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The role of indigenous African choral music in the search for identity: With special reference to Mzilikazi Khumalo's music

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Abstract

This article recognises the gradual attempt by South African choral music composers to produce music that is identifiably African. Two of Khumalo's works, as well as a number of scores of composers who preceded him are discussed. Open-question interviews were conducted to obtain Mzilikazi Khumalo's views. A number of other choral musicians such as choir conductors, choristers and choral music adjudicators were also interviewed. The research on which this article is based has established that most of the composers that came before Khumalo tended to combine indigenous African and Western idioms. It was only in 1980, after he had completed *Izibongo zikaShaka,* that Khumalo developed very interesting melodies, rhythms and structures that were typically African. Whilst his compositions are not African in all respects, they incorporate most of the well-known traditional Zulu indigenous musical styles. This article provides information that should encourage and influence future composers to continue devising strategies to promote the establishment of a truly South African indigenous choral music identity, one that will contribute to the depth and richness of the rainbow nation.

Key words: African movement, antiphony, Black Consciousness, folk songs harmony, syncopation

Introduction

Composers of South African indigenous choral music have been making noticeable attempts to establish a choral tradition that would help them determine an identity of their own – an identity that would relate to their culture, traditions and their particular indigenous music. National political movements such as the Pan African Movement in Africa, reinforced by the political philosophy of Black Consciousness of the 1970s, influenced these composers. Earlier, these composers had limited opportunities, but with the liberation of South Africa from the shackles of apartheid

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in 1994, their prospects have improved. Lately there have been 'conscious efforts amongst choral music composers to include features in their music that are identifiably African'(Mngoma 1988, 1).

Like other art forms such as drama, film, dance and visual arts, indigenous African choral music is frequently performed in South African schools and tertiary institutions. However, it is infrequently taught and comparatively less researched, less archived, less recorded and very much less published in South Africa (Mugovhani 1998, 5). Some profiles of a number of South African choral composers appear in publications by Yvonne Huskisson, a pioneer in research on South African indigenous African choral music (cf. Huskisson 1969; 1994). In recent times Grant Olwage (Olwage 2003) has done some research on this genre. Some references to South African choral music are found in Beverly Parker's article (Parker 2000) and Markus Detterbeck's doctoral thesis (Detterbeck 2003). South African indigenous African choral music composers have been represented rather sketchily in the above publications, and except for Parker, the researchers have not focused on issues of identity. Therefore, it is the aim of this article to focus on Mzilikazi Khumalo as a case study, and to consider his search for an indigenous African choral music identity.

The purpose of this article is therefore, to demonstrate how South African indigenous African choral music composers, specifically Mzilikazi Khumalo, tried to incorporate some indigenous African musical elements into their choral works in an attempt to establish a choral tradition that would determine their cultural identity. Through the description of a number of compositions of the composers that came before Khumalo and two of Khumalo's popular compositions, the article will elucidate the way in which the previous composers attempted to achieve this compositional goal, and how they influenced Mzilikazi Khumalo's compositional style.

In addition, open-question interviews were conducted with Mzilikazi Khumalo and other choral music practitioners such as choir conductors, choristers and choral music adjudicators to determine whether the earlier compositional styles had any influence on Khumalo's compositional style.

Indigenous African choral music: An historical perspective

The foundations of choral music as an art form practised by indigenous Africans were laid between 1850 and 1930. The most notable composers of this period were Tiyo Soga (1829–1871), Rev. John Knox Bokwe (1855–1922) and Enoch Sontonga (1873–1905). Although their music was based mainly on Western-style hymnody, it contains African folk elements (Khumalo and Nhlapo, 1993). Although he was greatly influenced by Scottish music, Soga remained committed to the preservation of his people's heritage, and to this end, he collated many Xhosa fables, praise

songs, legends, genealogies and a variety of other material pertaining to Xhosa culture and customs. Sontonga is known for his famous hymn, *Nkosi sikelel'iAfrika*, composed in 1897. Little did he think at the time that his composition would be adopted as the national anthem of both Zambia and Tanzania, and that together with C. J. Langenhoven's *Die Stem van Suid Afrika*, would be adopted as the national anthem of the new South Africa.

The generation that followed included prolific composers such as Alfred 'Assegaai' Kumalo (1879–1966); Benjamin Tyamzashe (1890–1990); Polumo Joshua Mohapeloa (1908–1981) and Tholakele Reuben Caluza (1895–1969), although Tyamzashe and Kumalo, like their predecessors, Bokwe, Soga and Sontonga, displayed predominantly Western musical influences in their music.[1] Mohapeloa and Caluza began to experiment by employing African elements in their works. The themes they chose for their compositions pertained to legend, nature, history, social skits and communal life – themes that were akin to those found in the folk music of their people.

Composers such as Mohapeloa managed to adapt to both Western and African styles with ease. One of Mohapeloa's compositions, *U ea kae,* has typical Sotho melodies and rhythms, albeit with some Western harmonic elements. The composition is in one key, which is a typical characteristic of an African folk song, and, a feature highlighted by Mngoma (1988, 63): 'Composers of the time consciously perpetuated the African folk song tradition of keeping one key centre'. *U ea kae* is in cyclic form and uses the traditional African call-and-response technique.

With *Umaconsana*, Caluza explores and exploits the sonorities of male against female singers. The alternation of these two groupings gives the work an antiphonal character similar to the antiphony found in African folk songs. The whole female section (SSS) presents the 'call', with the 'response' coming from the male section of the choir (TTBB). The first section of the work is homophonic. The second section has the alternation and antiphonal singing of the female against the male groupings. The third section has the melody in the bass-line, whilst the upper parts (SAT) provide the 'response' in an accompanying manner. The composition is characterised predominantly by antiphony and the non-simultaneous entry of parts, a typical characteristic of traditional African texture. Again, as is the case in African folk songs, the text of this work strongly influences the melodic contours and the rhythmic motifs of the music. Contrary to most of the compositions of Caluza and his contemporaries, *Umaconsana* has some modulations. These modulations, together with Caluza's employment of some ragtime rhythms (Khumalo and Nhlapo 1993) in the composition, aptly illustrate the fact that the Western influence still dominated Caluza's compositional style. It is significant to mention, therefore, that composers such as Mohapeloa and, to a lesser extent, Caluza, had, by the turn of the 19th century

already embarked on the pursuit of their cultural identity by rediscovering lost Sotho and Zulu musical traditions through their works.

The era of Mzilikazi Khumalo includes composers such as Michael Moerane (1904–1980); J.S.P. Motuba (1920–1982); and Benjamin 'Big Ben' Myataza (1912–1986). Even during this era there were still some composers whose compositions were predominantly Western in style. A typical example of such writing is seen in Moerane's *Sylvia*. The composition is in ternary form. The first section (A) is 24 bars long. The second section (B) is eight bars long. The last section (reprise of A section) is 22 bars long, and this comes after a small section which acts as a bridge between the B section and the reprise.

Moerane's contemporaries,[2] on the other hand, tried to continue with the tradition of their predecessors like Mohapeloa and Caluza. They used folk songs to produce choral works with antiphonal textures. Their melodies and rhythms were greatly influenced by the texts. The melodic movements in their compositions are often from a high to a low pitch, typical of the traditional African melody (Khumalo and Nhlapo 1993). This is also characteristic of the works of Myataza and Mzilikazi Khumalo. Myataza's many still popular works such as *Uponi* and *Ingoma phezu kodonga lomlambo* are 'highly polished choral adaptations of traditional Xhosa songs' (Huskisson 1996, 285).

It is significant to note that most of these composers (including Mzilikazi Khumalo in his early career) tended to combine both traditional African and Western idioms. Khumalo recalls that in almost all the compositions he had written before 1980, there was a section that was in traditional Zulu style. The style in *Ma ngificwa ukufa* (1961), *Koze kube nini*? (1966), *Ugqozi* and *Kwadedangendlale* (1969) are not predominantly African in character. Like Caluza, Mohapeloa and Myataza, Khumalo and his contemporaries combine the two idioms (African and Western). Huskisson (1994, 37) points out that 'this unique combination of two idioms produced music that became popular in South Africa'.

Mzilikazi Khumalo and his music

This section discusses the scores of *Ma ngificwa ukufa*, an early work, composed in 1960, and *Izibongo zikaShaka,* a recent work by Mzilikazi Khumalo, in order to determine the nature and presence of African elements in them.

Ma ngificwa ukufa

Ngimbeleni phansi kotshani,
Duze nezihlala zomnyezane
Ngozwa nami lapho ngilele,
Utshani ngaphezulu buhleba,
Lala sithandwa, lal'uphumule.

Akhukho' mlungu, akukho'pasi,
Kulele izinkulungwane zakhithi.
Ziyagiya, Ziyagiya ziqethuke,
Ziyagiya zonke.

Lapho amagatsh' ayongembesa
Ngamaqabunga, agcwel'ubuhlaza,
Utshani ngaphezulu buhleba,
Lala sithandwa, lal'uphumule.

An English translation of this text is as follows:

Bury me beneath the grass
Next to the willow tree,
There in my resting-place will I hear,
Above me the grass whispering;
Sleep dear one; sleep and rest in peace.

In death there is no discrimination,
No white man to ask you for a pass,
There lie thousands of our people resting,
Everybody dancing and rejoicing.

There will the branches of trees cover me,
With leaves evergreen,
And above me will the grass whisper;
Sleep dear one; sleep and rest in peace.

A literal translation of the title of this work is '*When death catches up with me*'. Taking into account the period during which Khumalo composed this work (1960), one can understand the choice of the text. It mirrors the lives of South African indigenous people, their concerns, their aspirations, the things they relished and those they hated. This was the period of apartheid and its repressive laws, laws that adversely affected indigenous African people in particular. Both the text and the music express the people's frustrations.

Khumalo has utilised most of the major structures that characterise a traditional African song in this composition. One of the common features of the structure of a traditional African song is *antiphony.* Usually two separate groups are involved in dialogue, with one group entering after the end of the phrase sung by the other (Merriam 1974, 62). It could be a group of female voices against those of males, and vice versa. In this composition, however, the sopranos and altos (females) start the phrase "*lapho amagatsh'ayongembesa"* and, instead of the answer coming from the tenors and basses (males), Khumalo uses altos with tenors. The tenor melodic line is an exact repetition of that of the sopranos, with the altos harmonising a sixth above the tenors. This is an indigenous traditional African musical feature.

Khumalo employs another common traditional African composition device, that of *call-and-response* (Merriam 1974, 62). There is no gap in the line of singing between the leader (usually a solo) and the follower (usually the chorus). In this composition the leader is the soprano line singing the phrase *lala sithandwa*, whilst the altos and tenors enter with a slightly different rhythm on the same words.

Although the sections in this work flow naturally from one to the other, they have clearly contrasting characteristics. The second section has a traditional Zulu dance rhythm, which is completely different from the first one in terms of rhythms, melodies, harmony and texture. The third and last section brings back the structural elements and techniques such as *call-and-response*. It could be argued that, because of the reiteration of the *lala sithandwa, lal'uphumule* phrases in the first and the last sections, the composition is in the ABA (ternary) form, but then bars 45 to 55, which are completely different from the beginning of the first section (bars 1 to 14), make that conclusion debatable.

Typical of the traditional African song, the structure and nature of the 'traditional Zulu dance rhythm' section is such that it could be sung for as long as the performers choose. This portion typifies the traditional African *cyclic* and *a piacere* (Khumalo and Nhlapo 1993) singing.

The texture is predominantly homophonic. This homophonic texture is loosened by some antiphony at a few passages, such as when the altos and tenors provide the accompaniment, the rhythm of which is independent of that of the soprano line. This loosening of homophonic texture with 'occasional heterophony' (Nketia 1974, 166) is a predominant feature of indigenous African traditional music.

The elements of polyphony that are found in this work are relatively infrequent. The traditional Zulu dance portion clearly shows the presence of this device. The voice parts (SATB) eventually develop into seven voices (SSAATTB). The musical phrases do not begin and end simultaneously. They alternate and overlap. Here Khumalo uses the technique of combining 'interlocking' (Rycroft 1967, 88) rhythms. By dividing the SATB texture into the SSAATTB in this section, Khumalo is in fact creating more rhythmic fragments with which to play. This results in the

polyrhythmic (Merriam 1974, 58) features that characterise indigenous African music.

Diatonic major chords and progressions dominate the composition. The dominant seventh chord is occasionally employed at cadential points with some interesting chord formations. The V7-1 cadence, for example, uses a double root, the fifth and the seventh without the leading note. Khumalo has used the hexatonic mode in this section. He uses motifs derived from this mode to create the polyrhythmic texture that characterises traditional African music. The feeling of modality is reinforced by the fact that Khumalo employs the I-II harmonic progression.

In keeping with the African folk song tradition, the composer has successfully exploited the constant 'rip-saw-like' overall falling pattern (Dargie 1998, 75) of African melodies. The melodies start on a high pitch and work gradually downwards in a smooth stepwise motion. The melodies in this composition are largely dictated by the semantic tone structure of the text. There is a link between the Zulu speech tone and the melody.

The composition is characterised mainly by melodies in conjunct motion. Smooth stepwise melodic lines dominate all four voice parts. Although there are occasional leaps within some phrases, the dominant feature is conjunct motion. Disjunct motion features prominently in the traditional Zulu dance section in the middle. Here there is ample use of wider intervals. The leaps of fourth and fifths, which are characteristics common to Zulu melodies, are in abundance in this section. The leaps G down to D and F down to C recur throughout the section. Khumalo has used notes derived from a hexatonic mode that is common in traditional Zulu music.

The different rhythmic patterns used in this composition determine its structure and texture. The three sections employ different rhythms. However, the first and third sections are characterised by a rhythmically more conservative style in their melodies. A sharing of musical motives further connects these two sections. The melodies of both these sections are contracted out of the interplay of two rhythmic patterns. In the middle section, the loosening of the texture clearly brings out the syncopated rhythms. Typical of an African traditional song, the voices do not always enter simultaneously, though using the same rhythmic pattern. Although the middle section has an unmistakable African feel, some of its melodies have rhythms that do not entirely reflect those of the spoken word. The way in which the 'off-beating' is used does not always conform to the manner in which the poem should be recited. This, however, does, not distort the spoken word beyond recognition.

The influence of Western church music and the somewhat peripheral formal music tuition Khumalo received are evident in the compositional techniques adopted by him in *Ma ngificwa ukufa.* Although the text is Zulu, the largest part of the music,

which is homophonic, sounds largely Western. It is unusual for an African song to vary tempo, let alone metre. Khumalo displays signs of the influence of conventional Western approaches to tempo and metre in *Ma ngificwa ukufa.* There are tempo changes, indicated by the commonly used Italian music signs and terms such as *andatino, tranquillo, molto, agitato, moderato* and *tempo primo.* The composition has two time signatures (4/4 and 3/4) used alternatively throughout. Another feature that is unusual in African traditional music is the use of dynamic markings in this composition.

Although he has adhered strongly to early hymnal influences, he exploited some African compositional traits. For instance, he successfully applied the techniques of syncopation and polyphony to give his music an African rhythmic feeling. By using contrasts in rhythmic and melodic patterns and textures, the composer has given the different sections of the composition some individuality.

Khumalo himself stated that almost all the compositions he wrote before 1980, including *Ma ngificwa ukufa,* were not in the traditional Zulu style in all aspects. The composer himself had this to say about *Ma ngificwa ukufa:* 'A short interpolation is used as an excuse for introducing a section of Zulu traditional dance rhythm' (Ford Choirs National Finals, Souvenir Programme, 1985). The interpolation, however, is traditionally Zulu in rhythm. It is African (Zulu) also in the modal melodies and harmonies employed.

Izibongo zikaShaka

This composition is based on a poem dedicated to the legendary Zulu king *uShaka*, which was published in Trevor Cope's collection, *Izibongo Zulu Praise-Poems*. James Stuart (1868–1942) transcribed the collection of these praises in Zulu and Daniel Malcolm (1884–1962) translated them into English (Cope 1968, VII). D. D. Z. Ntuli added a few lines to the words of the poem.

Udlungwane kaNdaba,
Udlungwane woMbelebele
Odlung'emanxulumeni,
Kwaze kwas'amanxulum'esibekelana.

Unodumehlezi kaMenzi, Usishaka kasishayeki,
Ilemb'eleq'amanyamalembe ngokukhalipha;
UShaka ngiyesab'ukuthi nguShaka,
UShaka kuyinkosiyaseMashobeni.

Uteku labafazi bakwaNomqabhi
Betekula behlez'emlovini,
Bethi uShaka kakubusa kakuba'nkosi,
Kant'uzakunethezeka.

Umlilo wothathe kaMjokwane;
Umlilo wothathe ubuhanguhangu,
Oshis'zikhova eziseDlebe,
Kwaya kwasha neziseMabedlana.

Uyakuhlaselaphi na?
Osifuba sinenqaba, uBayede kaNdaba,
UNdaba ngiyameba, ngimuka naye,
Ngimuka kwehle nezinyembezi.

Umoy'omzantsi womngenelo,
Ohlez'ubangenela nangomnyango,
Oth'esadlezinye wadl'ezinye,
Wath'esadl'ezinyewadl'ezinye,
Oth'esadl'ezinye wadl'ezinye,
Wath'esadl'ezinye wadl'ezinye.

An English translation is as follows:

Udlungwane, son of Ndaba
Ferocious one of the Mbelebele brigade,
You who raged among the large kraals,
So that until dawn the huts were being turned upside down,

You, who famous as you sit, son of Menzi,
You who beats but is not beaten, unlike water,
Axe that surpasses other axes in sharpness,
Shaka, I fear to say he is Shaka, Shaka, he is the chief of the Mashobas.

The joke of the women of Nomgabhi,
Joking as they sat in the sheltered spot,
Saying that Shaka would not rule, he would not become chief,
Whereas Shaka was going to prosper.

Fire of the long dry grass, son of Mjokwane,
Fire of the long grass and scorching force,
That burned the owl of the Dlebe hill,
And eventually those on Mabedlana also burned.

Where will you attack? Where will you attack?
You whose chest is a fort, Hail son of Ndaba,
Ndaba I am stealing away, I am going away with him,
I will and leave tears falling down.

You southern wind which creeps in,
This creeps in through closed doors,
He who, while devouring some, devours others,
And as he devours others he devours some more;
He who, while devouring some, devours others,
And as he devours others he devours some more.

For the purpose of analysis, an attempt was made to divide the work into three large parts, which can be regarded as episodes rather than as clear-cut sections. These three episodes are different from one another in terms of text, rhythms, melodies, harmonies and texture. The composer has characterised the different episodes with different melodic and rhythmic motives, tempi and harmonies, yet has managed to keep the whole work as a unit through the story (text).

The composition manifests a sequential transition from the first to the second section. This first section contains two subsections, the first one serving as a preamble to the whole work. Although the two subsections are different in terms of rhythm, harmony and key, they are organically connected by the message (text) and the fact that the rhythm of the first subsection is brought back towards the end of the second subsection. The second section is distinct from the first and the last one in terms of the tonality and musical structures employed. Whereas the first section is entirely in the major key, the second section employs both the major and harmonic minor scales. The section is also dominated by solo passages for tenor and baritone voices, with the female voices (sopranos and altos) offering simple harmonic accompaniment. The first subsection applies the *ostinato* technique. The basses start the *ostinato* pattern, and are joined later by the tenors and eventually the sopranos and altos. Thereafter the soprano solo improvises above the *ostinato* rhythm sung by the males (tenors and basses) only. The rhythm and tempo of the second subsection are different from those of the *indlamu* dance rhythm of the first subsection. Whereas the tempo and rhythm of the first subsection are fast, those of the second one are slow. Again, whereas the harmony of the first subsection is based on the pentatonic mode, that of the second subsection is based on the major scale. The third and last section brings in another pentatonic motive, another Zulu dance rhythm and typical traditional African antiphony by tenors and sopranos against altos and basses, thus making it distinctly different from the other two subsections. The composer incorporates the *indlamu* dance rhythm in his music. This is a style of

dancing and singing associated with the more energetic Zulu youth. Khumalo shows a clear understanding of this Zulu dance rhythm through this portion of the work.

The composer has succeeded in keeping the rhythm African throughout, even in passages where the music appears to be both melodically and harmonically Western. The different rhythms employed here are very close to the actual Zulu speech rhythms. These patterns have succeeded in portraying the stylistic traits of Zulu folk music. Except for a few small portions here and there, the overall harmonic progression of this music is based most particularly on the pentatonic mode. As in *Ma ngificwa ukufa*, Khumalo uses motifs built out of the mode (this time not in the hexatonic, but the pentatonic) to bring out polyphony, colourful harmony and rich texture. Modality is one of the common musical devices in African music (Nketia 1974, 160).

The composition begins in G major and modulates to the dominant key (D major). After eleven bars, it returns to the tonic key. Another modulation occurs in the middle of the composition. This time the music moves from G major to C major (the subdominant key). This subdominant key actually dominates the largest portion of the music.

Traditional African societies also employed 'polarity' (Nketia 1974, 166) in their vocal music. This stylistic feature, which is the duplication of melodies in octaves, with men and women singing together, occurs in abundance in Khumalo's *Izibongo zikaShaka*. Homophonic parallelism (Nketia 1974, 160), especially involving parallel fourths and fifths, is common in Zulu traditional vocal music, and produces the rich, colourful harmony peculiar to African music. This parallelism has contributed to the beauty of Khumalo's *indlamu* dance portion. The work contains the different textural elements that typify traditional African music. The first section introduces us to the call-and-response technique. The sopranos make the *Udlungwane kaNdaba* call (and other voices respond together before the end of the soprano phrase), resulting in overlapping of the leader and follower lines. This overlapping often produces unison singing. The texture is thereby alternately thinned and thickened. Besides employing the call-and-response technique, Khumalo has provided textural variety by interplaying homophony against polyphony in the various sections. Bars 120 to 123 have the sopranos and tenors (in unison) involved in dialogue with the altos and basses (also in unison). This is typical African antiphonal singing. In this work, as in *Ma ngificwa ukufa*, Khumalo shows a clear understanding of both the Western and African textural styles.

Undoubtedly, one of the elements that make this work interesting is the melody and the way Khumalo has fashioned it. The composer's mastery of the utilisation of musical motifs to connect the different episodes is interesting. He uses small phrases, which are repeated in different contexts. The episodes are so completely

different that the work would have had no coherence at all had it not been for the way in which Khumalo managed to connect them through these motifs. Some of the pitch patterns that have been used to produce these motifs have been described as 'exquisitely lyrical and dramatic' (Daniel 1994), 'esoteric, haunting and mysterious' (Van Rensburg 1994). These structural patterns were drawn from different shades of the pentatonic modes. Hereafter, the composer utilised the patterns to produce the descending melodic lines characteristic of Zulu songs. This descending tendency has a definite affinity with the overall down-drift intonation of the normal Zulu speech.

Rycroft (1967) and Cope (1968), as well as and others speak of the four recurrent levels of pitch, resembling the 'scale' of notes in a piece of music, which appear to predominate and serve as basic tonal structure throughout the recitation of Zulu *Izibongo*. Three different notes can represent these four levels musically, with the top written an octave lower. Although Khumalo quite often uses five instead of three notes as mentioned above, he follows the same pattern of repeating the top note at an octave lower. Despite the difference in the number of notes utilised (tritonic against pentatonic) in his composition, the usage is similar.

In keeping with the African folk song tradition, the composer has successfully exploited the 'rip-saw-like' overall falling pattern of African melodies. Another recurring tendency in this modal melodic pattern is that of leaps of fourths towards the end of these melodies. Disjunct motion is common to African music, especially in the downward form. The work is dominated by the pentatonic mode.

In the recitation of Zulu I*zibongo,* syllables taking one note during the course of the recitation do not always maintain an absolute level of pitch. Glides to or from the note are frequent. It is interesting to note that Khumalo employs this feature in this composition.

Khumalo has tried to keep the music as syllabic as possible. The length of the spoken phrases (syllables and words) dictates most of the melodies. Almost every syllable has its individual note. This is another common feature in traditional music. Khumalo's melodies in this work have a strong link with the words. He has tried to imitate the inflections of authentic Zulu speech. Most of the stylistic traits common to a typical African melody have been exploited. For instance, the influence of speech-tone in the melody is evident in this composition. The melodies are dictated by the syllables. The rhythmic patterns employed in this composition have been influenced by the actual speech rhythm of the Zulu text. As in *Ma ngificwa ukufa,* he has successfully applied the techniques of syncopation and polyphony to give the music an African atmosphere.

Compared with his earlier works, including *Ma ngificwa ukufa, Izibongo zikaShaka* shows Khumalo moving away from the early hymnal influences of formal Western music tuition and Western church music. In his effort to arrive at an authentic African sound, he has produced more interesting Zulu melodies, rhythms and harmonies than in *Ma ngificwa ukufa.* Khumalo's endeavours towards making indigenous African choral compositions 'perhaps sounding more African' (Boekkooi 1996), have shown that it is possible to use traditional African elements of music in choral compositions.

Conclusion

Khumalo has tried to follow the actual speech rhythm of the text of the poem in *Ma ngificwa ukufa* and *Izibongo zikaShaka.* The rhythm of this music has evidently been influenced by Zulu speech rhythm. There are many different interesting rhythm patterns throughout the songs. He has successfully exploited the 'rip-saw-like' overall falling pattern that is typical of African traditional music. The influence of the speech tone in the melody is evident. The melodies, which are based mainly on modes, are also generally dictated by the syllables. Most of the stylistic traits common to a typical African melody have been fully exploited, especially in the modal passages of both songs.

Ma ngificwa ukufa is a song with Zulu words, but predominately in the Western harmonic style. Except for the hexatonic melodic motives used in the middle section of *Ma ngificwa ukufa,* the largest portion of this song is Western in conception; most of the song is based on the major scale, except for the hexatonic modal passage in the middle. On the other hand, the largest portion of *Izibongo zikaShaka* is in the pentatonic mode. It is based predominantly on pentatonic melodies and harmonies. Modality is a common characteristic of African music. The difference between Khumalo's earlier and his present composing career is evident in the two songs.

Texturally, African traditional music is predominantly monophonic, with occasional homophony in the form of parallel fourths, fifths and, sometimes, thirds. These textural variants, which characterise traditional African music, are dominant in the modal portions of *Ma ngificwa ukufa* and in most of *Izibongo zikaShaka.* Syncopation, which is another typical stylistic trait of African folk music, abounds in both *Ma ngificwa ukufa* and *Izibongo zikaShaka.*

Although Khumalo makes use of modulation, this is not a common characteristic of traditional African music. It is also unusual for a traditional African song to vary in tempo, let alone metre. A typical traditional African song is usually performed in one tempo, and in is one metre, albeit with different rhythmic patterns. It is unusual for an African dance in a single musical performance to change tempo. Khumalo could afford to defy the traditional trend in these songs, because they were not meant

for traditional African dance performance, but for the concert stage. They represent Mzilikazi Khumalo's search for idealised traditional African dance genres. Because these are extended compositions, they would, in any case, have been monotonous in one tempo and one metre. The length of the text used justifies these extended compositions. Again, although it is not common in traditional African music for a composition, whether noted or communicated by rote, to fix dynamic marking and other musical signs and terms, Khumalo has used them extensively. In traditional African songs, contrasts in texture only are common. By using contrast in rhythmic and melodic patterns, dynamics, tempo, metre, structure and texture, Mzilikazi Khumalo has given his songs their individuality and uniqueness. They are both visually and aurally very different from those of his contemporaries.

Khumalo's songs, indeed, are not completely African in all aspects. Both African and Western styles have been fully utilised to such an extent that the music itself defies easy categorisation. Even though his songs may not be purely African in all musical aspects, most of the elements that characterise African music have undoubtedly been utilised, particularly in his recent ones. They incorporate most of the well-known traditional Zulu musical styles.

Mzilikazi Khumalo is just one of a growing body of the new generation of indigenous African choral musicians whose mission is to preserve and promote indigenous African choral culture. Today this movement is stronger than ever, thanks largely to the initiatives of choral organisations such as the African Teachers' Association of South Africa (ATASA), the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Africa Music Organisation (ELCSAMO), the Old Mutual/Telkom National Choir Festival, the South African Choral Music Association (SACMA) Choir Festivals and the Sowetan/Caltex National-building programme, as well as the more stimulating opportunities and incentives offered by sponsoring companies such as Ford, SAMCOR, Caltex, SAB, Old Mutual, Metropolitan Life and Telkom.

Khumalo has undoubtedly added another giant step to those made by his predecessors, particularly Mohapeloa and Caluza, in their quest for more traditional African approaches to choral compositions. From these seeds, there is already a strong movement towards more indigenous folk-based compositions. Choral composers such as the late L. M. B. Chonco, S. B. P. Mnomiya, H. M. Mjana, C. T. Ngqobe, the late Bongani Cola and F. H. Sumbana have vigorously pursued this movement. It is up to this generation and those which will follow to pursue this trend and perhaps, eventually produce new genres and forms in South African indigenous choral music in order to establish a recognisable South African choral music identity.

Notes

1. For instance, the hymnal style in *Ntokozo* and the ternary form in *Menzi wento zonke* by Khumalo.
2. Especially those that underwent formal tuition in Western music (like Soga, Bokwe, Sontonga, Tyamzashe Assegaai Kumalo and Moerane).

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