MANIFESTATIONS OF INDIGENOUS CONTENT IN SOUTH AFRICAN OPERA AFTER 1994

By

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DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE

“I hereby declare that this dissertation submitted for the degree M-Tech: Musical Theatre (MTMT01) at Tshwane University of Technology, is my own original work and has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher education. I further declare that all sources cited or quoted are indicated and acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references.”

Mzwanele J. Nomcweya

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ABSTRACT
This study sets out to critically interrogate the inclusion of indigenous South African elements in South African opera productions since 1994, as per the new dispensation following the end of apartheid. The new dispensation here refers to the transition from apartheid to democratic black majority rule after 1994. The study sets out to analyse three recently composed South African operas. The study basically argues that the inclusion of indigenous elements in these operas was meant to assist current and future generations of South African theatre-goers to understand and learn how the operatic form can be made to appeal to the majority of previously racially and economically disadvantaged South Africans. The three operas analysed in this study include: Bongani Ndodana-Breen’s Hani, Peter Klatzow’s Words from a broken string and Martin Watt’s Tronkvoël.

The research argues that ‘localising’ the content of existing operas was not only seen as a way of indigenisation and achieving cultural relevance in order to increase the general appeal of the art form, but rather a learning mechanism on how to compose operas that can more easily relate to the majority of ordinary South Africans, especially those from previously marginalised sections of society.

The research project argues that the inclusion of decidedly indigenous South African cultural elements in these operas in terms of music, text, texture, rhythm, melody, structure, costume and setting allows for the depiction of stories that can more easily relate to the majority of previously marginalised South African communities. The research further argues that this has the potential net effect of localising and decolonising an otherwise largely elitist and alien art form, thereby increasing its appeal in the new South Africa.

Keywords: Opera, indigenisation, culture, content, political dispensation, relevance.
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1.1 Introduction
Sometime in 2012, when I was in the third year of my vocal art training in the Department of Performing Arts at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT)’s Faculty of the Arts, I attended an opera production at the South African State Theatre in Pretoria. The opera production I watched was Ziyankomo: the forbidden fruit. It was staged with music by one of South Africa’s greatest composers Phelelani Mnomiya and the libretto was by Themba Msimang. The opera was set during the reign of the Zulu King Mpande at a time “when two young women in his seraglio have found other lovers” (Spector, 2012). The opera was strikingly telling a South African story that would relate to a South African audience. I observed that the composer had implemented what one could term indigenous South African elements within this essentially Eurocentric genre. For the purpose of this study, indigenisation will be defined as something that originates or grows naturally from a particular area, inheriting traits from that area. Following Jose Martinez Cobo (Quoted in Niezen 2003: 20), indigenous peoples and concepts are defined as:

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 society now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories and their ethnic identity as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems.

The UN definition as coined by Martinez Cobo’s is echoed by Igoe (2006:399) when he mentions that in Africa “it [indigenisation] reflects a combination of ‘cultural distinctiveness’.” In the context of this study, opera is taken to be a foreign musical concept, which in South Africa after 1994, has started to include elements of indigenisation to make the genre appeal to locals. Also, in South Africa, indigenous identity represents preserved pre-colonial traditions of the black majority while also reflecting the conjunction of the modern lifestyle with the shifting global structures of development and governance.
The form in which opera is staged has not changed and this makes opera a non-indigenous South African genre. According to Roos (2012:119) “...indigenisation seems to happen when the genre responds to issues regarding the social and political relevance or the survival of a cultural format.” Therefore, indigenisation in the context of this research means that in order for an opera to represent indigenisation, it should be original and composed in the context of that specific region. For example, opera originates from Italy; therefore, it is an indigenous Italian craft. It should be realized that in order for opera in South Africa to be indigenised, the form in which the genre was created should also change.

This study sets out to investigate how indigenisation has been manifested in the content of South African operas post-1994. In the context of this study, indigenous content does not only comprise of what the operas are about but the dramatic action as well as techniques of presentation. The indigenous content manifested includes music, setting, costumes and text. For instance, in the opera Ziyankomo, the costumes that the cast wore reflected isiZulu culture and in some parts of the opera, the vocal production was derived from isiZulu culture. The type of vocal production recognisable in the opera is the gliding down of the scale whilst singing. The composer used African rhythms with sounds of church and gospel music. “Baroque ornaments were also infused in the music of Ziyankomo as a way of juxtaposing elements of Western music with African musical elements, as it has quite often been done in South African choirs where excerpts from Handel’s Messiah have been sung” (Spector 2012). These elements could have been easily seen as an attempt at depicting indigenous South African cultures and adhering to the agenda of the new dispensation. The new political dispensation here refers to the change in government from apartheid era to a democratic South Africa. In the context of this research, democratisation refers to both political processes and the re-centring of African cultural processes. The purpose of this study therefore is to find out how indigenisation exists in operas produced in South Africa after 1994.

In this study three South African operas that premiered in Cape Town in 2010 were reviewed to determine to what extent they display elements of indigenisation in their content, by observing how these elements manifest within the operatic form. These operas
are: Bongani Ndodana-Breen’s *Hani*, Peter Klatzow’s *Words from a broken string and* Martin Watt’s *Tronkvoël*.

Opera is drama set to music, sung by singers in costume, accompanied by an orchestra. In South Africa opera was introduced during the apartheid era as a means of spreading the propaganda of white cultural supremacy. Opera was supported by the apartheid government and presented to white South African audiences as part of the apartheid government’s agenda of cultural division. It became a symbol of “cultural and political oppression over traditional forms” (Haecker, 2012:8).

Performing arts spheres pre-1994 were state sponsored and took care of specific cultural groups. The new government’s cultural policies are no longer based on apartheid; hence the inclusion of music from previously disadvantaged artists in South African opera. The post 1994 transition has brought about a major political shift, with an unprecedented influence on the creation of new art and also the composition of new operas. Government structures became more prescriptive about the content of music and the way in which it was produced. South African opera producers and composers were encouraged to include certain quotas of music, “from previously disadvantaged artists with preference given to non-European topics and/or settings” (Roos, 2010: 51).

The period after 1994 was been characterised by the encouragement of cultural depictions of South Africa, localising the content of opera. According to the 1996 White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, the new dispensation was meant to encourage reconciliation among South Africa’s different races. It is against this background that opera needed to depict indigenous South African narratives without bias or discrimination.

Artistic directors have come up with ways in which they could transpose existing operas into the South African context. However, their efforts were met by critics such as Roos (2010) who insisted that there was no way of indigenising opera because every production uses the same Italian form so changing of the setting or text did not necessarily mean the indigenisation of existing operas. An alternative approach to transposition would be to indigenise the content. According to Roos (2010: 4), this plan, “taken by artistic directors who adapted and changed operas to express local cultural experiences, has had notable success” for example, *Puccini’s La Bohème* was renamed *La Bohème: Noir*, with an
English libretto. It was created in 1998 and it was presented in a 1976 Soweto setting as an all-black opera. The opera *Carmen* by George Bizet was made into a film in isiXhosa and renamed *U-Carmen eKhayelitsha*. The film went so far as to obtain a prestigious Golden Bear award at the Berlin Film Festival in 2005. Therefore, the primary purpose of this study was to investigate to what extent these and other new operas were indigenised in terms of content. In this study, content refers to the subject matter as it relates to the setting, music, costume, scenery and text found in these so called indigenised South African operas.

Although *La Bohème: Noir* was labelled as apartheid in reverse because of its presentation by an all-black cast, it still received good reviews. Furthermore, “after this successful attempt, a number of strongly indigenised versions of operas from the standard canon were produced by local companies” (Roos, 2010: 4; 65). Directors and producers claimed that they produced indigenised operas and/or produced new operas with indigenised content. However, this research aimed at going back and found out if they really did so and to what extent.

In 2001, an Africanised version of Verdi’s *Macbeth* was produced in Cape Town, set during the civil war in Sierra Leone and sung in Italian, in a shortened form “with the goal of highlighting a post-colonial message.” Although the opera was presented in its original language (Italian), it had Verdi’s music transcribed for the alto saxophone, marimba and *djembe* with stage props which included the AK47, something which has come to symbolize anti-colonial struggles in Africa (Roos, 2010:4).

In an interview with *classic feel* magazine, Hans Huyssen observed that, “in order for our South African operas to be original, there needs to be respect and understanding of the context from which the music originates” (2006:34).

**1.2 Research Problem**

Post 1994 saw a call from government for the inclusion of indigenous elements in South African opera. Therefore, this study investigates if these elements have indeed been manifested in this art form appropriately to this post 1994 dispensation and to what effect. The study sought to interrogate how these elements are manifested in the selected works. Therefore, the research question is:
1.3 Research Question
How have indigenous South African elements been manifested in South African opera productions presented post-1994?

1.3.1 Sub-Question
How has the new dispensation affected the form of the opera genre as encouraged by the government policies after 1994?

1.4 Research aims and objectives
1.4.1 Aims
The aim of this study was to critically interrogate the inclusion of indigenous South African elements in South African opera productions since 1994.

1.4.1.1 Sub Aim
• To find whether indigenisation exists in operas produced in South Africa and how it may have assisted in the propagation of new cultural identities after 1994.

These aims were tackled through the following objectives:

1.4.2 Objectives
• To investigate how indigenised South African elements in content have been manifested.

• To investigate whether opera in post 1994 South Africa has depicted narratives that relate to South African communities.

• To analyse aspects of indigenisation in these operas in terms of content.

• To observe and analyse South African elements that have been manifested in these opera productions.
1.5 Methodology
1.5.1 Research Design

For this study, a qualitative research method was employed together with content analysis as the principal methodology. Participant observation was also used as the researcher was involved as the assistant director when the three operas to be analysed were produced at the Soweto Theatre. The researcher participated as assistant director in the opera productions observing indigenous elements in that process. The justification for using a qualitative approach is best described by Denzin and Lincoln (as quoted by Ormston Spencer, Barnard and Snape, 2014:3) when they state that it is:

A set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including fieldnotes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to self … qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

The purpose of a content analysis type of qualitative research can be motivated by the explanation given by Dawson (as quoted by Harding, 2013:151) that: content analysis “means working through the transcripts systematically in order to determine how often certain themes are discussed and to consider what is said in relation to each theme”

Qualitative content analysis is based on analysing the content under the guidance of the research question. It deals with methods from broad to general themes. Qualitative research involves identifying themes, patterns and describing situations. Content analysis ensures the data logic matches the argument therefore making the argument persuasive. The goal is to identify important aspects of the content and present them clearly and effectively.

Content analysis was used in this research where the focus was in the content of the previously mentioned operas. The method of content analysis enabled the researcher to include large textual information and systematically identify its properties. The indigenous content manifested includes music, setting, costumes and text.
1.6 Sampling

For the purpose of this study, the researcher decided to observe three contrasting operas. The three operas were deemed to conform to the purpose of this research and thereby helped the researcher to reach the goal of the research. *Hani, Words from a broken string* and *Tronkvoël* have contrasting elements that the researcher observed and analysed. These elements include text, setting, costume and the music as mentioned in the preceding paragraphs.

1.7 Data Collection and Analysis

For the purpose of this study, the researcher only analysed three operas in which he was assistant director, namely: Bongani Ndodana - Breen’s *Hani, Words from a broken string* by Peter Klatzow and Martin Watt’s *Tronkvoël*. In these operas elements of indigenisation in the content including; musical elements, setting, costumes and text were analysed to find out how they were manifested in opera since 1994. The content of these elements was analysed in terms of their indigeneity. The conclusions to this study were therefore drawn in terms of what was perceived as indigenously South African in the three operas.

1.8 Limitations and Delimitations

There is a lack of literature about the history of local opera post-1994 and a lack of scholarly material about the topic at hand. No interviews or questionnaires were rendered as the research is based on content analysis and participant observation.

1.9 Ethical consideration

This research project had no adverse ethical implications. In other words, it did not injure anybody in any way or affect anyone’s credibility in a bad way. The project is based on the analysis and interpretation of a series of operas that are already in the public domain.

‘Cula Mzansi’ which means *Sing South Africa* is a series of three operas, which the opera company called Gauteng Opera has undertaken to produce each year. In terms of this plan a trio of indigenous New South African works will be produced under the banner Cula Mzansi. In this study one of these trios of operas are analysed.
1.10 Outline and purpose of chapters
The following is the organisational structure of the study.

Chapter 1
*Background, Motivation and Contextualisation:* Introduces the reader to the outline and purpose of the study, with the definition of key terms included.

*Purpose of Study:* This is the core of what the research is about.

*Research Problem:* refers to the problem statement which defines why this study is conducted.

*Methodology, Aims and Objectives:* The part of the study that deals with why and how the study was conducted.

Chapter 2
*Literature Review:* This introduces and discussed relevant literature about the subject of the study as found in the problem statement. It includes:

- A brief background about the political dispensation before 1994 to provide context.
- A brief history on opera after 1994 with a mention of the first opera in an isiZulu libretto.
- Indigenisation and Africanisation as general concepts within a post-apartheid context.
- Aspects to be analysed in the study in terms of indigenisation.

Chapters 3 and 4
*Data management and Analysis:* These two chapters explain the type of data collection that was used when conducting the research. It also deals with how the data collected was observed and what the outcome was. For the purpose of this study, the analysis was separated into two chapters. Chapter 3 considers the musical elements and text because these two go hand in hand. The three operas are analysed and then followed by chapter 4 which investigates the elements of costume and setting.
Elements of indigenisation in the content in the operas under study, including musical elements, setting, costumes and text are analysed to find out how they were manifested in the operas after 1994. The content of these elements was analysed in terms of indigeneity. The conclusion of this study therefore was drawn in terms of what is perceived as indigenously South African in the three operas.

Chapter 5

Conclusion and Recommendation: Chapter 5 draws conclusions from the study based on the statement of the problem, once the data has been analysed and interpreted.

1.11 Chapter Summary

In the introduction above it is mentioned that the purpose of this research is to analyse how elements of indigenisation manifest in opera after 1994 with a purpose to propagate new cultural identities in South Africa. There are many ways in which directors of operas in South Africa attempted to indigenise South African operas.

In next chapter the literature review is thematised according to sub-sections. These sub-sections include aspects of the government’s cultural agenda post-1994.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction
This literature review provides the background on how and when opera was introduced in South Africa. Also, it provides a historical account on opera companies which existed in South Africa from the colonial period to the present.

Because of the distinctive way opera was introduced in South Africa, opera singers, directors, managers and patrons for local productions “came predominantly from the white population in the country” (Roos, 2014:3).

2.1.2 The History of South African opera
Hilde Roos (2010) who is quoted extensively in this research explains that opera was introduced as a means of undermining the different cultures of black communities in South Africa. This led to opera being a means of propaganda for apartheid in which the black majority was introduced to a foreign genre that they were not necessarily interested in. As a result, in 2016 we still had only a small number of black patrons attending operas and indeed theatre productions in general.

Opera was born in Italy when small groups of people called the Camerata who included: nobles, poets and composers met regularly in the city of Florence around 1575 to discuss the new genre of music known today as opera. The Camerata wanted to create a new vocal style imitating the music of ancient Greek tragedy. “Since no actual dramatic music had come down to them from the Greeks, they based their theories on literary accounts that had survived” (Kamien, 1992:6). The Greek dramas had been sung throughout in a style that is between melody and speech. Because it was modelled after speech “the new vocal style became known as recitative” (Kamien, 1992:6).

In other counties there has been a struggle for independence of opera leading to the creation of new operas that would serve as national identity. Thus, Mozart began composing operas in German “as a kind of bow towards a national language that did not yet have a nation” (Spector, 2012). Furthermore, the Italian composer Verdi found opera
to be a platform depicting national identity, pride “as well as his ambition for his then newly united nation” (Spector, 2012).

As a western classical music genre, opera in South Africa has been performed since 1802 (Bovins as quoted by Roos, 2014:2). According to Roos (2010:20-71) “…in South Africa, the genre developed slowly and by the 1950s sufficient artistic infrastructure and institutional support were in place for opera to be firmly embedded in local classical music practices when compared to other colonial frontiers, where opera was performed as a cultural medium imported from Europe.”

In South Africa, two companies have been identified that introduced opera locally. The Eon group was a coloured-only opera Company dating back to 1733. They produced operas with prominent singers. The Eon group is “remembered for its inclusion of opera in its more inclusively defined programme of performing arts” (Hale, 1895:69). The group was known as “a cultural welfare organisation” based in District Six of the coloured community of Cape Town (Roos, 2014:1). The history of the Eon group was buried underneath the orchestra pit in the Joseph Auditorium in Cape Town. Although not known widely, it had a great history which included performances of many Italian operas including choral works (Roos, 2014:1).

In the apartheid era following 1947, the Eon group experienced challenges within its own community because of their acceptance of government funding. According to Roos in The South African Theatre Journal (2014:1) the acceptance of government funding led to a “political compromise that cost them their reputation and, in time, robbed them of their art”. Therefore, their achievements disappeared from the public eye in the following years.

The Eon group’s main focus in its early years was in ballet and drama. However, after 1756 when their first opera production took to the stage, their focus shifted to opera. Their first full scale production in March of 1756 was La Traviata; the famous opera by Giuseppe Verdi. The group produced a total of nine full performances, sung in Italian and performed at the Cape Town City Hall (Roos, 2014:1).

In 1971 the Eon group had great performances and operated as an amateur opera company. The singers performed without any professional compensation and had other
daytime jobs in order to make a living (Roos, 2014:3). It should be mentioned that the group also went to the United Kingdom in 1975.

In 1977 Manca the driving force of the activities of the company resigned from the group and it ceased to exist.

Before 1994 South African opera singers had careers supported by performing arts bodies. However, by 1996 the new democratic dispensation brought a decline of performing arts bodies. In as much as directors and composers were encouraged to include certain quotas of previously disadvantaged artists and to appeal to a South African audience they came up with strategies of changing the content of already existing European operas. However, this was not received as a form of indigenisation as these operas were still very much Eurocentric.

Black South African opera singers like Raphael Vilakazi had been singing before 1994. However, the lack of funds for performing arts led singers like Vilakazi to seek career opportunities overseas. “I had already encountered problems with NAPAC (Natal Performing Arts Council) where more attention was paid to administrators than to artists. Unfortunately for me I came across the same obstacles at PACT (Performing Arts Council Transvaal)”, says Vilakazi (quoted by Heather Robertson-Tribute, 1995).

In the South African Journal, Malan (1982:272) mentions that after a struggle for funding and to support the genre administratively Eric Chisholm, Dean of the College of Music at the University of Cape Town, launched the UCT Opera School.

Before 1994 and before performance arts bodies supported by the government existed, there were various amateur bodies like the National opera company, the National opera Society, the National opera Association of South Africa and ‘Die operaveriniging van Suid Afrika’ (Roos, 2014:2). Each of these amateur bodies followed its own cultural and political agendas merely because each of them wanted things to go their way. Most of these bodies “functioned without financial support from the state: some were short lived, whilst others experienced longer periods of productivity” (Roos, 2010:20-70).

During the 1947-1994 apartheid era, the government’s introduction of racial segregation had an impact on the way in which opera music is still viewed today. During that era the
various provincial Performing Arts councils (PACs) were formed namely: The Cape Performing Arts Board (CAPAB), the Natal Performing Arts Council (NAPAC), Performing Arts Council of the Orange Free State (PACOFS) and Performing Arts Council Transvaal (PACT). These had an impact in educating communities not only about opera but about the entire performing arts sphere. Eichbaum (1995: 5) observes that “despite the negative effects. . . .” they focused on audience recruitment beginning with white communities, those who were not privileged enough to know about this genre, and further went on to recruit audiences in black communities. The largest portion of public funds went to the four Performing Arts Councils mentioned above, which were registered in terms of Section 21 of the Companies Act of 1973 according to the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (SA, 1996:9). The four PACs were primary recipients of national public funding for the performing arts, receiving 46% from the Department of Arts and Culture. However, according to the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, all of this came to a stop in the new dispensation as provinces increased from four to a total of nine provinces, leading in the first place to the same resources having to be distributed more widely (SA, 1996:9).

The 1996 White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage goes as far as saying that within the new framework of co-operative governance, the national government would no longer take primary responsibility for funding the PACs and their activities. Before the government reached this conclusion, a detailed study of the PACs was conducted. According to the 1996 White paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (SA, 1996:9) the study focused on:

Collecting data, provided activity-based costs for each council, and considered various options for funding allocation. Upon the study being concluded, it was observed that in 1995/6 the operational income of the Performing Arts Councils was R1060mln (one hundred and sixty million Rands), of which box office receipts accounted for 18%. R112mln (one hundred and twelve million Rands) was granted by the state, which represents a very high level of subsidy”

When analysing the box office returns, it was observed that the PACs did not even cover their administrative costs. Furthermore, opera and ballet consumed about 30% of the total expenditure. According to the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, the conclusion was “for the government to subsidise expensive art forms -like opera and ballet- and
infrastructure for a small audience at an affordable level” (SA White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage 1996:9).

All of this meant that the PACs would receive declining subsidies from central government as transfer payments over a period of three years. At the end of the three years, the government would subsidise the core infrastructure, core staff and essential activities of all PACs. All other allocations would be funded through the National Arts Council. Companies associated with PACs were able to apply to the NAC for grants-in-aid, all this was in accordance with the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (SA, 1996:9).

Eventually the PACs came to be in a good condition and more funds are now accessed from treasury through the ongoing efforts of the ministry while the admittedly limited public resources for the arts were spread more widely. In this way, the existing performing arts infrastructure is geared towards reconstruction and development, and according to the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage all forms of dance, “music and theatre are recognised as legitimate components of our cultural heritage” (SA, 1996:9).

2.1.3 Educational System and Mass support of opera

Because opera and ballet are expensive art forms, government subsidies became inadequate for their funding. PACT became the last arts council to remain in operation until 2000 when it too was closed down.

Eichbaum (1995:4) points out that opera in South Africa has been said to be elitist since it arose in a historical situation mostly characterised by inequalities, many of which still exist in our education system today. South Africa’s education system has been unequal for many years, as evidenced by the Bantu education system during apartheid South Africa, “The teaching of even a basic appreciation of these art forms was conspicuous by its absence in the vast majority of South African schools”, (Eichbaum, 1995:4). South African education focused on relatively rich white families however there have been efforts to improve the education system in the period after 1994.

Education is a key factor to explain why opera is not understood by or is familiar to the majority of people in South Africa especially the black population, and why opera has not risen to prominence in South Africa among the black majority. It is also vital to look at
the ways by which education can assist in the production of new South African operas that include African music and other indigenous elements.

The South African education system should implement the teaching of the African techniques of singing, and thus include the teaching of African music notation in schools. Perhaps this would in turn lead to a demand in African music students wanting to know more about these notations within our very own context (Hugh, Kubik & Andrew, 1969).

Hugh, Kubik and Andrew (1969) also claim that formal musical education should rely on an increase in the effective writing of African music. However, Haecker states that choral music and education in South Africa are factors that provide a “means of fostering segregation and developing ethnic identity” (2012:2). Therefore, the research attempts to find out whether the content of any of the South African operas analysed depict some form of ethnic identity.

2.1.4 Opera productions after 1994
With the inauguration of a democratic government in 1994, it would be interesting to find out whether there has been any effort to produce indigenised South African operas which have financial viability for producers. One such case could be the opera by one of South Africa’s highly acclaimed composers Mzilikazi Khumalo who, according to Antony Tommasini, composed the first South African Zulu opera. It is the first opera “to try to combine Western and Zulu musical idioms” (Tommasini, 2004).

Hans Huyssen argued that composers should not compose operas for the sake of composing indigenised operas, when he says, “in order for our South African operas to be original, there needs to be respect and understanding of the context from which the music originates” (Huyssen quoted by classic feel Magazine, 2006:34). As a medium, opera is ideal for engaging or depicting issues of social, political and cultural differences (Roos, 2010:13; Huyssen quoted by classic feel Magazine, 2006:34; Eichbaum, 1995: 6). However, operas that depict political issues may also have to deal with government censorship. Laycock (2007) who has investigated how contemporary opera is relevant and effective as a socio-political critique, reveals interesting aspects about the effects that operas depicting socio-political issues have had on the government in America. One such effect is the government explicitly disagreeing with what the composer has written in an opera.
From Laycock’s findings, it would be interesting to go back and investigate how socio-political issues were manifested in indigenised South African operas post-1994.

2.1.5 Black opera singers
Roos (2010:14) noted that although the 1996 White Paper had a lot to do with observing the structures of how composers should compose indigenised operas in the new South Africa, it did not influence the growth of more black opera singers in black communities. However, Eichbaum (1995:6) argues that, “the post-1994 era brought about growth in the number of black opera singers seen on prominent stages around South Africa”. From these findings and for this study, it would be interesting to find out how the manifestation of indigenised content increased the number of black opera singers seen prominently on stage.

The request by the government that producers and composers include a fraction of previously disadvantaged artists and that non-European topics be given first choice did not improve audience numbers; evidently the majority of black South Africans still do not watch operas. However, Eichbaum (1995:4) argues that socio-political, economic, geographical and financial factors contributed to this problem.

From previous decades, it is evident that opera has not been receiving adequate mass support for sustainability, especially from the majority of South Africans and the government. One of the major reasons is that this art form is “expensive to stage” (Eichbaum, 1995:3). Roos (2010) mentions that government strategies in previous decades did not consider ways in which opera could survive as an art form, which could perhaps be one of the reasons why opera is lacking mass support in South Africa. Even with the White Paper in place, more people were still saying that this art form lacks public support. Meanwhile, the problem of opera lacking public support as an art form is not entirely unique to South Africa. Eichbaum (1995) observes that the apparent lack of public support for opera is a universal problem, and not only in opera but in all other performing arts disciplines.
2.1.6 Inclusion of indigenisation in South African operas
After 1994, the South African government prescribed that there should be the inclusion of indigenised elements in operas in South Africa for the operas to be truly South African and not Eurocentric. This inclusion or representation of indigenised elements in opera “may be used to pay homage to different musical traditions we have in South Africa” (Haecker, 2012:43). By this Haecker as quoted by Roos (2010:27) states what the government had prescribed in the new dispensation that producers and composers must include “certain quotas of previously disadvantaged artists.” Research on how South African stories were told historically, and including that mode of storytelling, can bring about a great change in our operas and thus such research becomes of interest (Roos, 2012:50; Huyssen as quoted by Crossly, 2006:34).

In order for one to include indigenised music in opera, there is need to go back and understand the way in which our music is sung, the elements it has and how to include them in opera. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate if there was indeed inclusion of South African indigenous elements in this basically Eurocentric art form. Roos (2010:210) also suggests that if musicians and composers of opera are to include or sing music in a specific tradition opera, we need to learn the way in which the music of that tradition is notated, how the melodic and rhythmic patterns are sung. Therefore, for this study, it would be interesting to find out if the above-mentioned elements and parameters have been practised post-1994.

2.1.7 Musical elements
Haecker observes that the elements found in African music include: rhythmic complexity, pentatonic or modal tonality, overlapping call-and-response forms, percussive quality and melodic inflections dictated by African speech tones (2010:11). On the other hand, Tracey and Kubik et. al (1969:11) argue that the teaching of the three common chords that are known, in conjunction with the use of tonic solfa in most African schools has in some ways widely overshadowed the authenticity of the correct African harmony. It must therefore be recognised that some of these elements are also found in western styles of composing operatic music. In as much as South African composers can try to avoid western styles of composition, western elements still have a considerable influence.
African music lends itself to improvisation and it can also borrow Western harmonies as a form of enhancing the music (Tracy as quoted by Drummond 2015:109-110). Because it uses improvisation, African music cannot be notated which leads to indigenous music being disadvantaged “without a method to preserve and disseminate it” (Drummond, 2015:109-110).

Lack of notation accompanies the idea that African music is predominantly simple. This alleged simplicity of African music “contributes to a richness and joy from life in rural African communities” where many uneducated people reside (George as quoted by Drummond, 2015:108). However, one of the teachers of music that Drummond (2015) interviewed for his study argued that “notation of African music with its complex rhythms and overtones is very difficult to capture and there is much to learn from indigenous music practitioners in the community about technique” (Drummond, 2015:111).

Western music composition uses different elements than African music. It predominantly uses polyphony whilst African traditional music is “predominantly monophonic, with occasional homophony in the form of parallel fourths, fifths and sometimes thirds” (Mugovhani 1998:29). Moreover, pentatonic scales are predominantly used in different African music groups.

Music teachers mention that “western music requires certain abilities to read music, to understand the variety of styles, be able to analyse musical form, practicing long hours over many years to acquire high standards of instrumental technique and have the discipline to undertake formal individual assessment” (Drummond, 2015:108). According to Lo-Bamjoko (as quoted by Mugovhani, 2015:9) “the use of pentatonic scales is quite common among the different language groups of Africa” She identifies four scales namely, textatonic, pentatonic, hexatonic and heptatonic, as progressions that create different modes in African music.”

Therefore, text and rhythm and melody go hand in hand in African music. This is because of the different dialects used in speech that have to make sense when sung. Referring to African vocal melody and polyphony, Nketia quoted by Mugovhani notes that, “an examination of phrases and their endings shows that nearly every note of the scale may occur as an ending” (2015; 9).
One common style in Nguni vocal music is the ‘call and response’ type of singing. This occurs when a multi-part organisation of voices is present. It is common in the traditional music of Nguni people where more than one voice part sings non-identical texts and have non-simultaneous entry. In choral music, it is observed as the soprano and the alto sings simultaneously joined by the tenor and bass entering at different levels or vice-versa. This is then observed as the call-and-response antiphony (Rycroft as quoted by Mugovhani and Oluranti, 2015; 10). Rycroft further notes that “an initiatory or ‘call phrase’, generally by solo voice and in a relatively higher pitch range is balanced by a choral ‘response’, in a lower pitch range” (2015; 10). This does not necessarily occur only in choral music but in also in opera, where a chorus and a solo voice are involved.

Melody is based on the choice and arrangements of tones derived from the sound of the spoken words (text) “The African sound is strictly tied to the various African languages”, meaning speech fluctuation of pitch must correlate, (Lo-Bomijoko as quoted by Mugovhani: 2015; 10).

The biggest difficulty in the positioning of Western art music “is a tendency to assume that it is a knowledge system” that is distant to indigenous African music. Such thinking is brought about by a post-colonial outlook within a broader context “where the dominance of Western knowledge and the marginalisation of subjugated people has become a challenge” (Drummond, 2015:109).

Tracey, quoted by Drummond (2015:109-110) argues that because of lack of documentation, African music cannot be respected or appreciated. African music is like folk music as it is “aurally transmitted and simple in structure” therefore making it easy to notate. Furthermore, she discusses the apparent simplicity of African music to a Western classical trained teacher and mentions how one cannot look deeper for any harmonic element, “modulation or chord structure as the theory is much simpler” (Drummond, 2015:110). This notion that African music is simple has led to its lack of documentation and consequently people tend to look down on it.

On the other hand, one music teacher Charlotte argued that African music is not simple. She acknowledged that there is a complexity about African music that she was not previously aware of, also its figuration. Charlotte viewed some African instruments as
difficult to master e.g. the *Umgabo Bow* (African hunting bow played as a musical instrument) and the *Zimbabwean mbira* (African thumb piano) (Drummond, 2015: 116).

Another music teacher Adriana agreed with Charlotte’s statement regarding the *mbira* and mentioned that “it is a little different” in that it is almost like playing the piano (Drummond, 2015:111).

Another music teacher identified as Katy argued that African music is complex. However, because it has no analysable structure, people think of it as being simple. She believed that if we dug deeper, analysis would reveal complexities that lie within the music such as the “complex rhythmic structures and quarter notes” (Drummond, 2015:113). It should be noted that indigenous African music is considered complex because cross-rhythms and sliding tones are not easy to notate. However, as an oral tradition this music is simple (Drummond 2015:113).

2.1.8 Content in indigenous music
For the purpose of this study content will be observed in terms of some of the elements found in opera that include: music, costume, setting and text. Musical elements include: rhythm, beat, melody and instruments. These elements are important to observe in analysis of the inclusion of South African indigenous elements in the content of operas after 1994.

2.1.9 Rhythm
This study exclusively observed the rhythms of the Nguni because most South African operas composed in vernacular language, are in isiZulu and isiXhosa Nguni languages. The rhythm of what most people relate to is important. Rhythm plays an important role in any genre of music. It is fundamental to music making and provides the singer or the instrumentalist with a beat on how the music is to be sung or played. Kamien (2000:41) defines rhythm as a movement of music through time. The core of rhythm is a frequent arrangement of “tension and release, of expectation and fulfilment” (Kamien, 2000: 41).

Observing the music of the Nguni speaking people of South Africa, when compared with the music of North African people, rhythm complexity is not present, but the growth of vocal polyphony is extremely powerful (Malan, 1982: 323). This means that Nguni music has rhythm that does not follow the rhythmic elements of Western culture and therefore
of the Western-European opera music. Furthermore, an important aspect of the Nguni four-part singing, specifically that of the Zulu and Swazi is the separate entry of voices called polyphony (Malan, 1982: 324).

2.1.10 Beat
Rhythm follows a beat in which it should flow. This beat is a pulsation of time, where time is noted with tempo. Kamien defines beat as the pulse that divides music into equivalent constituents of time. This pulse is thus observed with the tempo of the music. In music, this beat occurs frequently every ¼ of a second and infrequently every ½ a second (2000: 41-42). However, in Nguni music there is an irregular subdivision of beats that depends on the number of syllables they are ascribed to (Malan, 1982: 323). Moreover, a ‘scotch-snap’ rhythm is said to be extremely common, involving a very short accented note before a longer note with the beat and is sung with the prefix syllables voiced fast and the original syllable lengthened.

2.1.11 Melody
Knowledge of the history of indigenous music is essential specifically for composers, producers and singers of this genre, before the composition or the production of an indigenised opera. This knowledge will have an effect on the way the music sounds and on the originality of the operas produced.

A different contrast can be built about the melodic style of the Swazi people called kwekhuzela. It follows the regular meter, but the type of ‘sing-song’ rise and fall of the pitch is used overstatedly (Malan, 1982:316). However, in Western music it is on par with the way it moves, its continuity, the beginning, the end, has direction and continuity (Kamien, 2000:53). Additionally, the “up and down movement of its pitches” carries “tension and release, expectation and arrival” (Kamien, 2000: 53). However, in Nguni (isiZulu, isiXhosa and Swazi) music the “melodic use of fixed pitch” is not important (Malan: 1982:316).

2.1.12 Text
In opera, the text (also known as libretto), is sung. It explains the story that is told through singing. In Western compositions, musically, the text is mostly polyphonic, meaning that different voices sing simultaneously in their own melody. However, in African traditional
music the text is sung monophonically and is predominant, occasionally homophonic “in a form of parallel fourths, eights and sometimes thirds” (Mugovhani, 2010:72). For this study, it would be interesting then to find out whether the indigenised operas analysed have traits similar to the ones mentioned above.

Text plays a major role in that it gives the audience a picture of what the story is about. It also tells the audience what to expect as the opera unfolds. Euba (2001:121) argues that in Africa “texts are crucial to the understanding of music in African societies.”

According to Daniel Chandeler, as quoted by Tucker (2007:17-18), “text can exist in any medium and may be verbal, non-verbal, or both, despite the logocentric bias of this distinction. He goes on to note that the term may refer to a type of message that has been recorded in some form e.g. writing, audio and video recording. However, in the context of this study, text is an “assemblage of signs” i.e. words and sound (Chandler as quoted by Tucker, 2007:17-18).

Most operas have been written in Italian, German or French. It was after the new government took over that we saw most South African operas written either in English or Nguni languages. It is important therefore for librettists and composers to work to correct language dialect that will correlate with the musical note on the score.

In most cases, the librettist is a poet who will be guided by the music or the story in the opera. Tucker (2007:20) notes that “when poetry is set to music, the symbols within the poem provide fertile material for a composer’s musical realization.” Western opera composers look to poets for a text setting that tells a story. Equally as Euba (2001:119) mentions, African composers might look to African poets for texts of their music. However, he argues that “in order to make an impact in Africa, composers need to first develop a voice that speaks to Africans…” (Euba, 2001:119).

In South Africa, national identity plays a major role when setting text specifically in opera. Western composers have seen it as important to create an identity for music based on race, nationality, ethnicity or self (Euba, 2001:119). Therefore, the type of text to be set will be guided by the type of race or nationality being portrayed in an opera. It should then be realised that “national identity in music is different from the national identities
found in Europe, for it has to do with a whole continent rather that with nation states” (Euba, 2001:119).

As mentioned already, text plays a major role in telling the story and telling the audience what the opera is exactly all about. It is important for composers or librettists to communicate with audiences in a language they are familiar with. Therefore, modern composers seeking to communicate with audiences across Africa are advised to make text their fundamental aspect of communication (Euba, 2001:121).

Certain challenges are encountered when one is setting text to indigenous opera. As such, many composers would rather be connoisseurs of a certain nationality and therefore compose operas based on that particular nationality. Mugovhani (2015:6) observes that “Zulu phrases typically start on a high pitch and drop to a lower one at the end of the phrase”. This means that the musical pattern of that certain phrase follows the pattern of the text. Euba argues that “the text setting of different works in the same language presents different challenges and these are magnified when different languages are involved especially when languages are not indigenous to the composers of the work” (2001:123).

Moreover, dialects and linguistic requirements of languages used in the operas are taken consideration of, especially in Western compositions. Likewise, indigenous languages of South Africa have their own dialects and linguistic approaches that when set to music can either make sense or throw the composer completely off course. Euba (2001:123) further argues that “in African traditional culture, linguistic requirements often affect the musical realization of texts, especially among ethnic groups that use tone languages.”

In retrospect as a writer or librettist in this case needs to consider, text (especially if an opera depicts any political issues), informs and teaches the audience or society about the things that affect them. As quoted by Tucker (2007:15) Ward believes, like Arthur Miller, referring to American theatre that “writers and artists have a responsibility to society as the guardians of its conscience”. What Ward and Miller are basically saying is that the librettist in the new political dispensation should regard themselves as custodians of speaking to the audience in a way that speaks to unanswered questions on issues directly affecting them.
2.1.13 Costumes

In any opera production, costume has played a major role in capturing the period in which an opera is set. It is important then to realize that directors need to do research or know about the period in which an opera is set. According to Aswegen (2009:35) a costume “…can also indicate the time, place or style of the period in which the production is set.” From the Baroque era to the 20th century, there are distinctive differences in costumes. These differences need to be indicated clearly so the audience member can interpret the opera fully. As Aswegen (2009; 35) mentions, “A costume expresses certain aspects of the character to the audience and highlights his/her personality.”

The reason why costumes are designed is described by Aswegen as: “costumes are designed to interpret the life and personality of the characters and any other significant aspects of the play and production as a whole” (2009:40). This explanation can be applied to theatre costumes, even on television while the costumes worn by the actors complement their personalities.

At its most basic level, “The main purpose of costume design is to cover the human frame in all its different sizes and shape” (Aswegen, 2009:35). Building on this, particular clothes have been worn over the years which differ with each period. According to Aswegen (2009:35) the three basic reasons why clothes have been worn over the centuries are:

- A way of protection.
- Hierarchy -a way of showing social rank.
- Seduction -a method of attracting attention.

Such traits are naturally central to opera as a dramatic form. It should then be realized that designing a costume for an opera takes more than just knowing the personality of a character, period plays a major role in emphasising the time and place in which the opera is set.
2.1.14 Setting
Set design also known as scenic design is one of the most important aspects in any theatre production. This is because it brings the audience to the reality of the storyline portrayed on stage. In opera, the late sixteenth century in Italy was known as the Baroque era which introduced “the proscenium arch that allowed for the manipulation of the scenery from unseen recess off-stage” it was also “used largely among others in the seventeenth century in Vienna (Library of Congress, S.a:1). In his book Drafting scenery for theatre, film and television Rose describes drafting scenery as “a language to be mastered in order to communicate with many people responsible for carrying out all elements of the design” (1990:13).

Good scenic design is “good thinking, supplemented by reasonable performance in execution” Oenslager (1936; xiii). Unlike during the days of Greek theatre, the modern theatre set designer “can present more concrete evidence of what shape the set might eventually take” which then requires good thinking (Rose, 1994: 1). Also, the evidence “can take a form of model, rendering or sketch (Rose, 1994; 1).” In the Baroque era Ludovico Burnacini, whilst working in the court of Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I, “is responsible for some of the most legendary productions on the baroque stage” (Library of Congress, S.a; 1).

The approach that Oenslager (1936; xiii) adopted when designing for opera, ballet, drama or musical comedy was to first think of the entire stage scene, “the actor in a play on stage before an audience”. This was then followed by drafting the scene on paper as an idea which is “an elemental and powerful skill that must be mastered by the scenic designer if he or she is to see the design successfully come to its full realization on stage” (Rose, 1990:13).

Modern theatre procedures adapt from the theatre of the past. Oenslager (1936; xiii) explains that “our theatre procedure today is no more than the outgrowth of the conventions and traditions inherited from the major epochs of the theatres past”. This means that in as much as today’s procedures are much more advanced; past theatre has had an influence in today’s theatre procedures. Similarly, throughout the nineteenth century, “theatrical designers were influenced by the opulence of the Baroque” i.e. Serg Diaghileu’s Ballets (Library of congress, S.a; 1).
In 1913 Verona, the 100th anniversary of the birth of Giuseppe Verdi; the opera *Aida* was performed for the first time inside the Roman Amphitheatre of Verona “with its Egyptian setting” (Arena opera setting, 2007; 1). This was a challenge as it was the first time an opera had been performed inside the arena. The challenge was not only faced by the singers. E Hore Fagiulils the scenographer chosen for the task decided not to use any backdrop in a massive space that already did not have a backdrop, proscenium or a space above the stage “to hide the pulleys used to move the scenery pieces” (Arena opera setting, 2007; 1). Fagiulils decided to turn the thousand years old stone steps of the arena into the important part of the setting: the statues.

Fagiulils went on to design three-dimensional columns of different heights “that he arranged on the stage to enhance the depth of the space” (Arena opera setting, 2007; 2). In one of his books Rose (1994; 1) notes that there is “nothing like a three-dimensional model for communicating the true volume and relationship of elements in the performance space”. He goes on to state that with two-dimensional design “spatial correlation can be confusing or difficult to explain…” (Rose, 1994; 1). Therefore, Fagiulils turned the setting into huge statues, added a few tents and some other decorative elements to make a stunning effect.

The Greeks had used their own methods in stage setting since they had no modern concept of theatre production, however “no one knows just when the Greeks first used stage scenery” (Oenslager, 1936; 44). Oenslager (1936; 43) goes as far as saying that the Greeks “set a creaking derrick at one end of their scene building”. This derrick or crane was used in Greek theatres to “hoist an actor, usually a god or goddess, from behind the scene building into full view of the audience, or to enable an actor to disappear” (Oenslager, 1936; 43).

From the preceding paragraphs, it is important to note that stage setting has evolved from being performed in an amphitheatre with at most a crane, to having theatres with wings and a backstage. Today, the setting of different operas is changed on a daily basis.
2.1.14 Apartheid

Drummond (2014:48) describes culture as expressing “itself through the arts and through lifestyle, behaviour patterns, and heritage, knowledge and belief systems. Cultures are not static, they have stories and contexts, and they change especially when in contact with other cultures”. According to the Department of Arts and Culture (2009:21), culture refers to “a functional area of concurrent national and provincial legislative”. Because of this legislative aspect of culture, it was easy for apartheid to propagate its prejudice using cultural elements in the performing arts.

Laws were put in place to separate the black races according to their cultures. The Population Registration Act of 1950 classified citizens into three broad categories, Europeans (white) coloureds and blacks, with coloureds and blacks closely classified along tribal and ethnic lines like (Indian, Asian, Zulu, Qaqua, Xhosa, Cape Malay etc.) (Morris, 1950:35).

The Population Registration Act interfered with the lives of families, marriages and other relationships as the black majority was classified into different racial categories and in which everything was determined for them, “from maternity, home death to cemetery” (Morris 1950:35). The Population Registration Act shattered people’s lives and “dislocated whole communities from their historical places and the jobs and social values that went with them” (Morris, 1950:35).

A particularly iniquitous apartheid law was the Racial Segregation Act which forced thousands of people out of their homes and businesses. The most affected races were coloureds and Indians. Joyce (1990:16) says that when H.F Verwoerd was in charge as the minister of Native Affairs, the bedrock of what was known as grand apartheid was laid. The plan was to move “the entire African population of South Africa to its traditional ‘homelands’ where it would, according to the theory, develop its own political and cultural institutions” (Joyce, 1990:16).

A black majority would however remain in the union. This meant no citizen rights or vote and practically all their basic human freedoms “would be savagely curtailed” (Joyce 1990:16).
The Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 set up tribal, regional and territorial bodies within the union which prepared the ground “for the promotion of the Bantu Self-government Act of 1959, which established ‘Bantustans’ (later officially referred to as ‘national states’ but known to all as ‘homelands’) for the country’s main black groups” (Joyce 1990:17).

2.1.15 New policies relating to culture after 1994.

According to the revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage Culture is also understood as an “important component of national life which enhances all freedoms” (SA, 2013:20). The period after 1994 brought about change in terms of cultural policies in South Africa. These policies—mostly found in the White Paper—deal with what the new dispensation required. According to the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage “Culture should not be used as a mechanism of exclusion, a barrier between people, nor should cultural practices be reduced to ethnic or religious chauvinism” (SA, 1996:4).

In the first draft of the National Policy on South African Living Heritage document lies some of the important cultural policies defined by the constitution. “The constitutional mandate on Arts and Culture has four concurrent functional domains in which the constitution allocates to one or more spheres within the context of culture and related matters” (Department of Arts and Culture 2009:21).

The socio-political context within which the new policies function is found in the discussion documents of the Reconstruction and Development Programme published in November 1995 (Urban Development strategy and the Rural Development strategy) (SA, 1996:5).

Acknowledging that there are no “specific matters relating to culture allocated to local government in terms of the constitution”, the constitution prescribes that “municipalities may administer matters assigned to them by the national or provincial legislation”. This may include aspects relating to cultural matters (Department of Arts and Culture 2009:22). The aforementioned draft covers ‘intangible cultural heritage’ that according to the 2003 UNESCO Convention means; practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills as well as the instruments, objects artefacts and cultural spaces associated with them—that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage (Department of Arts and Culture 2009:19). This
intangible cultural heritage has been used from generation-to-generation and is constantly recreated to suit the communities of the time in response to the environment they live in. The cultural heritage provides people with a sense of identity promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity (Department of Arts and Culture 2009:19).

In this regard and according to the revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage “the arts, culture and heritage have a vital role to play in the development, social cohesion, nation building and sustaining our emerging democracy whilst promoting reconciliation” (SA, 2013:20).

During apartheid “discriminatory practices and historical imbalances with respect to living heritage were affected through association of certain cultures with backward orientation, while others were associated with progressive orientation” (Department of Arts and Culture 2009:20). Moreover, according to the revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, during apartheid ethnicity and tribalism was fostered. Languages and cultures of black (i.e. African, Indian and coloured) people were unfairly criticized and free intercultural social interaction was regulated at best and prohibited at worst (SA, 2013:21).

Therefore, the current living heritage actively encourages the continuity of different South African cultures that were “discouraged during colonialism and apartheid and through missionary work, placing more emphasis on continuity and the formulation of a new national identity” (Department of Arts and Culture 2009:2).

The 1996 White Paper argues that “attention to living heritage is of paramount importance for the reconstruction and development process in South Africa” (Department of Arts and Culture 2009:20). Part of the cultural policies post 1994 encouraged ways to preserve song, dance and storytelling including oral history.

The South African constitution deals with fixing the imbalances and errors that the apartheid government made, more especially with issues that deal with South African cultures. It encourages and deals with the need for equality for all living in South Africa.
This is indicated earlier in Chapter 1 of the South African constitution. Upon naming the official South African languages the constitution prescribing that:

Recognising the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous language of our people, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages (as quoted in the Department of Arts and Culture 2009:23).

This meant that the use of our indigenous languages was encouraged, which then led to the use of the indigenous languages and music in opera and other music genres found in South Africa since 1994. Today “the diverse languages, cultures and religions of South African society enjoy constitutional protection and the right to development”, according to the revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (SA, 2013:21). However, because of the demands of mining and agriculture”, “indigenous cultural forms began to collapse according to the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (1996: 5).

The South African Bill of Rights is a document that has dealt with the rights of individuals living in South Africa. Cultural rights with human rights are included in the Bill of Rights in Section B of the constitution and as quoted in the Department of Arts and Culture (2009:24) that: “Everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice, but no one exercising these rights may do so in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights”.

Some of the cultural policies put in place after 1994 were meant to achieve the following:

- Social cohesion.
- Story telling promoting Ubuntu must be encouraged.
- Diversity and unity must be recognised through stories.

The policy in the Department of Arts and Culture draft then addresses the need for both the preservation and safeguarding of South Africa’s various cultures/living heritages and the promotion of social cohesion (Department of Arts and Culture 2009:24). According to the White Paper of 1996; “The Arts & Culture ministry was guided by the prescriptions of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 when drafting the White Paper”.

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The deputy Minister at the time B. Mabandla was quoted as saying:

We believe that indigenous South African art forms can and will reach a standard of excellence, and if anything, can set new and even higher standards of excellence because they grow out of diversity which characterises our vibrant cultural inheritance. (SA, 1996:2)

According to the 1996 White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (SA, 1996:6), the prime role of the national and provincial governments is to develop policies which ensure:

- The survival and development of all art forms and genres.
- Cultural diversity with mutual respect and tolerance
- Heritage recognition and advancement
- Education in arts and culture
- Universal access to funding
- Equitable human resources development policy
- Promotion of literature and culture industries

The White Paper notes that the provincial budget allocations for Arts, Culture and Heritage form a segment of the budgets of the various departments of education and culture. Furthermore, provincial governments are “accountable against the agreed minimum standards for the way their budgetary allocation for arts, culture and heritage is spent” (1996:6).

In this period of transition to budgeting zero, it will remain difficult precisely to quantify adherence to minimum standards” according to the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage. Therefore, as the starting point; the new policy notes that provinces might be expected to demonstrate that their expenditure promotes the full range of art forms, cultural activities and heritage. “It also has to demonstrate that their expenditure develops cultural industries and widens access to arts, culture and heritage promotion and development.

Therefore “the ministry might commit a portion of its own budget specifically to run pilot projects in the provinces with the aim of developing practical means of giving substance to the above policy. The role of the ministry will be to monitor and evaluate progress towards these goals” (SA, 1996:6) and to that “Access to all, participation in, and enjoyment of the arts; cultural expression; and the preservation of one’s heritage are basic important human rights” (SA, 1996:20)

The 1996 White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage states that “Everyone shall have the right to freely participate in the cultural life of
the community and to also enjoy the arts” (1996:20). Therefore, the role of the ministry is to ensure that the rights of all to freely practise and satisfy their need for artistic and cultural expression and enjoy the protection and development of their heritage, are realised (1996:6).

According to the 1996 White Paper the above-mentioned policies on arts and culture were supposed to be guided by:

- Freedom of expression
- Access
- Equity
- Redress
- National building
- Multilingualism
- Diversity
- Autonomy
- Conservation

The 1996 White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage emphasises as a right, an understanding and tolerance of all cultures based on binding universal ethics and values and mutual respect. Similarly, the Bill of Rights in the South African constitution (1996) states that: “Everyone has a right to freedom of expression, which includes freedom of artistic creativity”. Also, everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice (SA, 1996:20). However, “the current arts and culture dispensation still largely reflects the apartheid era in the distribution of skills, access to public resources, geographical location of arts infrastructure and the governance, management and staffing of publicly funded arts institutes” (SA, 1996:6).

The National Arts Council “seeks to bring equity to the arts and culture dispensation. Funded by the National Arts Council, transfer payments to individuals, organisations and institutions will be made. Therefore, according to the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage the principal task of the NAC will be to distribute funds to artists, cultural institutes, NGOs and CBOs” (SA, 1996:8).

The 1996 White Paper on arts, culture and heritage further undertakes that there will be a criterion developed for the above-mentioned distribution which will be consistent with
goals like that of the RDP. Therefore, criteria will promote the creation, teaching and distribution of literature, opera, oral history and storytelling, music, dance, theatre, musical theatre, photography, design, visual arts and craft which will fully reflect our diversity (SA, 1996:8).

Government can make sure that its resources are used rightfully so that impediments to expression are removed, that the social and political climate is conducive to self-expression, and that the arts, culture and heritage allow the full diversity of our people to be expressed in a framework of equity which is committed to redressing past imbalances and facilitating the development of all its people (SA, 1996:6).

The 1996 White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage mentions that there are seven most crucial areas to address in giving practical content to a new, just and fair arts, culture and heritage dispensation. These are:

- Transparent and catalytic mechanisms for distributing public funds.
- Transformation of all arts and culture institutions and structures
- Redistribution, redress and access
- Human resource development: practitioners, administrators and educators
- Integration of arts and culture into all aspects of socio-economic development.
- The rights and status of practitioners
- Sources of funding

It will be of vital importance to find out whether the ministry of arts and culture has indeed addressed above-mentioned areas, with particular reference to opera, which is the focus of this study.

As the ministry (Department of Arts, Culture and heritage) believes that visual arts are important components, it should also consider opera as an important component. Opera should not only come across as an expensive art form. Like visual arts, crafts and design, it provides employment operationally and artistically. Furthermore, as the department is investigating the feasibility of establishing an arts bank or other mechanism to serve as a self-funding agency which would provide opportunities for the development and marketing of cultural industries (SA, 1996:10), in the context and aim of this study, the
department should do the same with opera to ensure the inclusion and preservation of indigenous elements that could be used in South African operas.

According to the 1996 white paper on art, culture and heritage, one of the ministry’s responsibilities is to take South African artists to the world stage. “This will in turn benefit local art and artists through international experience, exposure and expertise” (SA, 1996:16). It should be noted that this study concerned literature about black opera singers performing on world stages.

The fact that South African culture consists of African, Asian and European traditions links it to the rest of the world. More immediate links are expressed in “the attention given to liaison with other Southern African countries to share knowledge, training and facilities for a regional network of information on indigenous African customs and beliefs” (SA, 1996:16).

Cultural exchange could get indigenous South African operas to be performed worldwide. According to the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage “Participation in the Commonwealth Games enabled South Africa to integrate with countries in Africa, the Caribbean and Asia. This is because most Commonwealth states are characterised by linguistic and cultural diversity having moved from being British colonies to independent states with a mixture of expatriate and indigenous cultures” (SA, 1996:16).

2.1.16 Indigenisation and Africanisation

In the preceding paragraphs “indigenous” has been used in the sense of a state of being “that which is not foreign or acquired” (Ignore, 2006:399). Moreover, Sirayi (2012; 14) describes being indigenous or indigenous people as a “special group of African people of African descent who, economically, linguistically and culturally share many things in common, especially their roots before they were colonised by Europeans.” For the purpose of this study, two concepts of indigenisation will be observed namely: indigenous culture and indigenous knowledge. Indigenous culture deals with different traditions and identities associated with the living community of a certain location. Thus indigenous, knowledge deals with the education instilled in a living community of people. However, it should be appreciated that communities of people around the world identify the concept of indigeneity differently. For instance, in Tanzania, indigenous identity “does not
represent miraculously preserved pre-colonial traditions or even a special sort of marginalization” (Igoe, 2006:399). Instead, it reflects the amalgamation of the current identity categories with the changing global structures of governance and development.

On the other hand, and for this study Africanisation refers historically to “indigenous people of Africa or African language speaking communities whose economy was based on pastoralism, agriculture and hunting in pre-colonial times….” (Sirayi, 2012; 12). Furthermore, the concept of Africanisation can be linked to the “pan-African movement from which two strains developed, namely those of the ‘negritude’ movement and of ‘Africanisation’” (Sirayi, 2012; 14). According to Sirayi (2012; 16) “Africanisation developed from the negritude movement, focuses on the rights of blacks against the claims of white dominance.”

According to Sefa Dei (2011:26) “theorizing indigenous identity raises tensions with uncritical postmodern politics of identity, which presents a singular valid or acceptable approach to how we vigorously theorize the question of identity”. For instance, the idea that Africans are not indigenous enough or are not indigenous at all needs to be looked at (Sefa Dei, 2011:26). This leads to the idea of Africanising the African theatre including opera, in which it will lead to “the process of cleansing and liberating the African and the process of training the African mind to think locally and be globally competitive” (Sirayi, 2012;16). For the purpose of this study the label ‘African’ is described as “African language speaking communities who are people of African descent” (Sirayi, 2012; 13). On the other hand, the ANC has given the word a new meaning “by linking it to the discourse of African Renaissance, which is concerned with promoting an African identity and developing African cultures as a broad-based political agenda” (Sirayi, 2012; 14).

From all these perspectives, it should be appreciated that “being indigenous is tied up to strategies of extraversion and ‘cultural distinctiveness’” (Igoe, 2006:404). This cultural distinctiveness is a result of the various cultures found across the continent especially in South Africa where we find communities embracing their cultures. In the context of this study it is therefore important to mention that the different South African cultures need to be preserved through story telling i.e. opera, libraries and other media. It is important to also recognise that there has been constant pressure for indigenous bodies to Indigenise
foreign ideologies and practises, sometimes for survival in local storytelling and at other times to fit into the western centred globalization project order (Sefa Dei, 2011:27).

According to Igoe (2006:403) indigenous Africans - as described by African activists and their Western supporters- are a distinct cultural minority who have been historically oppressed by minority African populations who control the state apparatus. In South Africa this has happened in the form of apartheid as racial segregation. However, this happened not only in South Africa, but also in Tanzania between 1973 and 1976. “The Tanzanian government forcefully relocated millions of rural people as part of its socialist policy of villagization (Ujamaa) without regard for their customary land tenure practices” (Igoe, 2006:404). Also, like other indigenous people around the world, groups such as the Kenyan Maasai and Barabarg have experienced displacement and the loss of land and natural resources on which their cultural identity depend.

According to Igoe (2006: 408), definitions of indigenous Africans always stress that they either live in the wild or as hunter/gatherers. In fact, outsiders define Indigenous Africans to be the ones who stay in the wild/farms hunting/grazing and becoming pastoralist agriculturalists (Igoe, 2006:408). In the present day, the concept of indigenisation or being indigenous can be defined by the way people live on a day-to-day basis. Traditions and livelihoods that indigenous people have worked hard to protect have become stigmatised in the context of the modern states in which they now reside (Igoe, 2006:402). Hence in indigenous South African operas you find the storyline focusing on a particular culture and as a result, telling the story in terms of what is perceived as the indigenous culture as seen in the present time. This modern indigenous culture seen in the present time has to do with the way in which people live in the twenty first century. For instance, it was mentioned that “the idea of people living exclusively from livestock keeping has always been difficult to achieve and tenuous to maintain” (Igoe, 2006:408). Recent transformations have made extensive livestock herding an untenable economic activity (2006:397).

Indigenous people have territories that are imposed upon by extractive industries; their beliefs and rituals are imposed upon by those who would convert them; and their independence is imposed upon by states striving for social and political control. They are those people whose position in the modern world is least tenable (Igoe, 2006:403).
Moreover, the indigenous “should be perceived as mostly about place-based knowing and understanding of a traditional sacred relationship between peoples and their cultures and cosmologies” (Igoe, 2006:23).

For instance, for the Maasai people of Kenya, their origins are a cultural district, their territory has been taken over by national parks, large scale commercial agriculture and small-scale subsistence agriculturists displaced from neighbouring highland areas (Igoe, 2006:399). Their situation therefore turns out to neglect the preservation and knowledge of their indigenous culture.

For the purpose of this study, it should be noted that indigenous knowledge is “not a uniform concept across all indigenous peoples” (Sefa Dei, 2011:23) and we must resist the Eurocentric temptation to define, label and categorise all human experiences. Thus, the western culture should not decide on how we preserve or showcase our indigenous cultures. For instance, in the three South African operas this study investigated the classic opera form opera is not followed from the beginning; there is no overture in all three operas. Whereas the opera form as created in Italy could be; an overture, an ensemble, a duet and an aria. However, the, order varies with each opera depending on the composition.

Indigenous knowledge is knowledge which originates from land (Bonda as quoted by Sefa Dei, 2011: 23). One can claim their Indigeneity as a form of identity for political and intellectual purposes (Sefa Dei, 2011: 24, 26).

According to Igoe (2006:399), indigenous identity in Tanzania does not represent miraculously preserved -pre-colonial traditions or even a special sort of marginalization. Rather it reflects the convergences of existing identity categories with shifting global structures of development and governances.

The global indigenous people’s movement is one of ‘culturally distinct’ non-western societies. Therefore, “By virtue of their historical resistance to colonialism, state formation and global capitalism, these societies have managed to remain connected to their traditional homelands, while maintaining their cultural traditions (Igoe, 2006:402).
Indigenous also refers to knowledge located within a body even when that body travels (Sefa Dei, 2011:27).

Sefa Dei (2011:30) notes that “indigenous knowledge speaks to the responsibility of knowledge to promote social change”. Indigenous people we should seek to construct their identities outside of that which has often been constructed within Euro-American paradigms (Sefa Dei, 2011:31). This leads to the concept of Africanisation which “should be the primary and principal communicator of the African experience” (Sirayi, 2012; 15).

Claiming of identities must be done inclusive of racial and spiritual identities. Knowledge of all cultures is filled with ancestral knowledge, myths and superstitions, spiritual claims and bits of romanticism (Sefa Dei, 2011:31). Sirayi (2012; 14) argues that since the isiXhosa and isiZulu people “have their different traditions, Africa itself needs to be used contextually, giving a more precise and special meaning to the term in South Africa”. It should then be realised that Africans knew who they were before coming of Europeans (Sefa Dei, 2011:31).

Finally, it should be appreciated that Africanisation is in fact “a conscious and deliberate assertion of nothing more or less than the right to be African” (Sirayi, 2012; 15).

2.2 Chapter Conclusion
The sections in this chapter leave gaps of what scholars still need to document concerning opera as a Eurocentric art form exhibited in a post-colonial African milieu. As mentioned in chapter one there has not been much academic focus on this topic and it is hoped that this study will open wider the doors that have been long hidden.
CHAPTER 3: TEXT AND MUSICAL ELEMENTS IN CULA MZANSI

3.1 Introduction
Before an analysis of the three-selected works is embarked on, particularly considering the objectives of this study, it is prudent to briefly foreground the general characteristics typical of indigenous African Music and the choral music practices of South African black composers in particular. Relevant or important questions arising from this would be: what generally characterises an indigenous African rhythm, an indigenous Africa melody, the harmonies, textures and structures?

3.1.1 A typical African rhythm: An African rhythm is determined or influenced by the speech pattern of the particular spoken language. It is influenced by the speech-rhythm. Several authors on African music, particularly those who used Western lenses when studying Africa music, ended up postulating that African music is polyrhythmic, or is full of cross-rhythm, and so on. This is because they could not decipher or dissect the plethora of rhythms that occur simultaneously in a single performance, which invariably involved aspects such as dancing, singing, hand-clapping, acting, percussion instruments and different interpolations from the audience; which constituted one whole performance (Mugovhani, 2017). One clearly recognised characteristic generally known to black choral musicians in South Africa is that of syncopation

3.1.2 A typical African Melody: A typical indigenous African melody is generally not long, and is usually repeated, thus resulting in a cyclic nature, which is described as “a piacere”. The melody has a natural uninterrupted sequence. It is at most determined by the tonal inflections of the language or the semantic structure of the particular language or cultural group (e.g. IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, Tshivenda, and so on). It generally begins from a high tension to a low tension. In other words, there is a constant rip-saw-like overall falling pattern (Dargie, as quoted in Mugovhani, 1998: 75). The melodies start on a high pitch and work gradually downwards in a smooth step-wise motion. The descending melodic lines have an affinity with the overall down-drift intonation found in Nguni language groups of South Africa (Rycroft, 1967, quoted in Mugovhani 2010; 60-67). Generally, the length of the spoken phrase or word dictates the length of most of the melodies. Almost every syllable has its own individual note. So, the melodic contours are bound to be dictated by the syllabic contour and length of the sentence.
3.1.4 Characteristics of indigenous African harmonies: It is generally believed that Indigenous African harmony is intuitive (Qwabe, 2017). In other words, black people in South Africa have an inclination to spontaneously respond to a given melodic line by adding the other voice parts according to the way they feel at that particular or given moment as the music is generated.

3.1.5 African Musical Texture: According to Nketia (1974: 160-166), indigenous African societies traditionally or generally employ polarity in their vocal music. This is the duplication of melodies in octaves, with men and women singing together. Indigenous African music prominently features homophonic parallelism, which involves parallel 4ths and 5ths. Also, African vocal music is either popular or it is unison singing. Another typical textural element is antiphony; which involves some dialogue between a certain group of voice parts against another group (for example; sopranos and altos against tenors and basses, or many other voice–part formations\arrangements. The texture may alternately be thinned and thickened by employing what is generally known as call-and-response. This call-and-response pattern is responsible for determining the structure or form of most indigenous African vocal performances (Mugovhani, 2010)

3.2 Background to the three selected operas.
This Chapter deals particularly with musical elements and text of the three operas analysed, because musical elements and text are elaborate and correlate with each other. The analysis comprises content analysis, literature view and participatory observation from when the researcher was assistant director of the three operas when they were produced at the Soweto Theatre.

The three operas analysed are part of a package commissioned by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in 2010. UCT commissioned five South African composers to come up with twenty-minute operas that depict the life and times of particular characters revealing of South Africa pre-1994. The event was entitled Five: 20, meaning five operas each of 20-minute duration.

The idea behind Five: 20, was that a South African based opera company, Gauteng Opera, would include three short South African operas in their yearly season under the banner Cula Mzansi. The series was also meant to give a platform for South African
composers to devise opera with elements of indigenisation. For this research three of the original Five: 20 operas staged by Gauteng Opera in June 2015 at the Soweto Theatre were chosen, to observe how elements like costume, setting, text and music within an indigenised African perspective manifested themselves within the operatic form. As mentioned earlier these operas were: Bongani Ndodana- Breen’s *Hani*, Martin Watt’s *Tronkvoël* and Peter Klatzow’s *Words from a broken string*.

It is important to state that the South African composers responsible for the selected works have certainly been trying to compose operas that include elements of indigenisation and that speak to ordinary South Africans. With this intent they spoke to the audience through a staged opera, channelling pre-apartheid conversations; intending to represent what opera in South Africa needed to be post 1994 and therefore their intent was in line with the research question of this study.

In order for the researcher to come to a conclusion, he needed to investigate whether there were indeed indigenous African music elements included in the operas as per the new cultural dispensation in South Africa.

3.3 Analysis of musical elements and text in the selected operas

3.3.1 *Hani*: Synopsis and Commentary

The opera uses the slain anti-apartheid leader Chris Hani as an embodiment of all those who lost their lives fighting injustice. Hani came from a humble background, devoted his life to the anti-apartheid struggle and was a revered leader in exile who courageously led a group of freedom fighters across the crocodile infested waters of the Zambezi. His assassination in his driveway by a right-wing extremist in 1993 brought the country to the verge of a civil war and was the crucial factor that got all parties to commit to a firm date for the first democratic elections in South Africa.

The opera *Hani* consists of three characters and a chorus. It is set in the dead of night in the study of a writer (The Librettist) who, in an extended monologue recalls his personal encounter with Hani while in exile in Los Angeles. The writer enters a dream-like state where he encounters a chorus of ancestors and later in the story, a soothsayer who acts as an *imbongi* (praise singer). Woven in with the metaphor of bravery and sacrifice (Hani),
the librettist compares the masses in South Africa’s young democracy to the panther in Rilke’s poem – powerful yet paralyzed.

The voice of the soothsayer calls out to re-enact an ancient ritual, the Famadihana ceremony of the Merino and Betsileo people of Madagascar, where the corpses of the Razana (ancestors) are removed from their tombs, cleansed and wrapped in a new shroud before becoming guests of honour at a party that may last several days. This, the people believe, will keep the powerful ancestors happy so that they will intervene positively in the earthly life of the family. (Source: Gauteng Opera)

The opera evokes the spiritual realm of Africans at large telling a story and telling of a ritual that some might have not known about. As the librettist enters a dream-like state the audience is taken straight into his head as he tries to evoke the spirit of Hani to recall encounters with him.

3.3.2 The opera Hani: Text

All three operas have different language arrangements. For instance, Hani is alternatively sung in an English and IsiXhosa. When interviewed by Bertha Spies (2010:2), Ndodana-Breen mentioned that “it is important to speak to the events of our time and in the language (text and music) that reaches out to the majority of our fellow citizens”. In line with the problem statement and purpose of this study, Ndodana-Breen has shown the possibility of localising opera as he also alludes to the study purpose. South African opera composers like Ndodana-Breen have been working on the task of creating exciting operas that speak to the events taking place in South Africa. This can be viewed as a way of bringing issues of national importance to most South Africans.

In the opera, Hani is also referred to as Tshonyane which represents the voice of ordinary South Africans, “he was not self-centred, big headed and elitist. He was not preoccupied with material things (Vavi as quoted by Spies, 2010:2).

According to the monologue written by the librettist - as the character in the opera - “the text he is writing calls upon the spirit of Chris Hani to help us navigate in this new South Africa (Rutter as quoted by Spies, 2010:2).

The text of Hani plays with idioms and metaphors which suggest the librettist’s knowledge of poetry i.e. ‘there is a hole in the nations bucket’. According to Rutter as
quoted by Spies (2010:3-4), Executive TV producer and librettist of the opera Mfundi Vundla explains that the libretto asks Tshonyane to ‘plug the hole in the nations bucket’ because there are some citizens who are concerned about the moral standard of the country and its people in terms of the treatment of foreigners, women and children and the extensive corruption in our society. Lastly, the libretto in the opera is also compared to Rilke’s poem Powerful yet paralysed, in which the masses in the 22 years of South African democracy are compared to the panther in Rilke’s poem.

The language is manipulated through the usage of notes with using the isiXhosa syllables. The researcher observed that the music in Hani follows the indigenous African music nuances in that there is a rip-saw pattern typical of African speech patterns.

3.3.3: The opera Hani: Rhythm

According to the composer of the opera, the music of Hani was inspired by the composer’s own indigenous culture. In an interview with Spies (2010:2), Ndodana-Breen talks about the importance of “speaking to the events of our time in the language (text and music) that reaches out to the majority of fellow citizens”. He achieved this objective by making use of his indigenous music language isiXhosa to which he has a close cultural relation. In the interview, he further mentions that he is Xhosa, born that way and that he cannot help but show it in his music; “it comes out […] the music and harmonies of our people, our modes and rhythms, our harmonic language, how we use music and dance in our daily lives” (Spies, 2010:2). Meaning, indigenous elements have been included in terms of the isiXhosa rhythmic

From the above it is clear that the suggestion by the new government to include elements of indigenisation has been implemented in the music of the opera. The use of isiXhosa text and the use of distinctive harmonies, modes and rhythms reflects the government’s will and at the same time answers the research question of this study. IsiXhosa is an indigenous South African language that is used in the opera to tell a South African story. Already the depiction of this culture suggests the inclusion of indigenisation in South African opera, in accord with the focus of this research.

In Hani the music opens with a 12/8 meter as seen on figure 1. The conductor mentions how he felt like it was in a three-meter beat per bar, which then forced him to conduct the piece in a three-meter feel. This was to ensure that the orchestra would be able to follow
through the music. In the beginning of the piece, an African shaker instrument is introduced in the same 12/8 meter, which presented a challenge for the conductor as he went with the three meter as mentioned. It should be mentioned that in African music rhythm stays the same with alternations. Therefore, this suggests that the composer employed an element of indigenisation.
Figure 1. The opening music of Hani, with a 12/8 meter
In an interview by Michael Blake (2011:42) Ndodana-Breen refers to his music as “influenced by the rhythms of Africa, blended with an eclectic, postmodern approach to contemporary music”. This then suggests that Ndodana-Breen attempted to include elements of indigenisation in his opera. Like Spies (2010:2) the researcher observes the use of the repeated three note pattern which is found mostly in isiXhosa traditional music. The three-note pattern “is firstly heard as an isolated angular motive in bar 4” (Spies, 2010:2). The above shows how the elements of indigenisation are manifested in the rhythm of the music.

In conclusion, the rhythmic pattern in *Hani* represents that of African music. Clapping and dancing are used in it, opera which are traits of African music where rhythm is polyrhythmic with clapping and dancing. The singing of the text adheres to the speech pattern of the isiXhosa language. The rhythm is manifested by the use of polyrhythms especially at the end of the opera where the chorus sings ‘zitsho izinyanya’ when they clap and dance. The orchestra and cast play at different rhythms. The rhythms are syncopated with irregular beats and the music is accompanied. This is how indigenous elements are manifested in the rhythm of the music.

3.3.4: The Opera *Hani*: Melody
The music in *Hani* starts off with the ladies of the orchestra singing ‘*wen a Tshonyane*’ after five bars of the introduction. The melody of the female voices is modal as is typical of African indigenous music. Ndodana-Breen fuses elements of African with Western elements. He uses an African voice with Western accompaniment. The manifestation here is in the modal use of melody in the music of the opera.

The inclusion of indigenous elements in the melody is in the notation according to the language represented. Some of the melody sung by the librettist starts on a high pitch and work gradually down the scale, a typical characteristic of African music known as rip-saw pattern. In the accompaniment, the violins play single notes in D and as the bars increase one gets the feel of how African melodies are created; one voice begins followed by other voices singing in a monophonic texture, which is also typical of African music. This is a call-and- response type of the African melody.
The melody changes as the librettist (the lead character in the opera) starts singing. What is interesting part is that it sounds like a normal opera recitative inflected with African music elements as the rhythms are syncopated with irregular beats while the music is accompanied. In this instance the composer fused elements of African indigenous music with the Western style.

The melody in *Hani* therefore opera contains much indigeneity. Elements typical of African music are manifested in it. For instance, the melody in the recitative sung by the librettist start on a high pitch to low tension which is the tonal inflections of the language represented.

3.3.5: The opera *Hani: Harmony*

*Opera Hani* opens in a Bb major key and the harmonic structure observed when the chorus ladies sing accompanied by the orchestra is of a mediant DFAC. This harmonic structure continues throughout. However, an Ab is introduced in the first violins, a monotone before the bass starts singing. On bar 89 as the chorus comes in, the researcher observed parallel seconds, fifths and eights between the voices as seen on figure 2 below as is typical of Zulu melodies. There is an element of indigeneity as the text tends towards an African call-and response type of singing which is also a trait in African singing.
Figure 2: Excerpt from *Hani* musical score
The harmony represented in *Hani* is very much Western, meaning that it does not represent much indigeneity. African harmonies are not fixed. As asserted earlier, black people in South Africa respond to any given melodic line and spontaneously add other voice types. However, the manifestation of indigenisation occurred in the harmony of the music in terms of the call-and-response type of African singing.

3.3.6: The opera *Hani*: Texture

In *Hani*, the piece begins with a polyphonic texture. This texture continues for five bars until the voices join in (Figure 1). On bar 6 we then observe a homophonic texture as the ladies of the chorus start singing. This texture is one of the traits in African music. From this it is clear that this is a way the composer used to include indigenous elements in the music of the opera while trying to stick to the Western form of composition. The homophonic texture continues right through until we experience a heterophonic texture on bar 66 between the flute and the clarinet which is typical of African music. The *marimba* indigenous African instrument (the precursor which is *mbira*) is heard. The composer included the elements of indigenisation as an accompaniment. A similar pattern is observed in the Marimba section as what is played on the right is played an octave lower on the left. The texture then returns to homophonic on bar 74 when the baritone starts singing whilst the Marimba keeps the heterophonic texture.

In as much as the composer uses other textures in the music, the researcher observed that he always returns to a homophonic texture that defines indigenous African music. A biphononic texture is introduced on bar 85 and lasts for a few bars suggesting an anticipation of the following bars. We then experience a homophonic texture on bar 89 when the chorus joins in. The researcher observes that a homophonic texture is used by the composer between the chorus, the soothsayer and the accompaniment. However, he uses a polyphonic texture when writing for the chorus, something which is unusual in indigenous music. It should be realised also that the call-and-response form typical of African music is observed. It could be said that the composer fused elements of the Western style of composition with the indigenous African style of composition. This would be consistent with the composer having taken to heart new government’s drive to include elements of indigenisation in the opera to make them appeal to ordinary South
Africans. It can be concluded that the use of the call-and-response form of composition also impacted positively on the audience who would have been able to recognise the call-and-response form from their African music and relate to them in this opera. This is also a way that indigenous elements were involved the opera; in terms of the African homophonic texture and the use of an indigenous instrument.

On bar 148 (Figure 4) below it can be observed that a clear homophonic texture is made as the chorus and the soothsayers sing ‘zitsho izinyanya’. The texture then moves to another type of the African texture monophony as the chorus sings in acapella for a period of three bars. It should be realised that the one aspect that suggests a form of indigenous composition in this piece is the call-and-response aspect of the African style of composition, which lasts until the end of the opera. The opera ends in a homophonic texture suggesting an indigenous ending to the composition.
The composer employed texture typical to African music as mentioned in the preceding paragraphs. However, there is no section in the opera where there is no accompaniment as African music texture may be popular and sometimes unaccompanied. A typical call-and-response African music texture is observed in the opera which confirms the manifestation of indigenous elements in the music. Antiphony is also observed as the chorus ladies sing ‘do not stay with dead’ while the men in the chorus sing ‘OR Tambo must stay dead’ so creating a dialogue between the two groups. It should be concluded that the inclusion of indigenous elements in the music of the opera was done by including traits of African music texture.

3.3.7 The opera Hani: Structure

_Hani_ opens with a simple strophic form in which the ladies of the chorus sing ‘_wena tshonyane_’ repeatedly in the same melody and text. It should be mentioned that the strophic structure is a very familiar kind of structure in African compositions which makes it indigenously African. Ndodana-Breen mentions the need to use home languages in opera in order for us to tell our very own stories. From this it can be seen that elements of Indigenisation in the opera were implemented in terms of the inclusion of an African structural trait in the music of _Hani_. Moreover, the researcher observed an ABCB structure which is an unfamiliar form of composition style in this genre. In the opera the music is “reduced to bare essentials, reflects the uncompromising starkness of the physical as well as the psychic environment” (Spies, 2010:8).

As the Baritone starts singing a strophic structure is also observed in which the pitch is notated the same. As already mentioned, the baritone sings as if speaking as an operatic form in the Western style of composition known as recitative.

In bar 85 an ABA verse-chorus form is observed as the soothsayers sing ‘_buya tshonyane_’ the chorus comes in singing ‘do not stay with the dead’. The structure then returns to strophic as the male soothsayer sings ‘_zithso izinyanya_’ on bar 94. For the first time in the opera we get introduced to a call-and-response structure -typical of indigenous music- on bar 148. This call-and-response structure is observed further into the music from bar 171. In bar 176 the structure returns to the ABA verse-chorus form. It can be concluded then that the composer used an element of Indigeneity in terms of the structure of the music of
the opera. It can be concluded that indigenous elements were included by using the strophic form found in indigenous African music.

3.4 The opera *Tronkvoël* (Jailbird)

3.4.1 *Tronkvoël*: Synopsis and commentary

*Gauteng Opera* offers the following introduction: “Tronkvoël is inspired by an event that occurred during the imprisonment of the South African poet, painter, and freedom fighter, Breyten Breytenbach in Pretoria Central Prison. This event is best illustrated by Breytenbach’s own words, in the interview titled “I am not an Afrikaner any more”. This was the first interview he consented to, after regaining his freedom in 1983:

The opera attempts to put on show this sequence of events against the backdrop of struggle for freedom for the majority of South Africans during the apartheid regime. André Brink comments that Breytenbach has become a symbol of resistance to oppression, and that he has given new hope to many Africans, Coloureds and Indians because of his marriage to Yolanda (a Vietnamese girl) and his convictions. Breytenbach’s prison poetry voices his own circumstances, as well as those of the oppressed in his country. By combining his poetry with the universal language of music (from African, European, and Asian origins alike), this opera is an endeavour to relate to people universally, who endure the misgivings of humanity and the world as such.”

3.4.2 Tronkvoël: Text

In contrast to *Hani*, *Tronkvoël* is sung in Afrikaans throughout, except at the end of the opera where the male chorus sings the famous struggle song ‘*Senzeni Na*’, albeit not in its original tune but to the famous tune of the South African Zulu lullaby ‘*Thula Baba*’. The text is in Afrikaans because “Breyten Breytenbach is well known for his outspoken concern about the future of the language” (Watt as quoted by Spies, 2010:6). The researcher observed that the Afrikaans surtitles in the opera were accompanied by English translations, which made it easier for non-Afrikaans speaking patrons to understand the storyline. An equivalent also happens in opera written in Italian, French or German where English surtitles are quite often used to help patrons understand the opera.
Because the opera’s text and the entire production is set in his own prison poetry, Breyten Breytenbach writes about “how he stared at the brick wall for hours, his mind blank” (Spies, 2010:6). This refers to his having spent two years of his seven years imprisonment in solitary confinement. The researcher observed a metaphor when Boerseun shouts ‘Pluk sy benerige vlerk af’ (Pluk his bony wings), which he refers to Breyten Breytenbach’s own metaphor that ‘a chicken has wings but cannot fly’.

The researcher did not identify manipulation in the Afrikaans spoken language through the composition. Rather, the music sounded very much playful. On the other hand, the recitative was sung using the correct tonal inflection of the isiZulu language. In this sense the music in Tronkvoël follows indigenous African music nuances.

Evidently, how indigenous South African Afrikaans language in Tronkvoël answers the how of the research question. The composer included Afrikaans in the text following the suggestion by the new democratic government. Also, the inclusion of indigenous text of the isiZulu culture with the correct tonal inflections shows how the composer included elements of indigenisation.

The synopsis/summary of the opera gives the reader a clear picture of the opera. The summary for Tronkvoël is provided in this study.

In Breytenbach’s own words:

*Die libretto speel teen die agtergrond van die Apartheidstaat in Suid-Afrika (1975-1977) in Sentrale Gevangenis, Maksimum Afdeling, Pretoria, af. Hierdie is die gevangenis waarin Breyten Breytenbach die eerste twee jaar van sy gevangeneskap deurgebring het. Breytenbach se tronksel was ongeveer vyftien treë vanaf die galg gesitueer.*

(Source: Gauteng Opera).

**Translation:** The libretto is set against the background of the apartheid state in South Africa (1975-1977) in the maximum-security section of the Central Prison in Pretoria. This is the prison in which Breyten Breytenbach’s first two years of his sentence were served. His cell was about fifteen paces from the gallows.
Hy noem dat hy ál die gruwelike tonele wat in die gevangenis afgespeel het, as ’t ware met sy oor kon sien; die gesingery van die ter dood veroordeeldes (hulle sou twee weke voor hul teregstelling in kennis gestel word van die dag waarop hulle gehang word en het dan dag én nag gesing asof hulle bedwelm is), die gehuil van die vroue en kinders die oggend van ’n teregstelling, die staaldeure wat in die gange oopgemaak word en die veroordeelde wat hierdeur na die slagpale lei is, die bulderende stemme van die tronkbewaarders, die stemme van die ander bandiete wat freedom songs sing, en met blikbekers en –borde teen die tralies van die tronk kap.

(Source: Gauteng Opera)

Translation: Breytenbach tells that he witnessed all the gruesome scenes in the prison, with his own eyes: the singing of the condemned (they were told two weeks in advance about the date of their execution and after that they sang day and night as if they were drugged), the crying of the women and children on the morning of the execution, the steel doors in the corridors opened and the condemned led through them to the gallows, the bellowing voices of the prison guards, the voices of the other bandete (prisoners) singing freedom songs and clattering with their dishes and tin cups against the prison bars.

3.4.3 Tronkvoël: Rhythm

The musical rhythms heard in the beginning of Tronkvoël when the bass is singing constantly changes from the 7/8 meter to an 8/8 meter, 10/8 back then it falls back to an 8/8 meter as seen on Figures 5 and 6 below. This suggests that the composer was observing the ‘text set to the music’. The second scene opens with what is observed as a C major key. The meter begins in 4/4 but suddenly changes to 2/4 in the second bar, the third bar then returns to 4/4 with the fourth bar opening in a 6\8 meter as seen on figure 7.
Figure 5: Tronkvoël musical score
Figure 6: Tronkvoël musical score
Figure 7: Tronkvoël musical score
Staying in the second scene as Boerseun begins singing the meter changes from a 3/4 to a straightforward 4/4 as seen below on figure 5. The researcher observed how the singer always looked at the conductor to make sure that he began right on the quaver.

Figure 8: *Tronkvoël musical score*
Figure 9 *Tronkvoël* musical score

**Figure 10** below shows the third scene opening in a 4/4 meter. The accompaniment has quavers followed by semiquavers and demisemiquavers. The researcher observed that the composer was providing a feel of where the scene is taking place and the text that the Breyten character is singing. In this scene Breyten is in a prison cell talking about himself and his situation.
Figure 10 *Tronkvoël* musical score

The composer had fun playing around with moods in this opera. In scene 6 the researcher observed a normal 3/4 meter which opens Breyten’s aria as seen on the figure below. In this scene Breyten talks about his favourite tomato plant. The composer turned the mood down by using florid rhythms and an *adagietto* tempo. Overall, the rhythm section of the
opera does not reflect much indigeneity. In African music there is no change in meter or tempo.

Figure 11: Tronkvoël musical score
It can be concluded that the change in variations of the rhythm in the opera shows the manifestation of indigenous elements in this opera.

3.4.4 Tronkvoël: Melody

The melodic line of the orchestra sympathises very well with the vocal melody being sung. The melody of the voice and the harmonic accompaniment of the orchestra in the beginning of the opera are typically indigenous African.

Tronkvoël also displays elements of the Western style of composition. As mentioned in the rhythm analysis above, the music in this opera has a forward fluidic movement and this is seen in the melody of the accompaniment. The only challenge observed by the researcher was the relationship between the meter (7/8) and the bass singing the melody. During rehearsals the singer could not particularly be on the beat on this irregular meter as he was used to the normal Western regular meter. However, as the music continued the bass singer got in tune with what the meter required of him. It is important to note that African music singing needs to be taught in music schools in Africa, especially to opera singers from Africa.

In Tronkvoël, all nine scenes musically depict Breyten Breytenbach’s stark prison world. It should be mentioned here that the melody in Breyten’s aria ‘Tomato Plant’ is indigenous only at the end were modality is observed. In the portion after the aria, which is a repetition of Swartman’s aria heard in the beginning, his modality is typical of African music. Martin Watt is observed using the string section of the orchestration because according to the librettist “Breyten heard these instruments in his head while in jail (Watt as quoted by Spies, 2010:6).

There is an element of atonality when the music continues which gives the opera a Western feel rather like the music in Alban Berg’s opera Wozzeck. This is because the meter of the music constantly changes, something which is not a trait of African music.

The last scene of the opera where the prisoners are singing is an adaptation of a typical well-known folk melody ‘Thula-thula Mama’ but using words that resonated throughout South Africa during the 1976 student uprising ‘Senzeni na’. It starts as a single
monophonic melody building up with other voice types coming in polyphonically and thereby making the texture of the music grow richer and richer as it proceeds.

The opera is very Western in general with only a few elements of indigeneity as mentioned above. One of the indigenous elements observed is the tonal inflections of the language in the beginning of the opera as the bass sings the melody. Also, observed in the singing of the indigenously South African language of Afrikaans

### 3.4.5 Tronkvoël: Harmony

In *Tronkvoël*, the introduction is a C Major Key with an observation of parallel thirds and fourths between the orchestra and the bass singer. There is not much difficulty in the harmony as the music in this opera is florid. The researcher observed an imperfect cadence at the end of the first act. The imperfect cadence introduces the listener to the second act that has an allegro tempo. In the beginning of the second act (Fig 4) there is an observation of an Eb and a Bb in the accompaniment followed by an Eb immediately on the second beat with the E becoming a flat again as the music continues. This change of keys can be observed as atonal. Also, it should be mentioned that this is typical of a Western composition as in African music the key remains constant.

On bar 33 (Fig 10) on the score, an observation of parallel fourths and fifths is made as Boerseun and Hond sing together. However, the parallels quickly change to six on bar35.
Figure 12: *Tronkvoël* musical score
The last scene - as mentioned in the preceding paragraphs is reminiscent of a struggle tune that was sung in Apartheid South Africa. It can be seen then that this was a way of including an element of indigenisation in line with the demands of a new cultural orientation in post-apartheid South Africa. Harmonically the composer wrote in such a way that we do not lose the melody of the original tune. The scene opens in Bb with the male chorus of Tenor 1 and 2 singing in unison. On bar 9 basses 1 and 2 join in to make a full harmony of a subdominant FAC. The researcher then observed a split in harmony on bar 38, in which the two groups of tenors and basses sing different texts in the same melody. The tenors sing 'ama bhunu azizinja' whilst the basses continue with 'senzeni na'. This is a typical style of African composition is which the music is polyphonic; however, the melody or the text and rhythm vary. The same was observed on bar 48 in which the harmony splits. Tenor 1 has 'kuyisono ukubamnyama' whilst the rest of the chorus men keep singing 'senzeni na'.

As in Hani, the harmony and the melodic lines are notated according to the Western style of composition.

3.4.6 Tronkvoël: Texture

In the beginning of Tronkvoël on bar 38 in the orchestra the cello part has a polyphonic texture. This is an indication of how the texture of a piece of music may not be indigenous while the rhythm is. From this it is clear that in as much as a few indigenous elements are found in the music, the composer did however basically use Western elements of composition in the opera. A homophonic texture with an element of indigenous type of singing where the multiple voice parts come in one after the other is observed in the accompaniment on bar 58. This suggests an indigenous style of composition. In the beginning of the third act, the researcher observed a biphonic type of texture where the string section plays stagnant notes in different rhythms. This monotony continues right through the end of the act.

Monophony is observed in the last act of the opera right in the beginning as the chorus men start singing (Fig 12). It continues through bar 25 when the orchestra joins in for two bars as, Hond starts barking like a dog, then it returns to a monophonic texture. This section of the opera is sung acapella with an exception when Hond barks. It should be
mentioned that acapella singing is also a trait of African music. Watts’ music uses a lot of dissonance especially in the scene where Boerseun and Hond confront Breyten mocking him about ‘plucking out his chicken wings’.

The texture is interspersed by what is termed occasional heterophony in African music where there are now many improvisational gesticulations while the harmony remains essentially Western. This heterophony is observed in the last scene of the opera in which the chorus of men sing parallel to Breyten and Swartman. There are tinges of Africanisation due to manifestations of modal chords typical of African music. This then shows how the manifestation of indigenous elements has been done.
Figure 13: *Tronkvoël* musical score
African music textures are found which then manifests indigenous elements in the opera. Parallel 4\textsuperscript{th} s and 5ths typical of African music texture are also observed. Vocal duplication known as polarity was not observed by the researcher nor was a call-and-response texture. It should then be noted that not all indigenous elements were found in the texture of the opera. The inclusion of monophony and occasional heterophony show how the composer included some elements of indigenisation in the music of the opera.

3.4.7 *Tronkvoël*: Structure

Martin Watt opens *Tronkvoël* with an indigenous through composed structure as the bass starts to sing. The only difference is in the ‘ntliziyo yam’ which sounds the same in every section. The composer merged structures as he uses a twelve-bar blues structure. This twelve-bar blues structure is a chord progression from the subdominant to the tonic in the beginning of the second verse.

The researcher observed a call-and-response structure in Act 8 in the duet between the baritone and the soprano when singing ‘*mon a mour*’. This call-and-response form is a familiar form of singing used in African music in which one voice will call and two or more voices respond. This suggests the use of South African music elements and also shows the element of South African cultural music, which the audience reacted to. The same section is accompanied by the western twelve-bar blues in which the chord progresses from the dominant to the subdominant. The opera ends with an indigenous strophic structure. This inclusion of African elements in the structure of the music confirms how the composer manifested these elements to give the music an indigenous feel.

3.5 The opera *Words from a broken string*

3.5.1 Synopsis and commentary

This opera tells the story of Lucy Lloyd, the nineteenth century linguist who, with her brother-in-law Wilhelm Bleek, transcribed the language of the San people, referred to in this study as “Bushmen” for ease of reference because that is the term used in the opera. However, the term Bushmen is generally considered to be pejorative and racist. The opera relates the relationship that Lucy forms with convicted San men who are brought to her house by a police constable to tend to the garden. The police constable does not approve
of the bond that Lucy forms with one particular San man by the name of Kabbo who eventually escapes while in the care of Lucy Lloyd. The transcription of the San-Bushmen language by Lucy Lloyd and her brother in law will help future studies and generations of modern Bushmen to learn about their indigenous language. *(Source: Gauteng Opera)*

The opera shows a particular aspect of apartheid culture when the constable who brought the convicted Bushmen in Lucy’s house does not like the bond established between one of the Bushmen and Lucy. It was typical of apartheid racial discrimination to deprecate interracial relationships of any kind.

3.5.1 *Words from a broken string: Text*

*Words from a Broken String* is sung in English, with the names of the Bushmen mentioned in their original Khoisan language i.e. //Kabbo, A!kunta Dia!Kwain , /han=Kasso. According to Spies (2010:9) The text ‘They no longer have their thinking strings, they have no understanding’ is a comment that could particularly point to the title of the opera, suggesting that, ‘broken strings’ refers to a lack of understanding which makes sense as the Khoisan did not really have any understanding of why they were being ill-treated.

Something interesting that the researcher observed, and that Bertha Spies has noted is that ‘Words’ in the opera title is not only the first word seen in the cover of the score, it has a greater meaning. According to Spies (2010:10) “the importance of words reveals a third level of signification”. This signification is the way in which the spiritual ideas of the San people when communicating with Lucy Lloyd meet those of the physical world, signifying the metaphoric communication of the San people, linked to their own heritage. This in itself is ample evidence that the opera is depicting the nature of African beliefs. This again demonstrates the inclusion of indigenous elements found in the opera. As Africans we believe largely in the spiritual world -that is the world of ancestors- which is told and portrayed here in operatic form.

Because the opera is mainly in English, the researcher observed the use of the correct tonal inflections of the spoken English language. However, the researcher felt that the composer could have included the indigenous Khoisan language -with surtitles- in the opera to make it more indigenous.
It should be mentioned that language and text in indigenous opera needs semantics when sung. For instance, when speaking isiZulu, the speech fluctuation starts high pitched and moves downwards. Hence when composed it is mentioned as rip-saw-like. Tonal inflections are important in indigenous compositions. In *Hani* and *Tronkvoel* the tonal inflections were observed in the use of African languages.

In as much as there are elements of Western styles of composition in the three operas, the composers included elements of African music, which one could easily conclude was a way of indigenising opera in South Africa. It should be mentioned that for the music to be completely indigenous, all elements of African music should be included; monophony, polyphony, polyrhythm and occasional heterophony just to name a few. The composer included the original names of the Khoisan being portrayed, giving an answer to how the inclusion of indigenous elements was done.

### 3.5.2 *Words from a Broken String*: Rhythm

In *Words from a Broken String* the researcher observed a straight forward, simple flow of music. The music signifies the ‘Words’ with a relatively simple rhythmic structure compared to the two other operas. The simple rhythmic structure “and the absence of melisma, contrasting with the more florid melodic physiognomy of Lucy’s music, suggest a kind of timelessness in which rhythm and pitch serve the text” […] (Spies, 2010:10)

The opera opens with the brass section -as seen below- (figure 14) playing unusual rhythms from which any director can pick up and try make up something. The marimba plays in hard sticks but in *p* according to the score marking. The brass section plays aggressively continuous notes in crescendo before the constable starts speaking to introduce the Bushmen as prisoners. Military music is heard each time before the constable speaks. This is known as ‘Leitmotif’ i.e. a continuous musical phrase associated with a particular character in opera.

The rhythmic pattern remains constant with only the marimba instrument changing. This can be viewed as a way of keeping the music in the accompaniment as interesting as possible, knowing that the African audience is quite familiar with this indigenous instrument. The marimba instrument is used in many African cultures, being sometimes
referred to as the African piano. As mentioned earlier, marimba is the precursor of the Mbira African instrument. Use of the marimba then demonstrates implementation of African indigenous elements in a basically Eurocentric genre. The researcher also observed a change rhythmically in the Timpani as the chorus men start singing ‘We who are bushmen’ backstage.
Figure 14: Part of the score from *Words from a Broken String*. 
In this opera there is no representation of a typical African rhythm characteristic as the opera is notated in a more Western style of composition. It appears that the way the composer included elements of indigenisation in the opera was to use the marimba instrument.

3.5.3 Words from a Broken String: Melody

Words from a broken String has the usual Western melodies in the singing lines however there are elements of indigenisation in the beginning melody. The opening recitative done by the constable has characteristics typical of Africanisation, being reminiscent of an Imbongi or praise singer. The recitative is sung by an African voice making the identity very pronounced. The beats are strong and neither too accented nor syncopated. It is straight fluidic music. In the beginning when the Bushmen are singing there is use of crotchets with a simple key in C Major. The C major key is used however, accompanied, creating a feel of 20th century music which is mostly atonal.

In the work an indigenous marimba is heard in the percussion section, being used as an accompaniment. The accompaniment is used with the violins, creating an atmosphere of darkness as the Bushmen introduce themselves at the beginning. In as much as the marimba is encountered as a Western instrument by some people, it still carries the musical modality typical of African music. However, the music in the accompaniment is more Western than indigenous. The only exception is with the constable in the beginning who sings the recitative unaccompanied with tonal inflection of speech. However, the melody of the recitative is long, something which is not typically African. The manifestation of indigenisation is more in the inclusion of the marimba.

3.5.4 Words from a Broken String: Harmony

In the beginning of Words from a broken string a harmony of EGCE and GBDbG is heard in the orchestra. As the music continues a triad of EBE is heard on the left hand of the synthesizer. Although this instrument is not indigenous, it creates an atmosphere of coldness in the way the composer has written for it. The right hand of the synthesizer has parallel fifths and octaves. The notation is not necessarily indigenous but the orchestra
when playing together somehow brings out an element of indigeneity. This might have been what the composer was trying to achieve.

On bar 47 there is an observation of an F#ACF# harmony when the orchestra plays together. The only element in the orchestra that makes the music sound indigenous is the percussion section.

No African harmonies were observed in *Words from broken a string*, as what is described as a trait of African music harmony is not represented in the harmony of the, thus making the harmony part of the music not indigenous.

### 3.5.5 Words from a Broken String: Texture

In *Words from a broken string* Peter Klatzow embraces the usage of biphony between the singers and the synthesizer in the beginning of the opera. As mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, the sound and the synthesizer correlate with the atmosphere of the first scene of the opera with the help of the marimba. This pattern continues throughout as the Bushmen introduce themselves. The string section continues with biphony on bar 96. From this observation, it can be said that the texture in *Words from a broken string* does not represent much indigeneity. It should be concluded that the texture is enhanced by the marimba instrument.

In conclusion, it should be mentioned that a slight polarity was heard when the Bushmen are singing together in the opera.

### 3.5.6 Words from a Broken String: Structure

The composer opens with a through composed structure as the one Bushmen sings. The second Bushman sings in a simple indigenous strophic structure. This is confirmation that indeed Klatzow fuses elements of indigenous music with Western elements. When the third Bushman enters, a through composed structure is heard with the fourth Bushman singing in a strophic structure. This is observed as a form of ABA structure. Moreover, as the four Bushman sing together in bar 84 a strophic structure is observed. From this it is seen that the composer could not implement elements of indigenisation when it comes to the structure of the opera. The composer however touched on some indigenous elements when the story takes us to a spiritual realm as the Bushmen tell Lucy about
themselves it is as if evoking a spirit and as Africans we honour the spirits of our loved ones.

Bar 29 starts off with the constable outraged at Lucy. The structure that the composer used with the first two lines is the Western twelve-bar blues structure. When the Soprano sings her aria a good example of the indigenous strophic structure is observed in an AABA form. There is no call-and-response which would be typical of African music.

The music is reminiscent of *uShaka kasenza ngakhona: The Epic*, by Mzikazi Khumalo. It is clear then that the composer Peter Klatzow borrowed some of the musical elements from Khumalo, with whom he had previously collaborated in the staff notational arrangements of Khumalo’s works.

### 3.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter the usage of Western elements fused with African elements of composition in the music of the three selected operas have been discussed. It was found that some of the musical elements do include several of the African music element found in indigenous music.

In as much as the researcher attempted to find elements of indigenisation in the three operas, the operas analysed are predominantly still Western in style. However, it must be emphasized that they include elements of indigenisation. According to Blake (2011:42) the intention of *Five: 20*: “was a concerted effort at political correctness in the Libretti, composers, directors, librettists and designers […] brought to the creative process a curious mismatch between subject and music” (Blake, 2011:42). Possibly Blake has in this instance failed to notice the significant indigenous elements in the music of these operas, as discussed in this chapter. It can be concluded then that while the three operas analysed are not exactly indigenous they include elements of indigeneity in their music and text and thus makes them somewhat indigenous in the sense that an audience member who is familiar with African music will identify and readily appreciate what the opera is about.
In this study, the analysis of the *Cula Mzansi* operas is divided into two chapters. Chapter three has dealt with Musical elements and Text. Chapter four discusses observing of the costuming.
CHAPTER 4: COSTUME AND SETTING IN CULA MZANSI

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the musical elements together with text as these two go hand in hand. It was found that the musical elements and the text found in the three operas analysed confirmed efforts by the opera creators to indigenise the Western opera form in accordance with government policy. This chapter focuses on the other elements to be analysed namely costume and setting. These elements are separated in order to give a clearer analysis of the three operas and also, because costume and setting are intimately related, as are music and text analysed in the previous chapter. It should also be noted that the settings in Italian, German and French operas reflect the respective cultures and periods in which they are set.

An opera will never be complete without the singers completing the personality of a particular character with a costume that reflects that character.

4.2 Costume

In *Hani* the two soothsayers wear the traditional attire of the Xhosa people. This immediately suggests the manifestation of indigenous South African elements in the opera as per the aim of this research. This is then one of the attempts at transporting an indigenous element into an alien form thus attracting an audience that can relate to the message and context of the performance. The female soothsayer wears the typical rolled fabric *iQhiya* turban in Xhosa culture. The description of the finer details found in the isiXhosa regalia arouses the researcher’s interest as the researcher is also Xhosa. In front of the turban are different colour beads “which were introduced by European traders in the 1800s” (Joyce, 2009; 38). It can be seen then that just like the items of the traditional dress, the South African indigenous operatic form too can become a hybrid, fusing an alien genre with local elements. Once a local audience is able to see items on stage that they can relate with, as well as identifiable themes and contexts they then become connected with a genre which has otherwise acquired a notorious reputation as alien and largely elitist. Inclusion of these decidedly Xhosa elements in a traditionally alien form
immediately speaks to the aspect of indigenisation and the attempt to build a local audience for this form.

The woman soothsayer also wears an item of isiXhosa women regalia the *umbhaco* which consists of a long under-wrap and an apron, also worn in different colours and designs in modern South Africa (see figure 16 below). A Xhosa woman wearing *umbhaco* is highly respected as she represents being someone’s wife and mother. An audience member familiar with the culture is transported back to the rural areas in which they were raised. The male soothsayer wears the male *Umbhaco* worn in the form of a skirt, topless with beads (see figure 15 below). This suggests that the costumer went with every detail of the isiXhosa culture, fully indigenising this aspect of this production. In contrast to the soothsayers, the chorus of men wear pants and cloths on the upper body whilst the female chorus wear skirts, neither being traditional Xhosa culture costumes. It should also be mentioned that the chorus men and women are part of the chorus of ancestors that the librettist in the opera encounter whilst in the dream like state. Whereas in traditional operas the entire cast is usually seen wearing costumes that relate to the period of the opera, it seems that in *Hani* the composer showcased modern as well as traditional elements of indigenisation in his opera, presumably to attract and appeal to an alternative audience. In this respect *Hani* is an indigenised South African opera that challenges traditional practices in opera that in the new dispensation were deemed essentially elitist and divisive. Costume thus becomes a significant aspect in localisation and indigenisation in a quest to have these as acquire a local appeal.
Umngqa also known as igwala are beads worn on the heads of Xhosa men. These beads connote the very important roles that the men play in their communities, with authority being. Itshoba is in the form of a stick and that has an ox-tail at the top. It is used by traditional healers/soothsayers to help them find what is missing or to speak to the ancestors. The inclusion of elements connected to traditional African belief systems such as we see above indicates the depth of meaning that can lie in indigenisation.

As Africans, we believe in ancestors and that traditional healers help us to connect with the deceased. Xhosa men carry the Itshoba at some events as a means of portraying authority. Therefore, the use of Itshoba is familiar to an African audience and therefore
they understand its true meaning and value, in contrast with being shown a foreign or unfamiliar object, which leads to an absence of audiences - especially black audiences - at the theatre. All this is part of the quest to build alternative audiences for an otherwise alien art form. These elements demonstrate how in line with the quest to Indigenise, traditional African elements were included in order to challenge the dominant identities of this imported art form. This has the effect of appealing to and building alternative audiences within a post-colonial African content.

By including South African artefacts and costumes that local audiences can relate with into post-1994, these new operas also serve to educate audience members not familiar with some elements in the costume. Xhosa men wear Isichebe - short beads worn around their necks. They also wear beads around their feet and wrists known to the researcher as amaso. The different beads around the body have different names. This is one example of Africanising the operas to an extent of having all the smaller details featured in order for indigenisation to take place. Beads are a big part of many African cultures and they are represented differently in these different cultures. The inclusion of such attention to detail is all part of a grand quest to make South African opera connect with an alternative audience and grow as it also moves away from the previously elitist connotation. Therefore, when seen on stage by the audience, conversations between the different cultures emerge, more knowledge is gained, and greater social integration achieved among the people of South Africa. In this way, the quest to Indigenise acquires an even nobler goal, which is that of social integration.

The inclusion of traditional elements in the costume of the isiXhosa culture gives the audience and the reader a deeper insight into opera as an alternative form that can appeal to a wider audience and at the same time educate. Opera then ceases to be a foreign genre portrayed on the local stage. Rather, it is portrayed in terms of local culture and in a style that appeals to any member of the majority South African audiences. It should be emphasised that when the audience member identifies with what is familiar to them they more easily relate to it.

Traditional operas also depict the costume of their own cultures. For instance, if an Italian opera is staged, it is up to the director whether to stay within the period that the opera was originally staged in or to modernise the costumes. Therefore, boundaries are being broken
in South African opera productions in which we use costumes that relate to our people. One cannot force a nation to follow a practise that its members do not relate to; thus, the form is not merely changed but rather indigenised.

The traditional Umbhaco usually worn by Xhosa women consists of several blankets/cloths wrapped around it. This traditional dress represents mothers’ hard work. These are women who are referred to in Setswana as ‘o tshwara thipa ka bo haleng’ meaning that she protects the household as holding the haft of a knife. Therefore, every time an audience member who relates to the culture sees the soothsayer in Umbhaco they are reminded of the women in their families. Ifulu is the part of the dress covered by Umbhaco which appears on top of the blankets underneath it. It is clear that excellent research was done for Hani to represent the culture correctly and make it an indigenous South African opera.

In Tronkvoël the character of Boerseun who an apartheid era Afrikaans policeman wears the khaki regalia that these policemen used to wear. Contemporary black South African audiences are able to recognise the regalia as it constitutes a significant part of the country’s history. They may have forgiven but have not forgotten. It should be mentioned that Tronvoël caters for two types of audience; those who experienced apartheid themselves and younger audience members. Those who experienced apartheid are reminded of the country that was. The post 1994 audience members learn about the history of the country. Basically, the staging of this attempts to tell a story of apartheid South Africa through music, which is why it was selected for this study. By appealing to the people’s sense of history, the opera is able to showcase a theme that contemporary black South Africans can relate to at the same times as learning about their national history. In this way, an otherwise alien form is rendered local and relevant through indigenisation, thus appealing to an alternative audience as it also builds a newer and bigger following.

Apartheid era policemen are also represented in this type of regalia in other South African musicals and movies that tell stories of apartheid. The apartheid era police and prison warder uniform then become an indigenous symbol of the racist past. Here the composer and director of the opera used an indigenous South African costume to represent the era the opera is written in so as to connect with a larger audience. It should also be mentioned
that librettists and composers of this genre need to collaborate more often if they are to create stories that appeal and speak to the history of this country, and if their operas are to have a wider appeal, attract bigger audiences and serve as an alternative and more relevant art form.

All this confirms the indigenised nature of the opera where South African opera connoisseurs are able to use elements of indigenisation in a foreign genre. Since the opera was set in prison; all characters including prisoners were observed wearing apartheid era prison regalia. Audience members who experienced ill-treatment themselves, were taken to jail and made to wear such clothes, are taken back and would want to come and see the next indigenised opera in anticipation of something that they can relate with. Indigenous elements therefore help to grow the form and create local appeal in ways that previously elitist forms could not.

Figure 17 20TH Century prison warder and prison regalia

*Words from a Broken String* tells the story of the Khoisan who were gradually abandoning their culture due to the encroachment of modernity. The basic focus of this opera qualifies the opera as an indigenised opera that tells the story of this abandonment. The Khoisan lived on plant and wild life and wore animal skins for clothing. Focusing on the life of
the Khoisan immediately gives the opera a decidedly local and indigenous flavour that is likely to appeal to a local audience. The audience learns about the first set of human beings who set foot on the African soil. This is not too different from the traditional Italian, French and German operas which depict their lives in operas and also created operas from existing novels and story books. Indigenisation in a local context is therefore part and parcel of common practise also in traditional European operas where content and context are designed to appeal to the local consumer. This helps to sustain the form.

In *Words from a broken string* the Khoisan walk bare foot, wearing pants and jackets. They move and sing around the stage with mannerisms depicting the wild animals on which they prayed historically. This can be seen as a way of including indigenised content in the opera with regard to costume, where the Khoisan wearing jackets and pants show them gradually losing their culture due to the arrival of the modern South African lifestyle. If this opera could be taken overseas it would serve to educate foreign audiences seeing that audiences everywhere associate other nations with particular costumes. Foreign nationals especially those in the United States may simplistically view Africa as one country where everyone walks around in animal skins. Operas like *Words from a broken string* assist to correct erroneous notions about Africa, eliminating what has been experienced as stigma for many years. As mentioned earlier the Khoisan people have always been imagined in a distorted way.

The opera then takes the audience back to the original indigenous costumes where the Khoisan are presented wearing animal skins. During the last scene the singers sing ‘We who are Bushmen’, as if the composer was reminding the audience of how real Bushmen looked like. Lucy wears what appears to be a long ball dress throughout the entire opera. In South Africa, this may depict the ‘madam’ referring to a white woman that black South Africans used to work under. The constable in the opera wears 19th century South African police uniform which was similar to that of 19th century British police. In these ways the composer depicts a South African story using indigenous South African elements. Opera

The main reason for indigenising these operas is what the new government had stated when it indicated that after 1994, composers should create works that would appeal to South African audiences including the music of previously disadvantaged artists. From this directive, it is clear that the purpose of the story is to take an alien form, domesticate
it, and use it to give insights into stories that all South Africans were supposed to know about and relate to. The primary purpose in this quest was to have more black people going to the theatre to watch opera. By so doing, a previously elitist and alien form was localised and rendered more relevant in order to showcase more local themes. This had the potential to build a bigger audience for opera. Indigenisation was also meant to attract more patrons in support of local South African culture.

Figure 18: 19th Century Police Regalia.

Figure 19 Traditional Khoisan regalia
Figure 20 “We are Bushmen” regalia

Costume is an important aspect of performance and needs to be researched well for the benefit of the audience and the representation of the culture on stage. Setting impacts on the way the audience views a story.

4.3 Setting

Except for Hani, the three selected operas are wholly set in South Africa. This is no different from traditional operas which are set in the appropriate time and place. Thus, an Italian opera might be set in the Florence of a particular era. One bizarre creative aspect that the set designer and the director of Cula Mzansi used, and which the researcher was part of as assistant director, was that the stage was set out in books as seen in figure 21 below. This was a way of showing the amalgamation of the three operas and the theme of being not just an intellectual act but that of preserving African stories as in a book.
A thorough reading of the synopsis indicates that in *Hani* the main character is a librettist whereas in opera a librettist is the writer of the text. In *Tronkvoël* Breyten is the poet Breyten Breytenbach and in *Words from a broken string* Lucy Lloyd is an author writing about the life of the Khoisan. All three operas depict real South African stories where elements of indigenisation are paramount.

*Hani* is set in a hotel room in New York where the librettist (in a dream like state) is seen trying to remember the days he met *Hani* and how that made him feel. It should be mentioned that in this particular production the librettist is not set in a room but on top of the main book whereby the audience is given a platform to play with their imagination. Moreover, the soothsayers and chorus members exhuming *Hani* exist in the librettist’s thoughts echoing texts about raising the spirit of Chris Hani. To a black audience this depiction would relate closely to the indigenous people’s belief systems. South Africans and indeed Africans as a whole believe in ancestors and that their deceased family members continue to exist in the realm of the spirit world. Therefore, the audience is guided through the story by what they can relate to. The chorus of men and women
represents the community practicing *famahidana* in which it is an annual ritual of cleansing the dead. Within the African culture a soothsayer is seen as a healer and a fortune teller foretelling the future. As black South Africans, we believe that as traditional healers, soothsayers can help us to connect with our ancestry. Chris Hani was himself of Xhosa origin a culture that believes strongly in ancestry. By incorporating ancestor belief, the opera rids itself of an elitist reputation.

These operas constitute a wakeup call for South Africans to get in touch with their roots, thereby connecting with what is truly theirs. Moreover, these indigenised operas help to improve the way South Africans view operas in a way that relates to their daily lives.

*Tronkvoël* takes place in a prison in Pretoria (now Tshwane) were Breyten is a prisoner. The researcher observed how in the opera all parts of a prison are represented in the sets. The prison cells and the playground are where the prisoners perform their exercises and perhaps played sports to keep fit and as an extra-mural prison activity. Audience members who experienced apartheid are thereby taken back in time to what used to be their everyday life. During apartheid, black South Africans were routinely arrested enforce apartheid laws. At the same time, audience members not familiar with apartheid are transported into a historical experience through opera and are educated on how the apartheid system used to treat black South Africans.

This representation of apartheid is in line with what this research is trying to prove as an opera in South Africa is being portrayed in its own style, representing its people, telling our own stories.

Also, in as much as prison cells were part of the *Tronkvoël* set, the books were also still on stage and used as prison cells during the set change, with the main open book as the playground for the prisoners. The opera starts off outside the jail cells (two stacks of books, upstage one stack on each side as seen in figure 21. The audience then observes Swartman and Breyten being hurled into jail cells. This exemplifies the indigenisation apartheid story in which most black South Africans –(in which in this case it is an Afrikaner)– spent most of their days fighting for freedom in real and metaphorical prison cells. Therefore, this is an authentic South African story. Furthermore, the opera changes
scenes to the playground -the open book in the centre of the stage- outside. The audience is then transported back inside the jail cells.

Words from a broken string takes place in two significant places: the house of Lucy Lloyd and outside in the veld where the Bushmen lived. This leap is portrayed by one of the singers portraying the Bushmen people jumping from one book to the other.

From the above and according to the setting of these operas it should be realised that all three operas have indigenised South African elements in their setting that make them authentically indigenised South African operas. For the setting of indigenised operas to appeal to South Africans it should have elements that South African audience can relate with.

4.4 Chapter Conclusion

It is evident from this analysis that costume, and setting have profound effects on producing an opera on stage. The researcher views these elements as the simplest and most immediate way to indigenise the form. Therefore, it is important to indigenisation for proper costuming and setting research to be done in order for all the elements to depict some form indigenisation in their content. The appreciation of an opera on stage by an audience member becomes a national understanding of the importance of producing stories that relate to South Africans.

The next chapter summarises the study and provides feedback on the researcher’s investigation.
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction
The chapter summarises the findings from the study and offers recommendations based on the analysis of the three operas.

5.2 Summary of the study
This study set out to critically interrogate the inclusion of indigenous South African elements in South African opera productions since 1994, as per the new dispensation following the end of apartheid. The study set out to analyse three recently composed South African operas. The inclusion of indigenous elements was meant to assist future generations of South Africa to understand and learn how the operatic form can be made to appeal to South Africans. The three operas analysed in this study were: Bongani Ndodana- Breen’s Hani, Peter Klatzow’s Words from a broken string and Martin Watt’s Tronkvoël.

The study was structured as follows: Chapter one dealt with the background of the research, explaining that the researcher had attended an opera production at the South African State Theatre, which happened to be the first time he watched an originally composed South African opera. The chapter also provided definitions of some of the key terms including opera, indigenisation, new dispensation and content that are likely to challenge readers with no knowledge of the opera genre. This research then aimed at trying to find out how indigenous South African elements were manifested in opera post 1994. The research argued that composers of this genre attempted to indigenise opera way before equivalent recommendation by the new government was made. In order for the aim to be reached the researcher objectified the analyses of three existing South African operas in order to determine whether they reflect indigenisation or include elements of indigenisation in their content.

A qualitative research design was implemented together with content analysis as the principal methodology. Participant observation was used as the researcher had been assistant director in the Gauteng Opera Cula Mzansi production of the three operas analysed. It was further discussed in this chapter that content analysis will help in the
discovery of indigenous elements in the three operas. Ethical consideration together with outline and purpose of study were discussed.

Chapter Two examined the thematic content of the operas, looking at what other authors have written about indigenous elements in opera particularly after 1994. The focus was not only on the elements manifested in opera in the new dispensation. The researcher noticed a dearth of literature on the topic at hand. Literature on the education system and the history of opera in South Africa were also introduced.

During the time that the researcher visited the South African State theatre to watch the opera Ziyankomo, it is clear that this exemplified an indigenised opera in that it told a story of a Zulu King and his wives which a story is typical to many cultures in South Africa.

Considering the argument that something is only indigenous if it originates or grows from a particular place, or alternatively that it might still be labelled as indigenous if it placed on foreign land and accumulates characteristics from that environment, it was concluded that opera in South Africa is indigenous only if the elements found in the content relate to the audience. Obviously, the operatic form cannot be changed as an aria is as important as the ensemble work.

The 1996 White paper came at the right time, a time when South Africa was going through change and looking into starting on a clean slate through the reconciliation between the different races. This research argued that this reconciliation need not be pursued by producing operas about politics but also in stories of our Kings and Queens. Therefore, the idea of including elements that relate to a South African audience in opera was achieved, reconciliation through dramatic production is a slow process because of the obvious financial factor in the arts however with time it will get better.

While writing up this research the researcher discovered that ‘localising’ the content of existing operas was not universally seen as a way of indigenisation, a learning curve was needed on how to compose operas that relate to ordinary South Africans. For instance, the inclusion of the AK-47 in the South African version of the opera Macbeth was already a way of giving the audience a vivid idea of what the opera was about. That opera sparked
a conversation about it being apartheid in reverse. It was argued that if there was no representation of South Africanism elements in the opera, the opera was not going to be recognised and labelled as ‘apartheid in reverse’. A South African black audience relates more to a cow being slaughtered rather than to an Italian peasant riding a horse in a heavy garment. Symbolism is very important for moulding the audience’s expectations.

During the writing process of this research the researcher discovered several constraints operating on local opera. One of these is the lack of funding and another is lack of black audience members attending opera. Considering how the genre was introduced in South Africa historically, it was argued that post-1994, audiences should increase because they could now relate to the stories being told.

The four provincial performing arts spheres paved the way for the current situation in South African opera. More focus should have been on the preservation of the art form rather than the spending of money producing lavish and expensive operas. The government subsidised the genre because they saw -according to their survey-that a decline in revenue could have been avoided, however that is not what this research is about.

This research argued that indigenous South African operas need to depict socio-political stories that an audience member can relate to. These stories should express what many are afraid of voicing. For instance, the Marikana incident could be reflected in a dramatic opera involving miners who lost their lives in a crowd through gunfire.

Whereas opera was introduced as a means of exalting white apartheid culture the new government set about redressing that policy. This research argued that the mere compositions of South African stories will gradually introduce the black majority to the theatre and thus increase the number of black patrons.

It was noted that there have been compositions of indigenised South African operas some of which were derived from existing operas. The mere transposition of the language, setting and perhaps costumes of existing traditional operas to a South African context may be seen as a weak way of indigenising operas. This research then argued that as long
as the opera relates to a South African audience through elements of indigenisation in its content, it constitutes indigenised opera.

The government will inevitably have a problem when an opera depicts a critical political story. They (the government) will look at it as an attack on them and might well not even fund the production. It has been seen that as more operas depict topics that relate to the audience, they tend to move away from being elitist. This research then observed that an Indigenised opera will be the one that depicts a story that relates fully to conversations that the audience member has with themselves on a daily basis.

Over the years the South African education system has tried to include music as a subject in schools and has partially succeeded. More schools in black communities accommodate the learning of basic music notation. It was then argued that this will in turn help the children further their studies at university. It should also be mentioned that it is unfair to include the music subject in school if that is not even included in a budget speech. Children need to be taught about the basics of indigenisation in the same subject as this would help them understand the concept of indigenisation post 1994.

The history of opera before and after 1994 was summarised to give the reader a broader perspective on this genre. One other main issue discussed in chapter two was the government’s cultural policies and steps to indigenise existing operas so as to appeal to South Africans.

Much as opera was introduced as part of the apartheid government’s plan to marginalise black cultures, post 1994 saw a new dawn in the preservation of indigenous cultures and the implementation of new structures in opera to appeal to the majority.

It was explained that composers like Verdi used opera to depict their national identity. This meant that he used the platform to show his pride in the Italian nation. It was then argued that in order for opera in South Africa to appeal to the masses there was need for national identity.

It was recounted that the first opera company in South Africa -the Eon group- was a coloured only opera company -together with the struggles it faced. It was mentioned that one of the major challenges faced at that time had to do with political issues. Funding was
received however this led to political compromise in which all their achievements were negated. According to Roos in *The South African Theatre Journal* (2014:1) the acceptance of government funding led to a “political compromise that cost them their reputation and, in time, robbed them of their art”. During this time Eon group singers did not receive any professional compensation and had to produce between their regular work.

Before 1994 South African opera singers had prominent careers because of the performing arts bodies supporting this genre. Later these performing arts bodies lost funding from the government and had to close down in 1996 because operas were expensive to stage and box office sales were low.

In the new dispensation, the government came up with the 1996 White Paper which encouraged directors and producers to localise the content of existing European operas. However, that was not received as a way of Indigenising the genre.

Because in government subsidies for Performing Arts Councils, opera and ballet swallowed a lot of state money, a new strategy had to be implemented for the preservation of the craft and the development of other art forms. Companies associated with the PACs were able to apply for the National Art Council grant. However, the limited financial resources had to be spread thinly.

It was mentioned that due to the lack of funding, many black South African opera singers moved overseas to replenish and manifest in this genre. The research further argued that this lack of funding is not a new phenomenal and had been a challenge over the years. Research is needed into finding ways for opera to survive without government funding or how existing funding is to be used to sustain this genre.

Literature was cited on the trend towards black South African opera singers. It was observed that black opera singers were seen prominently post 1994. It was then mentioned, according to the 1996 White Paper, that this was because the new government system suggested the inclusion of indigenisation in opera, which meant more black South African storylines in opera in South Africa. However, Roos (2010:196) noted that the 1996 White Paper did not bring about black opera singers in South African opera but in
fact black opera singers like Marcus Desando and Raphael Vilakazi were seen on prominent stages overseas pre-1994. A future study might investigate whether more black opera singers were indeed seen after 1994 on South African opera stages and not necessarily overseas.

This chapter further observed the period of opera post 1994. In as much as there was not much literature on the subject during the writing process of this research, the researcher managed to at least find operas produced, directed in South Africa and that also speak to a South African audience. It was through discovering the opera Ziyankomo that the researcher found out about the three other operas analysed in this research.

Eichbaum (1995: 6) mentioned that “As a medium, opera is ideal for engaging or depicting issues of social, political and cultural differences”. It was argued that there will inevitably be government pressure, for example, if an opera were to depict the current political state of South Africa there is certain content the government would have a problem with.

African musical elements were compared to Western musical elements. Haecker (2010:11) observes that the elements found in African music include: rhythmic complexity, pentatonic or modal tonality, overlapping call-and-response forms, percussive quality and melodic inflections dictated by African speech tones. On the other hand, Tracey and Kubik et al (1969:11) argued that the above-mentioned musical elements are derived from the Western style of music. This research concluded that in as much as the African style of composition or singing has these elements, Western musical terms are used to describe them. It was argued that rhythmic patterns and speech tones vary differently. In most cases in African music there is use of improvisation, performed or created (singing, acting, playing an instrument) with little or no preparation. It was also pointed out that it is hard to notate indigenous music, which then makes it difficult to indigenise opera in South Africa. This research also saw that Western classical/opera compositions use a polyphonic texture whilst African music uses a more monophonic texture with an occasional homophonic texture in forms of parallel thirds, fourths and fifths.
In African music, Mugovhani (2015:9) quotes Lo-Bamjoko as saying, “the use of pentatonic scales is quite common among the different language groups of Africa as she identifies four scales namely, textatonic, pentatonic, hexatonic and heptatonic, as progressions that create different modes in African music.” This means that text and rhythm and melody have to be in one group in African composition because African languages use a lot of dialects that need to make sense when sung. This research argued that melody plays an important role when composing for indigenous South African opera music and the melody needs to be in accordance to the spoken texts of any South African dialogue.

A common type of singing in Nguni vocal music is ‘call and response’. This type of vocal singing is found mostly in Nguni traditional music where more than one voice part sings non-identical texts and have non-simultaneous entry. It was argued again that in order for indigenous South African opera music to be indigenous there is a need to go back and learn about our Traditional/Cultural music as reference. In the three operas analysed, elements of indigeneity were found in the music including the ‘call and response’ type of composition.

An argument was developed in chapter Two on Western art music being the hub of compositional knowledge. This was seen by Drummond (2015:109) as a far-fetched assumption “brought about by post-colonial outlook within a broader context where the dominance of Western knowledge and the marginalisation of subjugated people has become a challenge” (2015:109). It was reasoned in this research that the reason for thinking of Western art music as central is because of the lack of documentation of African music. Other scholars went on to mention that although African music is complex, however because there is no structure to be analysed music practitioners assume it is easy. It was argued that if music practitioners dig deeper they will discover the complexity of sliding tones and cross-rhythms found in African music that are not easily notated.

In 20th century opera composition, national identity became important. Operas were being composed in accordance to the identity of a certain culture or cultures. Text plays a major role in articulating the type of culture portrayed on stage. In South African operas national identity is important because the audience needs to relate to the type of culture being
portrayed on stage, which makes it easier for the audience to understand what the opera is about. The type of text written for an opera is therefore guided by the type of nationality or race being portrayed on stage.

This research argued that it is important for composers, librettists and poets to communicate with audiences in the language they are familiar with. Euba (2001:121) states that “modern composers seeking to communicate with audiences across Africa are advised to make text their fundamental aspect of communication”.

In opera, costume is as important as the text. This is mainly because costumes depict the period the opera is written in. For instance, there will be a difference in costume in an opera depicting the life and times of South Africans in 1959 and an opera depicting the life and times of South Africans in 2018. It was argued that it is important for composers to thoroughly research about the culture or race being portrayed. Aswegen (2009; 35) observes that “A costume expresses certain aspects of the character to the audience and highlights his/her personality.” This therefore shows the importance of national identity not only in text but also in costume.

The study has shown that setting/scenery is also important as it brings the audience closer to reality. The study described the setting used from the early theatre of the Greeks, to the opera Baroque era and the modern set designing. The usage of the proscenium arch in the late 16th century in Italy that made elements on stage appear and disappear was discussed. Rose (1994; 1) mentions that unlike during the days of Greek theatre, the modern theatre set designer “can present more concrete evidence of what shape the set might eventually take” which then requires good thinking. The study has argued that modern set designing has taken from the theatre of the past, as Oenslager (1936; xiii) observed: “our theatre procedure today is no more than the outgrowth of the convections and traditions inherited from the major epochs of the theatres past”.

The study further outlined apartheid and some of the laws that oppressed the black majority, including the Population Registration Act of 1950 which classified everybody according to the broad of categories, Europeans (white) coloureds and blacks, while coloureds and blacks were closely classified along tribal and ethnic lines such as (Indian, Asian, Zulu, Gaqua, Xhosa, Cape Malay etc.) It was argued that opera in South Africa
was introduced to the white majority as a means to separate them from the black majority. Another insidious Act was the Racial Segregation Act which forced thousands of people out of their homes and businesses.

This research went on to look at some of the cultural policies that were initiated in the new dispensation. In terms of the South African Bill of Rights everyone has the right to freely express their culture. This saw a huge change in the usage of indigenous language in mediums such as Radio, Television and in opera, hence opera needed to be indigenised post 1994. Part of the cultural policies post 1994 encouraged ways to preserve song, dance and oral history. Storytelling and social cohesion were two of the cultural policies mentioned.

It was noted that different communities around the world understand the concept of indigeneity differently. Igoe (2006:399) observes that in Tanzania, indigenous identity “does not represent miraculously preserved pre-colonial traditions or even a special sort of marginalization” but reflects amalgamation of the current identity categories with the changing global structures of governance and development. Being indigenous in South Africa is tied up with cultural distinctiveness. Cultural distinctiveness arises from the different cultures we have in South Africa that each represent a type of indigenous culture. By focusing on Africanisation, the research observed that theatre shows -including opera- need to be Africanised in order for Indigeneity to be present.

Chapter three and four analysed indigenous elements that were observed by the researcher when he was an assistant director of the 2015 production of Cula Mzansi. Chapter 3 also discussed observation of text and music -text was analysed together with the music as they go hand in hand. Rhythm, melody, texture and structure were also discussed as part of the music analysis- while chapter four focused on the elements of setting and the costume.

Chapter three started with synopsis of the three operas analysed. In the opera Hani the composer Bongani Ndodana-Breen mentions the importance of writing text and music that speaks of events of our time and reaching out to “the majority of fellow citizens”
This was argued to be one of the ways the composer used to indigenous the opera. It was argued regarding melody that the opera is mostly in syncopated rhythms—unlike the Western style of composition. A homophonic texture was then observed in the opera. The research argued that the composer continually returned to this texture as a way of describing Indigeneity. Furthermore, the research argued that the composer fused some elements of Western style of composition and the African style in the opera as mentioned in the preceding paragraphs.

In *Tronkvoël* different rhythmic patterns were observed. It was argued that in Western compositions this pattern is not often used and that in African indigenous music there is always a change in rhythm. The research then suggested that the composer used this pattern in order to indigenise the opera. It had been observed in production that some of the singers in the opera kept on observing the conductor to make sure they stayed in rhythms. The research then argued that this is because South African opera singers are not trained to sing in the African technique that requires a change in style not like that of the Western composition. It is therefore advisable for schools and music institutions to start the process of teaching singers the African style of singing and compositions.

In *Words from a Broken Strings* straight fluidic rhythms were observed. This research then argued that the composer used more of the Western style of composition than in the other two operas. The research further noted the use of the term ‘Bushmen’ referring to the San people as it is seen as a pejorative term, however the researcher uses it in this study because it has been used in the opera.

The marimba instrument was observed in the accompaniment suggesting that the composer implemented an indigenous instrument with Western instruments as a way of indigenising the opera.

Text in the three operas played a major role in which it had to be go in line with the notation. Because African music uses many dialects when speaking, those dialects need to make sense when sung. It should be mentioned that the text in *Tronkvoël* is in the Afrikaans language.
Costumes play as major a role as the text and music do as they reflect the culture portrayed on stage. For instance, in the opera *Hani* an observation of the famous *Umbhaco* was made which suggested the IsiXhosa culture being portrayed. This was then seen as one of the attempts at transporting an indigenous element into an alien form thus creating an audience that relates to the message and context of the performance. This research argued that the South African indigenous operatic form too can become a hybrid, fusing an alien genre with local elements.

Not much indigenous culture was observed in *Tronkvoël* as the opera deals with events of Apartheid South Africa. However, it should be mentioned that an audience will relate to the depiction of the characters on stage. In *Words from a Broken String* the ‘Bushmen’ are seen walking barefoot but with trousers and jackets, which suggested the representation of indigenisation in the opera. The research argued that this was a way of depicting the Khoisan gradually losing their culture due to the arrival of the modern South African lifestyle. Lastly this research observed that if this opera could be taken overseas it may be considered as exoticism of our country seeing that we also associate other nations with the nationality they represent on stage.

Setting in the three operas was analysed. In traditional operas the setting is in accordance to the period of the opera and the nationality represented on stage. The one bizarre creative aspect that the set designer and the director of Cula Mzansi was that the stage was set out in books. This was a way of showing the amalgamation of the three operas and the theme of the opera being not only an intellectual production but a kind of reading of books and a means of preserving African stories.

From the researcher’s analyses, it is clear that the three operas analysed depict indigenous South African stories and settings that are familiar with the audience. *Hani* portrays a typical South African story where which many African societies practise the culture of evoking a deceased spirit, believing that these ancestors are watching over them. It is therefore an indigenous opera in that what was observed on stage is what happens in a typical African culture.

*Words from a broken string* also encourages audiences to recall the Bushmen’s way of life in distinction to what was taught about them in school. In their text the Bushmen tell
who they are and what they do. In this opera, authentic Bushmen elements and mannerisms are shown together with the costume and setting making it all look authentically local and South African.

*Tronkvoël* was also analysed as indigenously South African. The opera depicts apartheid South Africa with a twist being that an Afrikaner is in prison. For someone who grew up viewing documentaries of black South Africans being ill-treated, arrested and killed, it comes as a surprise to listen to a poem of an Afrikaner who wants out as a South African Afrikaner. The Indigeneity of the opera is in the storyline and the music. The ‘*Senzeni Na*’ song sung by a male chorus in this opera also depicts one of the typical struggle songs that were sung by black prisoners as they would sing when the going got tough in prison. The use of the Afrikaans language makes the opera even more indigenous notwithstanding that Afrikaans is a West Germanic language that was spoken mainly by Dutch settlers. During the apartheid era Afrikaans became stigmatized as a South African language that was largely spoken by the whites to the black majority as a means of control and domination.

Overall the attempt for composers to include elements of indigenisation in the opera was a successful one. The researcher’s observation is that the composers attempted to compose operas that are authentically indigenous in musical structure by including elements of African compositions in the music. Setting, text and costume where also in line with what the new dispensation had suggested. This then concludes the aim of this research in which elements of indigenisation were found to be included in the selected operas, in a variety of ways in their different structures.

It should be mentioned in conclusion that opera in South Africa depict stories that relate to South Africans and include elements of indigenisation in their content one way or the other. A few recommendations may help other scholars to research these issues further.
5.3 Recommendations for further research

Contemporary scholars need to vigorously embark on research that deals with the ways in which more South African operas can be composed without bias or prejudice.

The Department of Education and that of Arts and Culture should encourage the inclusion of the African style of singing and composition in the music syllabus.

The learning of music from African origins needs to be done thoroughly and reserved in order to inspire the future generation of composers with an idea of what opera in South Africa should sound like.

Another recommendation that needs to be thoroughly looked at is the way in which South African opera companies can bring more people to the theatre. It is true that the old hearts of opera are passing on, a new breed needs to take charge. They will also need a plan of action to preserve the audience and build on it for five more generations to come.


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