the intention of the democratic government that arts education should be provided in all schools (RDP - 1994: 71).

Schools are expected to administer an Arts and Culture Programme from the school entry level up to lowest grade Nine (C2005 - Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools)). Since it is the government that prescribed these programmes, it is assumed that there is no compromise (Gazette No. 3434.Vol.4342, October 2002). *Umaskandi* as a people's musical practice can easily be part of this programme that requires dance, drama, music, and the visual arts.

The syllabus for South African History and for philosophy for Zulu people has always been incomplete in that the way of life of Zulu people, before the advent of the culture of cities, has never been consciously recommended, whereas, this is the history to which *umaskandi* music relates. All along, emphasis was made on the history of foreign countries, other than African history, in general, or, specifically, Zulu history. Though it is good to learn about other people's history, it is primary and relevant that a people should know their's first.

The history of the Zulu people is a history of communal life, a story of sharing, a story of civility, a history of morality, and, amongst many other topics, a history of *ubuntu* (humanness). In one of his collection, Mfazomnyama refers to the aids epidemic and warns people to behave responsibly in love matters (Mfazomnyama Khumalo - CDGSP 3051:5).

There is, but one point that should borne in mind in dealing with *umaskandi* in the classroom. That the social conditions under which *umaskandi* thrived were different from the ordinary classroom conditions, demands more prudence on the side of the educator. Although this and other similar traditional styles possess some applaudable educational qualities that would give them credence for inclusion in the classroom, the idea should be taken with great care. Taking them to the classroom would mean teaching the said arts in our existing conventional schools. In that case, we should anticipate that the final product could be something slightly different from what has been seen before. African traditional music relies greatly on the environment. It absorbs its warmth from the social activities of the people. If, therefore, the music is taken to academic institutions, it will be without the social flavour that it derives from its natural social environment, in spite of its academic merit. Welcome Nzimande says:

... the idea of a school for male voice singing that was supposed to operate at Ladysmith collapsed was very logical. *Isicathamiya* (male voice singing) is an urban musical style. It might not succeed in a country town, where people hurry to get home after work. In the big cities, the male singers had all the time. They had no immediate

family problems. They would not rush for taxis after work. They could rehearse every day, and, on Saturday they could afford to spend the whole night in a concert hall (Interview - Welcome Nzimande<sup>127</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> June 2003).

Welcome Nzimande was explaining how the school for male voice singing that Joseph Shabalala of the Ladysmith Black Mambazo had planned to establish at Estcourt could not take off. Nzimande went on to say that the social context under which Zulu music thrives should be taken into consideration whenever any form of programmes that involve the styles are planned. He eventually concluded by saying that:

...after working with traditional groups for so many years, the best school for them is their environment and that they are an institution on their own. To understand their music, which is performed in their environment, would also enable us to understand their philosophy of life (Interview - Welcome Nzimande 15<sup>th</sup> June 2003).

Welcome drew these conclusions from his experience, having worked with traditional musicians for much of his working life. The essence in the practice of Zulu traditional music is in its social context, and, that has a bearing on both the performer and the listener. What is intended for academic considerations should also be scrutinized academically.

Like all other academic materials, *umaskandi* may not be precluded from the classroom for the reason of the likely

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<sup>127</sup> Nzimande, who has been employed by the South African Broadcasting Corporation for more than thirty years, used to record Zulu traditional music and has been in touch with many groups and with all Zulu genres. He is now the Head of Radio Zulu in /Durban.

shortcoming that it may show. Once it has been administered, it should be supervised and also be evaluated, like all other learning programmes (Leonard and House - 1972: 79).

This is, however, a great challenge to those ethnomusicologists and other academics in higher education who have been involved with the indigenous people's traditional music without fully getting involved in the overall people's culture. The study of *umaskandi* may not be complete without the study of the language of the practitioners, for the understanding of their philosophy of life.

#### 8.4.1.2 ARTS AND CULTURE OUTSIDE SCHOOLS

The Department of Education also deals with Arts and Culture outside schools, that is, for the benefit of those people who are not in the classroom. *Umaskandi* music can be profitably used and be readily incorporated into their modus operandum, within the greater public, for the promotion of the arts and cultures of all the people of South Africa. This department is also responsible for rebuilding the people's cultural ideals, belief systems, and re-establishing a sense of national identity. The oral nature of *umaskandi* can render it accessible to many people.

#### 8.4.1.3 DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND CULTURE

This document is very relevant to the Department of Arts and Culture. The document is about the art of music that is firmly established in the culture of the people. The

performance of *umaskandi* embraces skill, tradition, belief, and oral literature, all of which have been identified as areas that need to be improved by the government. The Reconstruction and Development Programme documents underlines these needs:

Arts and Culture embrace custom, tradition, belief, religion, language, crafts, and all the art-forms like music, dance, the visual arts..  
 .....written and oral literature (RDP - 1994:69).

The document also states very articulately that:

Priority must be given to those people and communities previously denied access to these resources (Ibid. 1994:69).

That *umaskandi* is practised orally poses an even greater challenge to those who prepare the curriculum for African Arts, because, *umaskandi* institution, as a people's art, has stood its own ground and proved that it has a place in Zulu society.

#### 8.4.1.4 DEPARTMENT OF ARTS, CULTURE, AND TOURISM

The Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism deals with, inter alia, music as part of artistic development inside and outside the classroom situation. They need to be very discreet in projecting truly African arts and cultures to tourist, from many societies. *Umaskandi* has long established itself, first, as a form of entertainment and, secondly, as an epitome of Zulu social life and identity.

In the past years, the apartheid government would showcase only the White people's cultures and the indigenous arts and cultures would be presented, if ever, as fillers of empty gaps, who would be withdrawn when the main performers returned on stage. Among those white people who found interest in African arts, very few would boldly appreciate the arts of black South Africans. The destructive laws of apartheid had taught the white non-Africans to repress their aesthetic sensitivity when it came to parochial arts. They had, therefore, learnt to fight against themselves. The democratic government did not release only the imprisoned politicians, but it also emancipated the human spirit in those that had imprisoned their minds. The arts and cultures of all South Africans, especially those that were anathematized, may now be practised and be appreciated by all those who get inspired by them. The Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism has thus a large pool of creations from which it can showcase South Africa.

*Umaskandi* was born out of Zulu strife against foreign cultural offensive. The music nurtured itself in spite of odds, and has survived to see its own flowering. But more importantly, it is the re-surgings of the human spirit that matters.

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## APPENDIX A

## ALPHABETICAL LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

| NAME                  | VENUE                               | DATE                                        |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Buthelezi Masonto     | Westville                           | 24th July 2001                              |
| Farouk Bams Furniture | 158 Queen St Dbn                    | 10 <sup>th</sup> July 2002                  |
| Gumede Siphiwo        | Umlazi                              | 20 <sup>th</sup> July 2001                  |
| Hadebe Mandla         | KwaDlangezwa                        | 3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2004               |
| Hadebe Ntombi         | Durban                              | 19 <sup>th</sup> June 2004.                 |
| Jungdas Subramaney    | Durban                              | 7 <sup>th</sup> July 2001                   |
| Khanyile G.T.         | KwaDukuza                           | 6 <sup>th</sup> July 2001.                  |
| Khumalo Mfazomnyama   | Nongoma                             | 21\05 & 22\05\1996                          |
| Khumalo Zama          | KwaDlangezwa                        | 19 <sup>th</sup> January 2003               |
| Khumalo Nomsa         | KwaDlangezwa                        | 19 <sup>th</sup> January 2004               |
| Kubheka Gilbert       | Lamontville                         | 10 <sup>th</sup> July 2002                  |
| Legkanyane S'thembile | Lamontville                         | 10 <sup>th</sup> July 2002                  |
| Luthuli Themba        | KwaDlangezwa                        | 20 <sup>th</sup> January 2003               |
| Mahlinza Michael      | KwaDlangezwa                        | 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2003                   |
| Majozi Maureen        | Durban                              | 20 <sup>th</sup> August 1999                |
| Masango Linda         | Durban                              | 7 <sup>th</sup> August 2001                 |
| Masondo Thulani       | Umlazi                              | 20 <sup>th</sup> July 2001                  |
| Mathenjwa Langa       | KwaDlangezwa                        | 6 <sup>th</sup> August 2003                 |
| Mathunjwa Ntokozo     | Salvation Army -<br>Matigulu Church | 7 <sup>th</sup> August 2003                 |
| Mavundla Jerome       | Lamontville                         | Years 1977 - 2003                           |
| Mbanjwa Irene         | Durban                              | 19 <sup>th</sup> June 2004                  |
| Mayeza Busi C.        | Kwa Mashu                           | 19 <sup>th</sup> June 2004                  |
| Mdlalose Phumlani     | KwaDlangezwa                        | 31/5 & 1/6 2002                             |
| Mkhize Khaba          | Mbali                               | 20 <sup>th</sup> January 2003               |
| Mkhwanazi Bhekithemba | KwaDlangezwa                        | 7 <sup>th</sup> July 2002                   |
| Mkhize Providence     | Hillcrest                           | 4 <sup>th</sup> July 2004                   |
| Mngoma Khabi          | KwaDlangezwa                        | 1 <sup>st</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup> July 1998 |

|                                           |                              |                                            |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Mnyandu Phuzekhemisi                      | Mzinto\Nsepheni<br>KwaDumisa | 26\27 Oct.1995<br>10\11\12 Apr. 2004       |
| Msimanga Paul                             | Durban\Raillway<br>Hostel    | 30 <sup>th</sup> July 2000                 |
| Mthiyane Simon                            | KwaDlangezwa                 | 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2003                 |
| Mvelase Michael<br>Jilimba                | Umlazi UNIT E                | 16 <sup>th</sup> June 2001                 |
| Namba Mthunzi                             | Durban                       | 4 <sup>th</sup> July 2004                  |
| Ndlazi Godfrey                            | Durban                       | 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2000                 |
| Ngcobo<br>Hhashelimphe                    | KwaBiyela                    | 25 <sup>th</sup> 26 <sup>th</sup> Oct.2000 |
| Ngcobo Simon (S.D.)                       | Pinetown                     | 21 <sup>st</sup> August 1999               |
| Ngema Vusi                                | University of<br>Zululand    | 4 <sup>th</sup> July 2004                  |
| Nkosi Michael                             | KwaDlangezwa                 | 9 <sup>th</sup> July 2002                  |
| Nokwe Alfred                              | KwaMashu                     | 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2004.                |
| Nxele Nkalipho                            | Dbn Playhouse                | 23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2004             |
| Nzimande Welcome                          | Durban                       | 15 <sup>th</sup> June 2002                 |
| Pienaar Steve                             | KwaDlangezwa                 | 16 <sup>th</sup> June 2002                 |
| Shange Moses                              | Buka\Melmoth                 | 15 <sup>th</sup> December 2004             |
| Shabalala Joseph                          | Durban                       | BETWEEN 1989-2000                          |
| Sithole Clement                           | Vryheid-Inkamana             | 10 <sup>th</sup> August 2004               |
| Sithole Dalton                            | Escombe                      | 19 <sup>th</sup> June 2004.                |
| Thembele Alex. J.                         | Clermont                     | 10 <sup>th</sup> July 2002                 |
| Thusi Brian                               | KwaDlangezwa                 | 30 <sup>th</sup> Nov. 2003                 |
| Xaba Duncan                               | Lamontville                  | 10 <sup>th</sup> July 2002                 |
| Yeni Duduzela                             | KwaDlangezwa                 | 29 <sup>th</sup> June 2003                 |
| Zulu BZ (Mntwana)                         | Dbn Airport                  | 24 <sup>th</sup> October 2004              |
| Mthethwa J. (Rev.)<br>IBandla lakwaShembe | Mtubatuba Reserve            | 19 <sup>th</sup> 20 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2004 |

Some of the interviewees, especially the musicians, were visited more than once, and, because of space, not all the dates were noted in the list. These were people like Khabi

Mngoma, Phuzekhemisi Mnyandu, Mfazomnyama Khumalo, Phumlani Mdlalose, Paul Msimanga, Dalton Sithole, Clement Sithole and Joseph Shabalala.

## APPENDIX

## GLOSSARY OF ZULU WORDS

The hyphen has been used in order to show the article and other forms of grammatical inflections that usually go with the stem of the word in isiZulu language.

**I-BANDLA**

A group of men that have come formally come together for a single purpose. The word is also used to refer to a refer to a church denomination.

**AMA-BHACA**

This is a community of Zulu people who are found in the Southern-most part of KwaZulu-Natal. They have been influenced by the Pondo people of the Eastern Cape. Their performing style is known as *isiBhaca*.

**AMA-BHINCA**

These are traditional Zulu people who are still sticking to their original rural life and customs and have not responded to the influence of other cultures, especially in matters of dress.

**UKU-BUYISA**

Literally, to bring back. The *uku-buyisa* party involves the slaughtering of a beast. The party is held in memory of a late head of a family, to bring his spirit back to his home and family.

**AMA-GODUKA**

These are urban workers who travel home regularly, especially during week-ends and month-ends or on any convenient holiday. Those that have stuck to city life view this idea negatively and they refer to the former as *ama-goduka* (home-goers) from the verb *goduka* (go home).

**AMA-HUBO**

*Amahubo* is the plural form of the word '*hubo*', a word that refers to a Zulu song in general. The word refers to the original and authentic vocal music of the Zulus. *Ama-hubo* style is a form in which the Zulus performed their vocal music, before the advent of the Western hymn or diatonic four-part harmony that was introduced to Africans by the Western church.

*Hubo* would be sung at all social occasion. But there would always be a reasonable difference between the songs of the different occasions. *Hubo* for any particular would be identified mainly by its libretto. The supporting features would be the mood, emotional content of the words and manner of body movement. Since all Zulu music is functional, the words of *hubo* always referred to the nature of the function for which it was sung. The mood, as mentioned above, would also tell the nature of the function.

In some cases, the words of *hubo* are onomatopoeic in that they would tend to echo the mood of the event for which the song is sung. The song would contain a lot of ideophones, that is, words whose sounds suggest the manner in which the event happened. The very word "*hubo*" has been used

onomatopoeically in explaining how water starts to boil in a heated kettle. The word, in this instance, is used in its verb form: *Amanzi aya [huba]* - (*The water is making the "huba" sound*). Metaphorically, the water is humming (Interview - Thembinkosi Tsotetsi - Madadeni: 12<sup>th</sup> July 2004).

On the main, most of *ama-hubo* possess some ancestral linkages in that they can be a prayer or a plea to either the ancestors or *umvelinqangi* (God). For instance girls' might not sing *ama-hubo* without first bowing their heads, which was an act of *uku-hlonipha* (respect) system. Secondly, when men went to war, there would be a form of praying by singing a certain *ihubo* just before they started their expedition. Besides war songs and hunting songs, *ama-hubo* were generally swave, steady and dignified, especially those for the elderly men and women (Interview - Nhlanhla Mahlaba - Madadeni: 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2004).

In spite of the steady rhythm, the music is not without a regular and steady rhythm that can always be felt in the performance of the style. In this rhythm one should not expect the Western 'ben marcato' pulse.

### **AMA-KHORASI**

This term refers to the new style of Zulu choral singing, where the singing of Western hymns has been Africanized. Hymns have been drawn into Zulu rhythm and a Call & Response texture. Zulu features are applied without necessarily translating the words.

**AMA-KHOLWA**

The verb '*Kholwa*' means to believe. *Ama-kholwa* (noun) were those African people who had been converted to believe in the Christian faith. But, the unconverted traditional people referred to both the civilized and the Christianized as *Amakholwa*.

**ESI-GCAWINI**

This is a locative. At a selected and open arena, wedding parties would converge for the conclusion of the wedding by the giving out of gifts to the family of the bridegroom and his other relatives by the bride. All the final customs, rituals and formalities would be concluded at this spot referred to as *isi-gcawu*, an open place where all the public can witness the detailed agreements about the *lobolo* that was agreed upon by the two families.

This word '*isigcawu*' was also used for the open arena where cases of a king's subjects were tried. It was on that open arena that the public would witness the proceedings.

In today's artistic world, the word refers to an open arena where dramatized stage plays are presented.

**E-MSAMO**

This is a locative, identifying the innermost area inside a hut, against the back wall. The significance of this area is that it was where the ancestors were supposed to be accessed.

## U-MASKANDI

The practitioners of the music refer to it as *u-maskandi*. Whether one is referring to the music, the practitioner, or the whole concept, they refer to it as *u-maskandi*.

People in Gauteng, and also in Newcastle<sup>1</sup>, refer to the style as *maskanda* (Interview - Caesar Ndlovu: 4<sup>th</sup> December 2004).

According to Doke, Malcom, Sikakana and Vilakazi (1990), the word '*maskandi*' or '*maskanda*' comes from the Afrikaans word, '*musikant*', which means a leader of a sing-song.

David Coplan, who uses the word '*maszkanda*' confirms that the word is derived from Afrikaans '*musikant*' (Coplan - 1985: 267).

Generally speaking, *u-maskandi* is a performer on an instrument. But, for the practitioners the meaning does not end there. They go on to say that *u-maskandi* is the instrumentalist that performs in the Zulu neo-traditional style that has been developed and accepted by this cult. In other words, he has to perform *u-maskandi* music in the manner in which other *u-maskandi* musicians know the genre. He, therefore, has to identify himself by his music. *U-maskandi* purists are very clear about the sound of *u-maskandi* music. No matter how efficient the instrumentalist may be, they will not take him for a *u-maskandi* musician if his music is different. Recently (January 2004) *umaskandi* performers, "Phuzekhemisi" Mnyandu of Dumisa and Phumlani Mkhize of

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<sup>1</sup> The speech of the people in Northern part of KwaZulu-Natal, like Newcastle, is greatly influenced by that of the people of Gauteng.

KwaDlangezwa, disapproved of the fusing of *u-maskandi* music with house music that was done by Hhashelimhlophe Ngcobo and the popular disc jockey, Oskido (Muntuza 2002). They feel that the combination affects the *u-maskandi* element in the music. They do not want to dance to *u-maskandi* but they want to listen to it (Phumlani Mdlalose, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2003).

#### **I-DLIWA**

This is said of somebody who is not eloquent in speaking or explaining a point clearly. This word also embraces persons who just cannot be artful in presenting or performing an act. Subsequently, such a person cannot sing well. He is, therefore, known as an *I-dliwa*.

#### **I-BHIMBHI**

This is said of a person who is unable to sing within a given key or tune. Literally, the verb '*bhimbha*' means to sing wrongly. Therefore, the noun '*I-bhimbi*' is a person who sings, but wrongly. What happens is that the verb is taken further and used metaphorically to refer to a person who is unable to do the right thing at the right time. It could be singing an inappropriate song at a function or doing anything that is not within the prevailing context.

The two words, '*I-dliwa*' and *I-bhimbi* are related. The main difference is that an '*I-dliwa*' simply does not have the ability or skill, while the main problem with *I-bhimbi* is that he uses his skill inappropriately.

#### **UBU-GAGU**

Literally the words refers to somebody who is able to sing well and is able to take up musical leadership, especially

where there is a group singing. Beyond that, the word is also used metaphorically to refer to someone who has skill, conciseness and precision in speaking or elucidating a point. This is a person who is able to arrange his ideas succinctly in a speech and is also articulate and accurate in his presentation.

### **ISI-GINGCI**

This is an isiZulu name for the word guitar. There is a belief that the name of the instrument is onomatopoeic in that it is an ideophone, "*Gingci*", a sound that is produced by "vamping" the guitar (Interview - Mpumelelo Mbatha: 5<sup>th</sup> December 2004).

### **I-GOGOGO**

Literally, this word means a tin. In the African traditional music world, the word refers to a homemade guitar, which would be constructed by using a five-litre oil can and plastic fishing life for strings.

### **UKU-NCINZA**

This refers to one-melody playing in the guitar, that is, playing one string at a time, sometimes referred to as the "picking style" playing in chords. This type of playing produces a melodic execution of the music, unlike "vamping", which produces harmony.

**UKU-VAMBA**

This is the playing of the guitar in chords, which is referred to as "vamping" in English. This noun is built from the verb "*vamba*".

**I-BRIJI**

This comes from the English word, "Bridge". In guitar playing, Africans refer to the capostato of the guitar as the bridge, whereas the real bridge is found towards the base of the strings, just before the point at which the strings are tied to the body of the instrument. By using the "Bridge" the player can transpose the pitch of the whole instrument without having to tune each individual string.

**I-NDLAMU**

This name refers to an isiZulu traditional dance that is done mainly by males. It consists of lifting a leg high in the air before stamping heavily on the ground. The manner of stamping may differ between the different race groups. For instance, there can be *isi-Nguni* style, the *isiBhaca* style, and the *isi-Zingili* style. All these are variations of *I-ndlamu*.

**I-NGOMA**

This is an umbrella term for a variety of song and dance styles. *I-ngoma* may be either in singing or in dance. In singing the word basically refers to a song. *Ingoma* is also a form of organized and choreographed movement, which expatriates may refer to as a dance. To the Zulus, this may be a dance, to a certain extent, that is, when the movements are meant to express joviality.

Similar movements may also be performed as a form of invocation and devotion, as it is the case with the worshippers of *I-bandla lakwa-Shembe*. In that context, to them those movements are a show of reverence to a Supreme Being. Such a solemn performance would be referred to as *ukusina ingoma*.

#### **UKU-SHAYA INGOMA**

Metaphorically, the term *uku-shaya Ingoma* or to "hit *I-ngoma*" means "to dance *I-ngoma* dance". In the case of *uku-shaya I-ngoma*, the word refers to a dance. "*Uku-shaya*" suggests some personal enjoyment and delight in the performance.

#### **UKU-VUMA INGOMA**

In this instance, the expression means to sing *I-ngoma*, in which case the word refers to a song. In this instance, *ukuvuma ingoma* may refer to both the initiating or leading a singing of a certain song or the responding to an already initiated song, by giving an answering phrase, whether vocally or even in a physical response. This explains that the Call & Response texture in Zulu music may not be confined to vocal singing only. A call can, therefore, be initiated by dancing it, and a response (*uku-vuma*) can be made by a physical gesture.

#### **UKU-HLABA I-NGOMA**

Literally, this means to "stab" the *I-ngoma*, which is a music style of the Zulu people. Metaphorically, the expression *uku-hlaba* means "to start" or "to initiate" or "to lead" a

dance or a song performance. There is also *uku-hlaba* which would mean to hit hard on the ground when dancing the *I-ngoma*.

#### **UM-BHINO**

These are songs that are sung by peer girls to one of their age group member who has had her first menstruation. The ritual takes place at her home and her peers sing these sarcastic songs as a warning that she has to behave properly as she grows into the new stage.

#### **I-NGCEKEZA**

These songs are also similar to *umbhino* songs in that they are sung for the first menstruation ritual and are sung by girls only. Although the two are in the same category, *Ingcekeza* libretto is not as harsh as *umbhino* songs.

#### **UM-BONDO**

This is a party or a ceremony that follows a *cela* ceremony. This noun, a metaphor, is formed from the verb '*bonda*', which literally means 'to amalgamate'. This function is a show of appreciation, by the girl who has been offered a marriage proposal, through *uku-cela* ceremony, to offer gifts of food to the young man's family. Food comes in form any portable foodstuff, and even pots of brewed beer that is ready for consumption. There can be pumpkins, bananas, madumbe, mangoes, (or any fruit in season). The even has to be very elaborate, with the foodstuffs carried on the head by the supporting girls from the *isigodi* of the prospective bride. The whole spectacle becomes very dramatic as the girls file in a single line towards the young man's home with their items carried on the head,

following each other in a long line on the winding footpaths.

This function also offers an opportunity for wooing to the young and not-yet married girls and boys to socialize.

#### **U-MUZI**

In the Zulu tradition, *umuzi* did not refer to just one hut, but the whole homestead, which consists of several huts within one yard, usually with a cattle kraal at the centre. Then such a man would be honourably referred to as *umnumzane*. As a metaphor, *ukuba nomuzi* (to have *umuzi*) means to be married.

#### **U-MGQASHIYO**

This is a syncretic urban style that combines both vocal and instrumental music. There is a lot of singing of Zulu songs and dancing. The singing group can be male or female of both. The accompaniment, which consists of guitars, saxophones, and keyboards, has a very strong percussion section. The accompaniment may not do without bass guitar. The noun '*mgqashiyo*' was derived from the high jumpy movements that are performed by the singers\dancers. This is the type of music that was sung by "Mahlathini" Nkabinde and the Mahotella Queens.

#### **U-MBHAQANGA**

In this style there is more of instrumental sound than voice. The instrumental side highlights the fusion of African jazz, American jazz, and a blended African melody and rhythm. It is nicknamed African maize bread, which is

the main ingredient, in a cluster of items that make up the cooked *mbhaqanga* bread.

### **I-MPUCUKO**

Usually, when Zulu people spoke of *I-mpucuko* they would refer to Western civilization. They would not refer to their own cultural advancement.

### **ISI-BONGO**

This word, in singular form, refers to a person's surname. (The underlined "S" places it in the singular form).

### **ISI-KHOLWA**

While *Ama-kholwa* are Christians, *Isi-kholwa* is a way of life or a way of doing things "like the Christians do".

### **IZI-BONGO**

Generally speaking, the word, in the plural, refers to praise poetry, which is the basis of poetry among the Zulu people. (The underlined "Z" places it in the plural form). Literally, *izibongo* is also the plural for surname.

### **I-KATI \ AMA-KATI**

Literally, this word means cat\cats. In guitar playing, there are little pins that look like a cat's paws and that are plugged into all the fingers that are involved in the playing of the instrument. It is with these "paws" that the strings of the guitar are plucked. It appears that these gadgets got their name from their position on the player's fingers and also from their striking function.

**IZ-IHLABO, I-NTELA OR I-SAWUNDI**

All these three words refer to one and the same thing or musical feature in *u-maskandi* music playing. They all refer to the introductory music that is played by *u-maskandi* musician when he starts playing any song. This music provides a warming up of the performer, before the main song is sounded. An important aspect in this preamble is that the introductory music suggests the style that the performer is going to employ in his execution. The sound will tell whether the style to be used is Mzansi, isi-Zulu, Isi-Shameni, or isi-Chunu.

**IZI-HLABO**

Metaphorically used in music to identify a music style to be used in the forthcoming song. As explained above). Literally, it comes from *uku-giya*, a martial art, which is shadow fighting. In the act of *uku-giya*, the actor exhibits his style and courage at warfare, against an imagined opponent, like shadow boxing.

**I-SAWUNDI**

Literally comes from the English the word "sound". By this word, the Zulu musician refers to the sounding and establishing of the key, motif of melody, rhythm and the style that make up his item.

**I-NTELA**

Literally, the word comes from the isiZulu word, *uku-thela* (flowering). This is an announcement of the performer's ultimate style.

**ISI-ZULU**

Literally, the word means 'Of the Zulu people', or 'Like the Zulu people'. Zulu *Umaskandi* musicians have a performing style that was contrived by them and it is referred to as 'isiZulu'. The style is based on a certain formula in which the strings tuned. 'Isi-Zulu' is that sequence in which the strings are arranged.

**U-MZANSI**

This is isi-Zulu performing style (singing, dancing and instrumental) that is practised in Southern Natal - from areas like Bulwer, Donnybrook, Umzinto, Mkhomazi, Port Shepstone, Harding, Mzimkhulu, and Ixopo. The most popular of these style s is the umzansi dance, where the foot is not lifted more than fifteen centimetres above the ground, but the thud has to be suddenly very hard.

**ISI-SHAMENI**

In music parlance, this word refers to any musical style of the Shameni people. Shameni River is a little trickle in the Colenso district of KwáZuluNatal. Literally, the word means "like the Shameni people". A dance, a tuning style, or a chord sequence, can be said to be in IsiShameni style.

**ISI-CHUNU**

This word refers to the musical styles of Ama-chunu, a clan of the Zulu race in and around the Pomeroy area. This style was popularized by Sipho Mchunu, who plays *umaskandi* music on a guitar.

**ISI-BHACA**

The word refers to the musical styles of the Ama-Bhaca, a certain group of Southern KwaZulu-Natal Zulu people who, historically, isolated themselves from the rule of the Zulu dominion.

#### **ISI-POYINANDI**

This refers to an instrumental music style, which bears overtones of urbanization. Amongst those that employed this style was Nkindlane Buthelezi, an *umaskandi* musician from the Empangeni area. There are not too many variations in this pattern.

#### **ISI-MPONDO**

This is a musical style or a performing art or manners of performing any social act in the style of the people of the Eastern Cape. This originates from districts like Bizana, Flagstaff, Lusikisiki and Qumbu. The style is evident in both vocal and instrumental music. Literally, the word means 'like the Pondo people do'.

#### **I-FESI**

This refers to the highest-pitched string on the guitar. *U-Maskandi* musicians refer to this as the first string. "*Ifesi*" is the Isi-Zulu version of "first".

#### **DABULI-FESI**

This was derived from the word: "Double First String". The Zulu performers of *u-maskandi* music would use a guitar with a doubled first-string set, while other strings would remain single. Initially, this would be done as a cunning tactic to outdo the others in competitive performances. Amongst

the earlier musicians to use this technic was Nkindlane Buthelezi who came from KwaBiyela district in the region of Empangeni.

### **UKU-SETHA**

This is an expression that is used by Zulus for 'tuning the strings'. The expression is derived from 'Setting the strings'.

### **I-ZAGA**

The singular form of this word is *I-saga*. *I-zaga* are poetic verses that are highly rhythmic and are recited energetically, with enthusiasm and verve, as accompanying rhythm for *uku-giya* war dance performance. They are in call and response form. Although there were common verses that could be recited by any one, it was always a pride for each participant to be identified by his or her verse. Women too, do recite these verses. *I-saga* could also be used as a form of attack, to a specific targeted person.

*I-saga* (singular) can be sounded as a prelude to a certain song. While some form of singing, especially in the singing of war songs, *I-saga* can be sounded as a way of bringing the song to the end. So, the start of *I-saga* will suggest the immediate end of *I-hubo*.

### **I-QHIKIZA**

A chaperone is the elder girl in the age-group of girls. She is expected to act as a guide and educator for the younger girls. She is expected to play a role of an advisor to the younger girls.

**ISI-BHINCA**

This is an adverb formed from the verb '*bhinca*'. The word means to live the life of an unconverted African, who has not been influenced by the new cultures. This word is sometimes used negatively to describe Africans or any person who has not been cultured, in the Western sense.

**ZI-BAMBE, UKUZI-BAMBA, OR MAKE UZI-BAMBE**

Literally, this means "hold them" or "just hold them". The literal meaning of this expression is derived from the stick-fighting culture, where the fighter should "hold (*zi-bambe*) his sticks firmly", lest they be hit and thrown off his hands by the opponent. The metaphor is an aesthetic expression that informs someone to perform in an artistic manner, whatever the performed art is.

**UKU-CELA**

*Um-celo* or *uku-cela*, a visit by a mediator from the young man's family to negotiate with the girl's parents or guardians, was one such event that opened the gates for a wedding.

To *cela* means to ask for something. When this word is used in relation to the marriage practice of the Zulus, it means to ask for permission to marry a girl. *Uku-cela* is generally referred to as *uku-cela isi-hlobo e-sihle* (Making a plea for the establishment of a good relationship). This is true because, in the culture, once the two were married, the relationship between the families would become very strong.

This relationship would stretch to embrace generally the people of the two districts that were involved.

In Zulu culture, it is only the young man's family that could proceed with the act of *uku-cela* or *uku-cela i-ntombi* (make a plea to marry a girl) by approaching the girl's family, and not vice versa. The envoy who would be sent to do the negotiations would be somebody who would be known for his eloquence and who would be ready to go into long debates about the whole issue.

There has been a good number of cases where the girl's parents have been very hostile, usually at the initial stages of the issue. But this attitude has been viewed to be a way of underpinning the integrity and responsibility of the bridegroom and his family to the whole issue of removing a girl from her family to be part of the new homestead.

#### **UKU-DLIWA ZI-NDUNDUMA**

Literally this means - "to be swallowed by the sand dunes or mine dumps that are extracted from the mine holes". Africans who went to work in the mines or in the mining cities and who eventually did not return to their original traditional homes in rural areas were said to have been 'eaten by the said mine dumps'. This is a negative expression by people who feel that the said people failed to come home to enjoy the benefits of their earnings with their relatives.

**U-MANYANO**

Simply, this is a guild. Among Africans, this is a women's guild and such groups are found in the Methodist Church of South Africa. The noun is formed from the Xhosa verb '*manyana*', which means 'come together' or 'unite'.

**U-MNSINSI WOKU-ZI-MILELA**

Literally, "A lucky-bean tree that sprouted on its own". This refers to indigenous people, who were not posted by anyone in the area and who simply found themselves and their ancestors living in that particular area. This is an expression of a strong attachment and belonging to one's area. Phuzekhemisi, a renowned performer of *u-maskandi*, uses this expression when he describes his own area, known as Nsepheni, in the district of Dumisa.

**ABO-NTANGA \ AWO-NTANGA**

This term refers to one's equals, that is, those people who are in the same age group. *Uku-buthwa* (regimentation or classifying people according to their age-levels) transcended the whole society, for the sake of social identification, primarily by age. The word *izi-ntanga*, or *awo-ntanga* or *abo-ntanga* is in the plural form. The singular is *u-ntanga*. Each person was expected to socialize with his equals or peers. In this set-up, it was easy for any new information to circulate within the groups for everybody's information. That was learning was achieved.

Various forms of education that impacted directly on the life of the person were provided by the *izi-ntanga* system. This refers to issues like *ubu-ngane* (childhood behaviour), *ubu-ntombi* and *ubu-nsizwa* (education of young women and young

men, with emphasis on sex education), *ubu-fazi* (womanhood), manhood (*ubu-doda*), and, finally, *ubu-ntu*, (humanness) which embraced all levels or ages of a person's life, with peer awareness at every level.

The *izi-ntanga* (peer group classification) was a form of administering the traditional form of education among the Zulu people. Following the initial home environment of an infant, the growing child would then be thrown over to relate to her/his equals within and also outside the homestead. Peer-group education was not autonomous, but the general norms of the society were well spelt out for all levels. Merriam explains this form of education:

The confusion for most Westerners lies in the distinction between education and schooling: the lack of formal institutions in no way suggests that education, in the broadest sense, is absent (Merriam, 1964:146).

#### **U-MEMULO**

A cattle is slaughtered for this party. The father puts up this party for daughter when she comes of age. The idea is to indicate publicly that the girl is now marriageable.

#### **UM-SEBENZI**

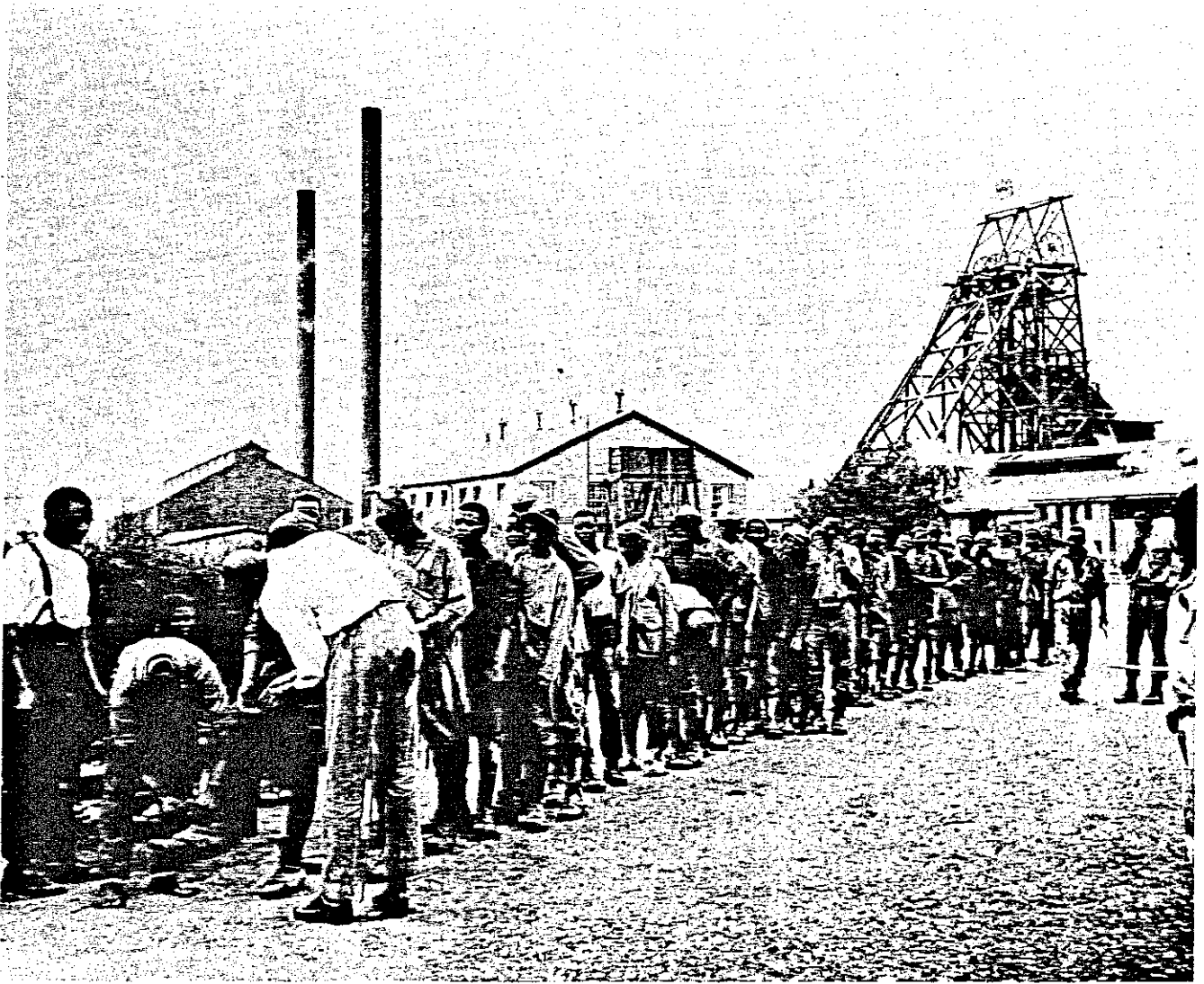
Literally this means "a function". The word refers to the slaughtering of a beast - for a party that relates to the ancestors.

**HLABELELA** Sing, formally.

**U-DODANA** This is a men's guild, especially in the Methodist Church.

|                     |                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>HLONIPHA</b>     | To be respectful. Be courteous                                                                                   |
| <b>I-BHESHU</b>     | Loin skin-worn by men - covering mainly the buttocks - as traditional regalia of Zulus.                          |
| <b>I-CULO</b>       | A song or a tune.                                                                                                |
| <b>I-KHETHO</b>     | Bridegroom's party - at a wedding.                                                                               |
| <b>I-MBONGI</b>     | Praise poet.                                                                                                     |
| <b>I-LOBOLO</b>     | Bride-wealth. The verb: to forward this bride-wealth is lobola.                                                  |
| <b>I-MBIZO</b>      | A conference.                                                                                                    |
| <b>I-MFILJI</b>     | Mouth organ.                                                                                                     |
| <b>I-MVUNULO</b>    | Traditional garb or finery.                                                                                      |
| <b>I-NDLELA</b>     | Rural path - Thus, in musical part-singing, this is a melody.                                                    |
| <b>I-NKONDLO</b>    | Poetry, especially that which has deeper poetical expressions.                                                   |
| <b>I-NSIZWA</b>     | A fully-grown young man.                                                                                         |
| <b>I-NTOMBI</b>     | Virgin                                                                                                           |
| <b>I-SICATHULO</b>  | Dance-characterized by slapping on the gumboots - also known as the gumboot dance.                               |
| <b>IZI-NDUNDUMA</b> | Mine dumps. .                                                                                                    |
| <b>ISI-SHAMENI</b>  | Sometimes called IsiShemeni - A dance style developed by the Tembu farm labourers around Weenen in KwaZuluNatal. |
| <b>ISI-TOLOTOLO</b> | A mouth organ. The name is onomatopoeic and seems to have been derived the sound that the instrument makes.      |
| <b>UM-THAKATHI</b>  | Literally, a witch. The word may also be used to describe a wizard (genius) in any of the arts.                  |

**LABOUR MANAGEMENT IN THE MINES**  
(Kallaway P. and Pearson, P. 1986)



# Zisha eGagasini

II. ANGA. DECEMBER 16-18, 2004

## UMhlaka 1



Phuzekhemisi

**I**NTAKA izobe ibekelwe amazolo ngomhla ka-1 kuMasingana (January) njengoba kuhlelwe indumezulu yeFestival ebizwa ngeDurban New Year's Day Music Festival 2005, eKings Park Soccer Stadium eThekwini.

Kule Festival kuboshelwe izingwazi zodwa zomculo zakuleli kusuka kuKwaito, Pop, wuMbhazanga noMaskanda.

Ihlelwe ngabe ngabeDrakensburg Promotions bebambisene noKhozi FM nabeNational Port Authority of South Africa.

Ngokusho kongumgugquzeli wale Festival uLeonard Sithole weDrakensburg abaculi osequqinisekisiwe ukuthi bazobe bekhona lapha ngoRingo Madlingozi, Stimela, Malaika, Soul Brothers, Mzekezeke, Ntando, Brown Dash, Phuzekhemisi, Ihashi Elimhlophe, Imi-

thente, Bhekumuzi Luthuli, Mfiliseni Magubane noBlack Cat.

"Kule Festival silindele abantu abaqhamuka ezindaweni ezahlukene zakuleli njengoba ngalesi sikhathi samaholide iningi labantu lisuke libuthene eThekwini.

"Ngiyabanxusa abantu abazobe beseThekwini ngalolu suku ukuba babe seKings Park ngo-9 ekuseni sivula amasango ukuze bangakhali ngokushodlwa yindawo. Ozobe ekule Festival ngineqiniso lokuthi unyaka uzuwuhlukanisa kamnandi.

Abantu abanengi esengikhlume nabo bakwezinye izifundazwe sebevele bakuqinisekisiwe ukuthi bazobe bekhona kule ndumezulu yeFestival ezobe ingakhethi bala lamuntu," kusho uSithole.



UMASKANDI

“Phithiza”

Phumlani Mdlalose

It can be noticeable that he is using only two fingers: the thumb and the index finger only.

“Phithiza” Phumlani Mdlalose - KwaDlangezwa.

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**A video-cassette recording of *Umaskandi* performers has been made, in order to demonstrate some of the physical acts that have been presented in this document.**