

The Prominence of Choral Music in the Search for, and Preservation of, an African Identity: A study focusing on the role of choral composers in the formation of black nationalism during and after the colonial era in South Africa

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Music of Rhodes University. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination.

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Athenkosi Nelani

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Date

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Abstract

In South Africa, choral music has been prominent in schools, churches, and community choirs since the 19th century. However, the majority of South Africans know little of the history of indigenous choral music. This study investigates the origins of South African indigenous choral music, its canonic figures, and their contribution to this genre in promoting an African identity among the indigenous people of South Africa.

Using the methodological lens of historical ethnomusicology, this thesis explores the genesis of choral music in South Africa. Choral music was introduced to the region when it was first colonised by the Dutch East India Company in 1652. Missionaries established institutions in the villages of the local people and translated the Bible and hymn books into the local languages. These actions had lasting consequences for music, and choral singing was greatly advanced. In addition, in this work early composers of South African indigenous choral music are recognised in an effort to establish a choral canon. Three definitive choral periods are recognised, namely those of the first-generation, second-generation, and post-colonial composers. Using this historical framework, this thesis investigates the social and political influence these composers had on African identity during the liberation struggles in the late colonial era and during the early apartheid period. The history and compositions of the composers are discussed, including how they used their compositions as political tools and as mouthpieces to communicate societal issues of concern to the indigenous people during and after the colonial era.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Context and background

The Republic of South Africa has a very vibrant choral music tradition which, in black communities, is referred to as *umculo wamakwaya* or simply *amakwaya*. David Coplan (1985, 72) specifies the origins of the term when he notes that

For the first quarter of the century, *makwaya* (“choir”) music other than hymns (*amaculo*) was... divided into three distinct categories by Zulu participants: *Amagama eMusic* (British and African popular choral and light classical songs), *Amagama 'sizulu* (traditional songs arranged for choir), and *Amagama eRagtime* (American popular songs and local pieces in ragtime style).

At an early age, I saw *amakwaya* documented and televised on one of the South African Broadcasting Corporation’s (SABC’s) channels, SABC 1. During this time, I was fascinated by how these choirs performed pieces in foreign languages. I was pleased when I heard the choir performing pieces in one of the local languages because then I could hear, understand, and relate to the music. This appreciation was the result, first of SABC 1’s choral television show, *Imizwilili*, which televised performances of mostly black choirs ranging from community to church, school, and teachers’ choirs; and, second, because the sound that the choirs were producing was quite distinct from that of Western choirs. At the time, I compared their performances to a Mormon Tabernacle Choir compact disc I had at home; after hearing the whole album, I concluded that South African – or rather African – choirs sound different to Western choirs. My research stems from this seminal experience. In addition, I am interested in the role of choir competitions, such as I experienced when I was young, in promoting black identity. Markus Detterbeck (2002, i) links these thoughts. He writes:

Amakwaya refers to the tradition and performance practice of choirs in South Africa that emerged from the mission-schools in the nineteenth century and is manifest today in the annual competitions held by various Teachers' Associations or

company-sponsored events like the National Choir Festival.

This phenomenon has grown in South African society through sheer tenacity because, as Ndwamato George Mugovhani (2007, 1) writes,

While South African indigenous choral music is frequently performed, as compared to other art forms like drama, film, dance, visual arts and others, it is infrequently taught in South African schools and tertiary institutions. It is comparatively less researched, less archived, less recorded and very much less published in South Africa.

I agree with Mugovhani as I experienced such a dearth of research during my honours project on the singing style of *amakwaya* in which I focused on the singers' distinct sound production and use of vibrato (Nelani 2018). Indigenous South African choirs are under-researched. Such research is hence important; my interest is in tracing this choral tradition back to its roots and in investigating how it became a significant tradition in the lives of black South Africans. As a start, I look to Detterbeck (2002, i) who provides this detail when he says,

This choral practice, [*amakwaya*] combining Western music styles with African tradition, bears the marks – both social and aesthetic – of colonial and missionary influences, and is closely linked to the emerging black middle class, their process of negotiating identity, and their later quest for a national culture.

Detterbeck's doctoral dissertation (2002) is particularly important as it provides historical documentation of the *amakwaya* tradition in South Africa; I consult his work throughout. I also consider that of Austin Okigbo (2010: 59), who adds the following:

Choral music proved to be the most significant means of articulating Christian theology that spoke to their African experience and educated and mobilized their people. Choral music has continued to be a significant means of articulating and expressing black South African political, economic, and cultural experience.

These statements lie at the heart of this investigation of the role of choral music in the search for and preservation of an African identity during and after the colonial era in South Africa. I explore the role of South African choral history in relation to nationalism and identity, in this thesis, examining the pioneers of black choral music composition, such as those mentioned by Percival Kirby (1959, 38), who writes about Ntsikana:

Ntsikana “composed” at least four hymns, both words and music, but in doing so he made no attempt to imitate Western musical practices.

In addition, I explore the second generation of black composers, that is, the composers who followed the pioneers of black choral music, and how they promoted black nationalism through their South African indigenous choral compositions. Mugovhani (2010, 60–61) comments on composers of South African indigenous choral music:

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.

It is this statement that motivated me to investigate how indigenous choral music composers preserved an African identity during and after the colonial era in South Africa. It is this statement that encouraged me to attain the goal of this research.

1.2 Goal of the research

The overarching goal of this research is to establish a canon by means of which we can explore and discuss how certain black South African choral composers used choral music to preserve their identity and promote black nationalism during and after the colonial era in South Africa.

1.3 Objectives

Therefore, the specific objectives of this study include:

- (a) To establish a South African indigenous choral music compositions canon.

- (b) To identify how specific South African indigenous choral music composers influenced the society and the politics in their eras.
- (c) To identify the specific African elements employed by specific South African indigenous choral music composers in their compositions which highlight their African identity.

1.4 Methodology

My experience with choral music, as a singer and conductor of school choirs and community choirs, has allowed me to discover that choristers and conductors are rarely aware of the history of South African indigenous choral music and its composers. As indicated above, this music is not well documented, and its history and composers are rarely included in current government school and university syllabi (McConnachie 2016). This, as I observed at school and undergraduate level, while Western art music composers are discussed. With this in mind, this research aims to add a historical contextualisation to South African choral music, which plays an important part in the musical lives of many communities in this country. As a scholar of ethnomusicology, it was my intention to utilise ethnographic methods of research for this project, including interviews with singers, conductors, and composers alike, using participatory action research, and an auto-ethnographic approach, reporting directly on my experience of choral music as a conductor and choir member. Due to the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, my research approach underwent significant alteration and my research had to be conducted through a different, though just as enlightening, lens. These approaches will be discussed later in the thesis.

It is beyond the scope of this research to provide a detailed investigation of the vast array of choral composers who have contributed to choral music in South Africa; for this reason, I instead consider only twelve significant figures who can be incorporated into a canon. The term canon is used to describe a list of composers or works assigned value and greatness by consensus and, although the idea of canonisation has been challenged by some (Caswell 1991; Tovey 1959), others (Johnson 2002) have observed that it plays a vital pedagogical function. In addition, if South African music history books are an accurate analogue of music historians' epistemological convictions, they reveal a clear set of priorities. The greatest proportion of space in them is devoted to a body of works that it is considered important to know *as works*; the next largest degree of attention is given to stylistic commentary; while discussions of social context and reception comes in third. I suspect that this hierarchy and

these proportions also reflect the musical and pedagogical convictions of most academic musicians and their students: that knowledge of a canon of great works is the most important; style comes next; and then context and reception (Caswell 1991, 129). The intention to contribute towards the development of a canon of South African choral composers is framed within this context.

1.5 Historical ethnomusicology

Shelemay writes that historical ethnomusicology is a synchronic study which illuminates the historical continuum from which a form of music emerged (1980, 233), while Wiora (1965, 192) writes that we “cannot understand the present changes ... if we maintain the present situation as being provoked by no previous trends”. Historical ethnomusicology is increasingly acknowledged as a significant subfield of ethnomusicology, and many historiographic techniques are rapidly transforming as a result of new technologies. As far back as 2005, Bruno Nettl observed that “the term ‘historical ethnomusicology’ has begun to appear in programs of conferences and in publications” (2005, 274), and, more recently, Ruskin and Rice have noted that there has been “an increasing concern with the writing of musical histories in ethnomusicology” (2012, 318). It is undeniable, however, that the development of the field of historical ethnomusicology has often been overshadowed by

ethnography, and the term itself has been broadly used in the last 40 years. Nevertheless, I employ Richard Widdess’ definition of historical ethnomusicology as a model for this research. He writes that it has twin objectives and describes them as “the uncovering of historical events and the study of their relationship in terms of processes of change” (1992, 91). Using these two approaches to guide my research, I ask the following questions:

- a. How did *amakwaya* begin in South Africa?
- b. Who are the canonic figures in South African *amakwaya* and how do they contribute to African nationalism?
- c. How have South African choral composers kept *amakwaya* relevant and thriving in the modern South African landscape?

As a starting point for developing a canon, I collate information, analyse compositions, and document each composer under the following headings: history, compositions, and

contribution to an African identity.

To gain insight into the origins and development of the choral music tradition in South Africa, existing data was examined, including published articles in journals, books, and dissertations.

1.6 Literature review

For this research, I have primarily focused on a selection of historical books, articles, and dissertations. These have guided my understanding of the emergence of *amakwaya* and of the biographies of the composers selected for this research. “South African Choral Music (Amakwaya): Song, Contest and the Formation of Identity” (Detterbeck 2002) was valuable because the content of this doctoral thesis provided me with the framework of the emergence of *amakwaya* practice in South Africa. The paper discusses the origins of the indigenous black middle class, how it emerged from mission institutions during colonisation, how Christianity was promoted through the medium of hymnal singing, the historiography of *amakwaya* competitions, and moreover establishes the periodisation of the early indigenous South African choral composers. These aspects guided my understanding of the evolution of the practice of *amakwaya* from the middle class of the nineteenth century to what is currently practised.

To be able to trace the origins of *amakwaya* practice, I had to consult *The Origins And Foundations Of Music Education* (Cox and Stevens 2011) and the doctoral paper, “Post-Apartheid South African choral music: an analysis of integrated musical styles with specific examples by contemporary South African composers” (Haecker 2012), which are pertinent because they provided a detailed explanation of how choral singing, which took the form of hymns, began when South Africa was colonised by Western nations. *South African Music: A Century of Traditions in Transformation* (Muller 2004) was key to substantiating this knowledge as it provides a detailed explanation of how the process of introducing hymnal singing to indigenous peoples began, allowing me to construct a narrative of the origins of the practice of choral singing in South Africa.

Michael Barrett’s master’s paper “The Value of Choral Singing in a Multicultural South Africa” (2007) and Ndzwamato George Mugovhani doctoral paper, “Venda Choral Music: Compositional Styles” (2007) have been valuable in highlighting the South African musical landscape before the beginning of the *amakwaya* practice. These aided me in understanding

the musical heritage of South Africa before it was transformed by colonisation and the introduction of Western cultures.

The journal article “Of Gospel Hymns, Minstrel Shows, and Jubilee Singers: Toward Some Black South African Musics” (Cokrell 1987) is relevant to this study as it provides detail on the influence American minstrel touring groups had on the musical landscape of South Africa, especially in establishing the practice of *amakwaya*. This article supports Detterbeck’s findings in “South African Choral Music (Amakwaya): Song, Contest and the Formation of Identity” (2002) on the emergence of *amakwaya* within the indigenous black class, and I was able to use this literature to illustrate the development of *amakwaya* in the black community in South Africa.

The book, *Black Nationalist Thought in South Africa: The Persistence of an Idea of Liberation* (Tafira 2016), and the journal article, “Musical Inculturation, Theological Transformation, and the Construction of Black Nationalism in Early South African Choral Music Tradition” (Okigbo 2010), are important to this research as they deal with the emergence of black nationalism in South Africa. Both authors provide reasons for the formation of a black nationalism and discuss the pioneers of indigenous choral music in South Africa. This literature guided my understanding of the emergence of black nationalism in South Africa and of how choral music was at the centre of this movement.

“The Music of Ntsikana” (Dargie 1982), “The ‘Great Hymn’ Of the Xhosa Prophet, Ntsikana: an African Expression of Christianity, 1815–1821” (Hodgson 1980), and “Precursor of Independency” (Hodgson 1984), were also valuable as they discuss the life and achievement of Ntsikana kaGaba, the first convert to Christianity among the Xhosa-speaking people. These journal articles provide detail on Ntsikana’s background, his conversion to Christianity, and how he composed his hymns and later started his African ministry. This information allowed me to understand his contributions to the foundations of indigenous choral music and to an African independent Christianity.

Music and identity: transformation and negotiation (Akrofi, Smit, and Thorsén 2007): “Tonic Sol-fa: an exogenous aspect of South African musical identity” (Stevens 2007), “Tonic sol-fa in South Africa: A case study of endogenous musical practice” (Stevens and Akrofi 2004), *The Origins And Foundations Of Music Education* (Cox and Stevens 2011) are relevant to this research as they deal with the beginning of mission education in the then Cape Colony of

South Africa as well as with the introduction of the tonic sol-fa notation method in mission schools. This literature provides details of the development of the tonic sol-fa notation method and how it was taught to the indigenous people in the mission institutions. Thus, this literature is important in tracing how composition developed among indigenous peoples and who contributed to the early choral works.

In order to discuss the early mission-educated indigenous composers, I had to turn to “Bokwe, John Knox (A)” (Millard 2019), a journal article that provides a brief but detailed biography of John Knox Bokwe. In addition, “Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika and The Liberation of The Spirit of South Africa” (Copland and Jules-Rosette 2005), and “Pentecostalisation of the African Church” (Mzondi 2018) are important as they discuss the life of Enoch Sontonga, how he began to compose his famous “*Nkosi sikelel’ iAfrika*” hymn, and how it became so relevant to the political landscape of South Africa. Zelda de Beer’s “An Analysis of Choral Works by the Zulu Composer: Professor R.T. Caluza” (1967), a bachelor of music dissertation, Deirdre Hansen’s “The Life and Works of Benjamin Tyamzashe: A Contemporary Xhosa Composer” (1968), a master’s dissertation, “An Analysis Of Oral Literary Music Texts in IsiXhosa” (Mpola 2007), a doctoral paper, “Black South African Urban Music since the 1890’s: Some Reminiscences of Alfred Assegai Kumalo (1879–1966)” (Rycroft 1991), “Joshua Pulumo Mohapeloa and the Heritage of African Song” (Lucia 2011), and *General Introduction to the J.P. Mohapeloa Critical Edition* (Lucia 2016) were also extremely valuable to this research as these papers discuss the generation of indigenous composers that succeeded the early mission-educated composers of indigenous South African choral music. The authors of the papers provide detailed biographies and information on the musical contributions of these composers. This has been important to me as I discuss these composers and their influence during and after the colonial era.

“Limnandi Evangeli and Hlangani Bafundi: An Exploration of the Interrelationships between Christian Choruses and South African Songs of the Struggle” (Tönsing 2017) was relevant because the article discusses how hymns and hymnal singing became important in the formation of liberation songs and how indigenous people adopted and adapted church hymns and used them a medium of resistance to the oppressive white government of the apartheid era in South Africa. This guided my understanding of the importance and the role of choral music, in this case in the form of hymns, in the liberation struggles in South Africa.

In addition, live recorded interviews on YouTube – “African Composers Interviews: A Conversation with Sibusiso Njeza” (2020) and “African Composers Interviews: A Conversation with Qinisela Sibisi” (2020), hosted by Dr Edewede Oriwoh (PhD in Cyber-Physical Security, and a Nigerian composer) – were exceptionally important as they introduce Njeza and Sibisi, who are prolific South African indigenous choral music composers. On the basis of these interviews, I was able to compile biographical sketches as well as discuss their compositions. I also had personal communication with these composers through the media of WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger in order to substantiate and clarify some of the content of the recorded interviews.

It is this literature that became the framework for this research: I evaluated the authenticity and accuracy of the data collected (“Libguides: Historical Research Method: Home” 2019), and then I analysed the data from these sources. In the chapters that follow, I have developed a narrative exposition of the findings.

1.7 Limitations to this study

Please note that this is the beginning of the development of a South African indigenous choral composers’ canon, as such there are composers who should be added in the future. It is out of the scope of this thesis to mention all the South African indigenous composers who should be here. However, it is a recommendation that further research should be done to add to the body of this work.

CHAPTER 2

The Genesis of Choirs in South Africa

2.1 The influence of colonisation on music

Understanding the colonisation of South Africa by Europeans is essential for this study, as the musical influence thereof is a focal point of this paper. Loomba (2005, 8) defines colonialism as “the conquest and control of other people’s land and goods.” Blauner (1969, 395) supports definition:

Colonialism traditionally refers to the establishment of domination over a geographically external political unit, most often inhabited by people of a different race and culture, where this domination is political and economic, and the colony exists subordinated to and dependent upon the mother country. Typically, the colonisers exploit the land, the raw materials, the labour, and other resources of the colonised nation; in addition a formal recognition is given to the differences in power, autonomy and political status, and various agencies are set up to maintain this subordination.

In South Africa, colonisation began in 1652 when Cape Town was established by the Dutch East India company as a refreshment station on the sea route to the Far East. This saw European Settlement at the Cape of Good Hope, or the Cape Colony as it was known. The Cape of Good Hope became a Dutch colony from 1679 (Cox and Stevens 2011, 224). Significantly for this research, the arrival of the Dutch East India Company exposed indigenous Africans to European musical trends for the first time. Choral music was introduced to the indigenous peoples: the primary musical sources were the Genevan psalter, Calvinists hymns, and simple Dutch folk songs called *liederwysies*. The majority of this music used sacred texts and was unaccompanied. These simple hymns and folk songs were then shared further with the indigenous African population when the Dutch settlers began to migrate inland, away from the Cape coast (Haecker, 2012). Early Protestant mission work also contributed to the sharing of European music with the indigenous Africans at the Cape. This began in 1737, when a mission was established by a Moravian, Georg Schmidt. In 1792, another new mission was established at the Cape by three Moravians who continued teaching a group of converts to read and write (Muller 2004, 191). Subsequent to the Moravian

missionaries, a great number of new missionaries arrived in the country in the late 1820s following the arrival of Dutch, English, Scottish, American, and French missionaries. These missionaries, upon their arrival, focused on translating Western hymn books and Bibles into the local languages as well as on compiling dictionaries for local use (Muller 2004, 191). The inclusion of the translation of the words of hymns shows how important this music was to the missionaries and how they recognised the potential of music as a tool for engagement.

The missionaries established their institutions in the African villages, where they aimed to civilise, educate, and evangelise the indigenous peoples. Western hymnody was central to the civilising work of mission evangelists, and hymns were used strategically to replace African traditional dances and music. That is, to attract the indigenes to conversion, the missionaries used hymns. To the missionaries, the singing of hymns was more effective than sermons in attracting those who were targeted as converts, and it is recorded that missionaries entered homesteads and kraals singing hymns (Muller, 2004, 191–192). The singing congregated the locals around the mission schools where they were taught the melody and text of the hymns. As a result, though they were not understood, the phrases used in these hymns were whistled and hummed by the indigenous peoples in their villages (Muller, 2004, 191–192). Thus, we note that the people of South Africa started becoming acculturated to the sounds of Europe. Indeed, Sadie (2001, 72) writes that, since the early 19th century, with the arrival of missionaries and the settlers, the Nguni had increasingly come under Western influence.

Music, however, had long been essential to the lives of the local indigenous villagers. In South Africa at the time, the fastest-growing nations were the Zulu and Xhosa; music played an active role in their communal activities (Barrett 2007, 30). The Zulu people had a strong choral tradition which was almost always accompanied by singing and dancing. For instance, before a battle, the Zulu *impi* (warriors) would dance around the king in a snake-like formation, and they would sing songs about victory and strength for their army. The singing style of these war cries was typically call-and-response: the troops would answer a leader's chant, and the songs would contain climaxes that rose in pitch and volume each time they were repeated (Barrett 2007, 30). Levine (2005, 49) comments that the "Zulu warrior ethic instilled in the Zulu nation by Shaka was proudly displayed through song and dance". Even today, music plays a vital role in the lives of the Nguni people, both for individuals and for communities. That is, music that is African and indigenous—the music of a specific Africanculture – is generally purposeful in nature. Specific ceremonies and occasions are

accompanied by songs, which are generally accompanied by dance routines. These include songs that are spiritual and are sung to the ancestors; songs for initiation ceremonies; songs of praise that are known as *amahubo*; songs for working; birth songs; and wedding songs (Barrett, 30–31). This is true for more than the Nguni peoples; Mugovhani (2007, 18) supports this statement with reference to Venda music. He writes:

Traditional Venda music is closely integrated with Venda cultural norms and values (Vhuvenda). Music formed the very basis of a Muvenda child's discovery of himself and his place in society as he grew into adulthood. Through music, he learnt how to behave in various situations.

This tradition is also common to the Sotho people of South Africa who have a gender-bound distinction as one of the main characteristics in their music. That is, men and women have their own individual music, including choral songs. Popular in this group are work songs, such as songs associated with grinding corn that women would sing when they undertake this labour activity (Barrett 2007, 32–33).

Many of these musical traditions remain alive to this day, as they do with the Nguni peoples, and for the same reason: Western styles have influenced these songs (Barrett 2007, 33). This influence has often resulted from the mixing of Western hymns with indigenous harmonies which has given rise to a style of *a capella* singing (Barrett 2007, 35–36). This missionary-led influence is discussed in detail in the next section.

2.2 Missionary education and the introduction of hymnal singing

During the early days of Dutch colonisation, Western education was necessitated almost only by the need to read the Bible. Thus, at locations where new communities developed, the Dutch Reformed Church established schools. In addition, to cater for the children in rural areas, private farm schools were set up. A secular education system was established by Lord Charles Somerset, the Governor of the Cape Colony from 1814 to 1826; its curriculum was developed along the lines of the English elementary school system (Cox and Stevens 2011, 225). Cox and Stevens write:

Theoretically, with the elementary education being free and secular, schooling was also

available to the indigenous people – Khoikhoi in the south and the Xhosa people on the east coast. However, with a colour bar effectively in operation, schools operated by missionary organisations represented the only avenue available for elementary education to non-European children (2011,225).

The introduction of education systems by the early missionaries has proved to be significant in the history of choral music practice in South Africa. According to Detterbeck, from the beginning, education played a significant role in the project of the colonial missionaries in South Africa and has “considerable relevance for the research into the history of *amakwaya* and its choral practice” (2002, 124). At mission stations, converts were trained by the missionaries with the aim of forming a core of Christian disciples who would spread the values of European cultures. The idea was to not only produce evangelists and teachers who would serve the mission field but also educators who would infiltrate traditional village life. Thus, the black middle class that received mission education “became the main source of black school teachers whose views mainly determined the practical content of music education in the twentieth century” (Detterbeck 2002, 125).

Early documents such as reports, diaries, and letters reveal that the missionaries used hymns as a means to formulate, portray, and emphasise the Christian message in their mission work; however, they were particularly disapproving of the combination of song and movement. This highlights the fact that minimal effort was put into enquiring about the musical practices of the local peoples. Detterbeck (2007, 127) writes:

In Southern Africa, music making has always been linked to bodily movement; therefore a distinction between music and dance seems meaningless... It was especially this fusion of sound and movement, of emotion and motion, that the missionaries disapproved of. To them this practice seemed to have sexual overtones and was therefore regarded as highly indecent.

It is clear that the Western settlers were on a mission of social reform, that is, to civilise the uncivilised Africans so that they conformed to Western principles. Olwage (2002, 207–208) concurs with this idea and comments:

Popular Victorian choralism in general functioned within the politics of ethico social reform, brokering institutional affiliations with other reform initiatives as its practices worked in fulfilment of the requirements of reform... It was as part of a global reform

movement, the foreign mission, that choralism had been introduced to the Cape Colony's black singers just after mid-century.

Driven by this perception, the missionaries attempted to eradicate the aspects of traditional music that they associated with pagan dancing and other vulgar rituals. Traditional music was condemned, and missionaries labelled it as barbarous. No effort was made to blend African musical styles with the music they had brought from Europe and, besides adopting the local language, no African musical elements were added (Detterbeck 2002, 128). Detterbeck writes:

The main reason for their opposition to traditional music was, however, their conviction that traditional music entrenched the traditional religious beliefs of the people... The process of prohibiting the converts from performing traditional music and restricting them to Christian music, was equated to moving them away from their "heathen" beliefs. In other words, missionaries used music and hymnody in particular, as an agency of transformation, as a way to transfer Christian ideas to their converts. (2002,127)

Thus, the hymns proved to be of great importance as the missionaries used them as a vehicle to transmit the Christian messages they wanted to communicate to the new converts. The missionaries believed that people would remember the words of hymns better than they would those of sermons (Detterbeck 2002, 141). Despite the obvious connection to the music that the indigenes felt, hymn-singing was nurtured and developed by the missionaries, as advocated by the apostle Paul's instructions to the Colossians (Col. 3:16–17), which reads as follows:

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Another Biblical passage that was relevant to the missionaries was Paul's letter to the Ephesians (Eph. 5:18–20):

Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Church services were not the only spaces in which Western music was promoted. Missionaries would organise singing lessons on other occasions too and, interestingly, some local converts were attracted by the missionaries' providing of singing training (Detterbeck 2002, 132). In this manner, the use of hymns and psalms by the missionaries to promote Christian ideals became the norm. This intervention was taken one step further with the realisation that having a choir lead the singing would have an even greater effect (Detterbeck 2002, 141). The formation of church choirs was instrumental in aiding the learning of hymns: The objective was not only to acquaint the community with the novel repertoire of hymns and psalms by training people to sing; there was also the hope that the choristers would ultimately be able to take the lead in singing in different churches and communities around South Africa (Detterbeck 2002, 141).

These interventions proved highly effective. Hymn singing at mission institutions, in churches and schools, proved to be effective in competing with traditional African social life. Increasing numbers of people began attending church and, eventually, mission school, and as the hymns were sung repetitively at school assemblies, at church services, and after mission training, this routine "brought about a recapitulation of central key words that in the end proved to be efficient in instilling Christian doctrine into the converts" (Detterbeck 2002, 142). It is evident that, from the beginning, the missionaries saw how indigenous South Africans appreciated music, and they used this as the key method to attract them to convert to Christianity and accept the European way of life. Nevertheless, it was not the church alone that influenced the development of *amakwaya*; in truth, one of the greatest influences was unexpected.

African-American minstrel shows and the formation of black choirs in South Africa An American influence on the musical life of urban South Africa in the nineteenth-century might have been expected to be negligible due to the political dominance of Great Britain at the time. It is clear that British culture was the hegemonic external force; the church's influence, as described above, fitted well with this approach. Yet, the American contribution that there was had a vital impact (Cockrell 1987, 417). Contact between Africa and America had already been initiated with the transatlantic slave trade, a phenomenon that had an impact on black cultural development across the Atlantic. Cultural interchange between African and American communities continued after slavery was abolished in the nineteenth century.

South Africa was on the periphery of these events, yet as Detterbeck (2002, 6) writes, the local impact was considerable:

In the second half of the nineteenth century, contacts with the other side of the Atlantic grew into an enduring and possibly the most significant influence on black thinking and cultural development in South Africa, particularly on literature and the performing arts.

Black South African and American musical cultures came into contact in the era of the jubilee choirs and minstrel shows (Cockrell 1987, 419). Minstrel shows were created in America by popular white musicians in around early 1843. These musicians imitated African-American humour, antics, dance, and music. A number of these performers came together and formed a group called The Virginia Minstrels – and the blackface minstrel show was born. Minstrel shows became especially popular in the mid-nineteenth century in both America and Britain – unexpectedly, the genre became immensely popular in South Africa too. (Cockrell 1987, 419).

The Minstrel repertoire was indirectly introduced to South Africans through these minstrel groups, which comprised travelling musicians, both black and white, who arrived at the Cape with “coon songs” (Detterbeck 2002, 6). These were songs in which African-Americans were depicted in terms of gross stereotypes, such as being thieving, lazy, and foolish. Coon songs have their roots in this tradition of blackface minstrel shows in which African-Americans were parodied by white men who darkened their skin. The term “coon” is thought to be derived from the word “raccoon”, an animal known to steal food – and in the American South black American people were already known to be thieves (Schroeder 2010, 142). The first American minstrel show arrived on South African shores in October 1865 and included groups such as the H.A. Devere’s American Minstrels, Willie Freear’s Frivolities, Anglo-American, Wheeler Comedy Company, Harvey-Dougherty-Braham Minstrels, and the London Minstrels (Cockrell 1987, 419). Specific shows, such as the Fisk Jubilee Singers and the Virginia Jubilee Singers in the 1890s, left a long-lasting impression in South Africa (Detterbeck 2002, 6). These troupes inspired South African black communities, who then imitated the touring artists. Thus, today, in Cape Town, on the second of January, one can witness coloured minstrel groups, or Christmas bands marching down the street at the famous Cape Coon Carnival (Bruinders 2010).

There was one group that made an impact like no other: Orpheus McAdoo and his American Jubilee Singers. Orpheus Myron McAdoo, with his ten singers, arrived in South Africa in July 1890 following a tour to Britain. They fascinated both black and white South African audiences with their appearances in major towns and at missionary schools and furnished the establishment with black musical styles such as *isicathamiya*,¹ and later *amakwaya*. McAdoo's American Jubilee singers' repertoire included instrumental music, African-American folk songs, and spirituals, as well as vaudeville items such as juggling, dancing, and an array of other artistic acts. It sometimes consisted of European classical music and hymns (Detterbeck 2002, 6-7). Their concerts came to highlight the black American impact on local black communities. In the growing towns of the Orange Free State, Basutoland, Natal, Transkei, and the Cape, new minstrel traditions and a range of new entertainments were founded. By the late 1800s, remote rural areas had finally been reached by the minstrels. It is here, at mission schools, that the effects of minstrel shows began to show as students began to fashion their own groups (Detterbeck 2002,8).

Furthermore, according to Cockrell, it is not a coincidence that an "African Native" choir was founded at Lovedale Mission Institution within eighteen months of the visit of the American minstrel groups (1987, 427). Lovedale was founded in 1824 by two Scottish missionaries, John Bennie and John Ross, who belonged to the Glasgow Missionary Society. Lovedale was established as an education centre that would offer academic and vocational training to Africans "as well as the printing and dissemination of the Christian word" (White 1987, 1). Timothy White (1987, 2) writes:

From the beginning Lovedale was to be an non-denominational centre of education and it was to be open to both the Black and the White races of South Africa. This meant that Lovedale could expand its horizons into a more cosmopolitan institution, attracting many different types of people to its environs.

The South African Choir, or African Native Choir, had been established as the African answer to Orpheus McAdoo's Virginia Jubilee Singers (Erlmann 1994, 168). This choir, a group of fifteen African singers, was recruited at Lovedale and in Kimberly. The choristers

¹ Janet Topp Fargio (2001, 1) defines *isicathamiya* as "an a cappella choral music performed primarily by Zulu men in South Africa. The word derives from the Zulu root - *cathama*, which means to stalk like a cat. *Isicathamiya* refers to the characteristic choreography in *isicathamiya* performance, which involves very light footwork often executed in a semi-crouched position with the toe of the foot barely skimming the floor."

originated in an exclusive class in South African society that was inspired by the Western values of progress and education. They strove to achieve prominence; however, they were excluded from both white and black societies (Detterbeck 2002, 5). This rejection of the black middle class drove them to create counterstrategies, and among them, and based on their experiences, grew a movement aimed at cultural reinvigoration and nationalism (Detterbeck 2002, 93–94). The “mission blacks”, according to Detterbeck, “had recourse to symbols to promote their ideas of progress and modernity and to distinguish themselves from the black African masses” (2002, 94). The choral practice of *amakhwaya* became important to the black middle class as they used it to communicate their desire for social and political emancipation.

2.3 The formation of African choirs

Thus, it was the travelling minstrel groups that inspired the formation of the African choirs in South Africa. The minstrel groups left enduring impressions on South African audiences. Many schools decided to form their own groups in order to raise funds. One group, advertised as African Jubilee Singers, toured the Cape in January 1891 and in May left for England (Erlmann 1994, 168). In Natal, at about the same time, another black school, Edendale, with financial problems of its own, decided to send its choir on tour to raise money for the institution (Cockrell 1987, 427).

A trend had started, and choirs such as the Zulu Choir (from Edendale), Reuben Caluza’s Ohlange Choir, and African Native Choir were used as vehicles to communicate the ideas of a national African culture and an emerging nationalism. The experiences of mission-educated blacks strongly influenced the repertoire of these choir’s concerts, in the form of westernised African choral songs, English secular pieces, and church hymns. The influence of minstrel groups and song material derived from this genre was present in performances by educated Africans (Detterbeck 2002, 8-9), and these African choirs sang both indigenous African and Western compositions.

2.4 The dawn of black nationalism in South Africa: Nationalism via choral music

South African black nationalism is historically embedded in the colonial confrontations

between the colonizers and the Africans (Fanon, 1992; Memmi, 2013). Black nationalism “is a consummation of a long tradition steeped in the desire of colonised Africans to liberate themselves” (Tafira 2016, 5). The pioneers of South Africa’s black nationalism include Solomon Tshekisho Plaatje (1876–1932), John Langalibalele Dube (1871–1946), Enoch Mankayi Sontonga (1873–1905), Isaiah Shembe (1865–1935), John Knox Bokwe (1855–1922), Mangena Maake Mokone (1851–1931), and Tiyo Soga (1829–1871). These pioneers began with issues of mobilisation and education of African peoples who were economically, politically, and culturally isolated as a consequence of the missionary and colonial projects.

Although the pioneers remained Christians, which might have been unavoidable since they had been groomed in mission institutions, they confronted challenges in retaining their African cultural identity (Okigbo 2010, 43). They advocated a distinctive form of nationalism in order “to forge a sense of unity among black South Africans to establish themselves as a formidable entity within the polity of the union in which they were being increasingly relegated to the margins” (Okigbo 2016, 45).

The pioneers of black nationalism in South Africa were products of the education on offer at colonial missionary institutions in which choral music was an essential part of the syllabus. These pioneers would form “part of South Africa’s early generation of modern intellectuals, who would conduct the first critical assessment of the oppressive conditions of black people in the Union” (Okigbo 2010, 43-44). It was in this space that they were able to make a subtle yet undeniable mark. The songwriters and poets constructed, through their own works, a design for theological transfiguration and “musical inculturation” that mirrored their own perspective and “African aesthetic ideals” (Okigbo 2010, 44). Thus, a path was set for a choral music tradition that is uniquely South African and indigenous (Okigbo 2010, 43–44). This form of nationalism was provoked by issues such as the ethnic subjugation that Africans were experiencing by the community of the European colonists. From the interconnected boundaries of religion and politics, these pioneer nationalists opposing colonial rule rebelled against ethnic subjugation by whites. Their agenda was communicated by the notable role of choral music, especially “from the religious front” (Okigbo 2010, 45–46). Thus, the very tool used by the oppressors to inculcate Western values in Africans, choral music, was used by the latter as a form of protest to communicate the socio-economic issues and the aspirations of the black community.

2.5 Conclusion

The foundation for the development of *amakwaya* was laid at the time the Dutch East India Company colonised South Africa when it established Cape Town as a refreshment station in 1652. The Dutch settlers brought with them their music, which included sacred songs, hymns, and Western classical music, and the music was then shared with indigenous Africans through early Protestant mission work. Mission stations were established in the villages of the indigenous African people following the arrival of British, American, Scottish, and French missionaries in the early 1820s, and a large number of indigenous African converted to Christianity once they were introduced to and taught to sing hymns by the missionaries. Converts received mission education and missionary training – the singing of hymns and reading the scriptures were part of their daily life. Thus, church choirs were formed for the Sunday services at the mission stations. When minstrel shows appeared in South Africa early in the second half of the nineteenth century, they brought with them the Christmas Band music genre and spirituals which fascinated the South African community. Minstrel shows were popularised in South Africa by American minstrel groups such as Opheus Myron McAdoo's American Jubilee Singers, which inspired the establishment of choirs at the mission institutions. The African Native Choir, Ohlange Choir, and Zulu Choir were formed in response to the travelling minstrel groups, and these choirs went on tours to raise funds for their institutions. At the same time, they were used by mission-educated black elites to communicate an emerging African nationalism within the colonial space.

Who were the pioneering composers of the new genre? In the following chapter, I consider the contribution that Ntsikana kaGaba, John Knox Bokwe, and Enoch Sontonga made to the South African choral tradition.

CHAPTER 3

The Pioneers of Indigenous Choral Music in South Africa

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the origins of choral (hymnal) singing and choirs in South Africa and how the dramatic effects of colonisation and minstrelsy formed the bedrock of the *amakwaya* of today. The previous chapter also revealed that indigenous choirs emerged at the mission institutions and that these choirs sang Western compositions as well as indigenous African choral compositions. This chapter focuses on the first generation of indigenous African choral composers, who are here referred to as the pioneers of South African choral music, and their compositions. It discusses the first indigenous choral songs to have been composed by Ntsikana kaGaba; examines the introduction of the tonic sol-fa notation to South Africa; and discusses the products of that notation method, focusing on John Knox Bokwe and Enoch Sontonga.

3.2 Ntsikana kaGaba and his oral compositions

Ntsikana kaGaba is one of the most influential figures in the history of South Africa. He is associated with the beginning of Christianity in the Xhosa community as he was the first Xhosa to convert to Christianity. He is remembered for pioneering African Christianity through his teachings and the singing of hymns, which he composed himself. His doctrine has been kept alive by generations of African Christians (Hodgson 1980, 33; Khumalo 2014,21).

Ntsikana was born around 1780 and belonged to the Cira clan (Hodgson 1980, 35). He was the son of Gaba, who was a renowned councillor to Chief Ngqika. According to Dave Dargie (1987, 7), “Ntsikana is an attractively mysterious figure in Xhosa history.” Evidence for this can first be seen in the events leading to his birth, when Gaba’s senior wife, Noyiki, became envious and accused Ntsikana’s mother, Nonabe, a junior wife, of witchcraft. Ntsikana was born some months after his mother ran off to be with her family at Qaukeni, in the Transkei, in order to save her life. When Gaba called for the 12-year-old Ntsikana, he was living with

his mother's relatives. He was adopted by Gaba's senior wife because she had no sons, and succeeded his father to the chieftaincy. His childhood was a traditional one – growing up, he learned to hunt and watch over his father's herds. As a boy, he underwent traditional initiation to become a man and subsequently married two wives. He became famous as a singer, dancer, skilled speaker, and a councillor following his father's death (Hodgson 1980,35; Millard 1999, 58).

Among Xhosa Christians, there was a widely held belief that Ntsikana derived his intuitions through spiritual disclosure independent of missionary control. It is said that when he was herding cattle as a boy, he heard the missionary, Van der Kemp, spreading the gospel and later listened to his teachings in the course of his evangelising tours (Hodgson 1980, 35). Hodgson (1980, 34) describes Van der Kemp as follows:

Dr. J.T. van der Kemp was the first to evangelize the Xhosa, from the end of 1799 to the start of 1801. He was followed some time later by James Read senior, who [travelled] at infrequent intervals. Finally, Joseph Williams founded a mission near present-day Fort Beaufort in 1816. But this was short-lived as the station was closed after his death two years later.

An association with the evangelists is indicated in the specific content of Ntsikana's teachings where he talks about God and a Christian way of life. However, it is believed that his conversion to Christianity occurred in 1815, before Williams arrived. The conversion of Ntsikana is said to have begun when he was a teenager and had a vision that changed his whole life. He was rounding up calves when he saw his favourite ox, Hulushe, being struck by a bright light coming from the rising sun's rays, though he noticed nothing unusual about this. However, later that day when he was attending a dance at a neighbouring *kraal*² with his family, they were unusual occurrences. A raging wind arose out of the blue sky that made the revellers cease dancing, and every time that Ntsikana attempted to join the dance, people thought he was bewitched. Folklore, however, has it that he was aware that he was being entered by a sacred spirit, and he immediately left and went home with his family. On their way home, he astonished his family when he went in the Gqora river and cleaned "the red ochre from his body" (Hodgson 1980, 35). Ntsikana's odd behaviour continued, and he spent the following day in the kraal humming and repeating an unknown chant. The chant became

² The Dictionary of South African English defines the term *Kraal* as (a) "a traditional African village or extended settlement" (Dictionary of South African English 2021).

his first composition, known famously as the *Round Hymn* or *Poll-Headed Hymn* after Ntsikana set the text “*Elele le le hom, hom, homna*” to music (Hodgson 35-36). According to Dargie, the words *ele le le le homna* are probably a “Xhosification of Alleluja Amen” (1982, 7). It is after these events occurred that Ntsikana began his ministry.

The Xhosa people claim that the first South African Ethiopian church was established by Ntsikana in 1815 (Hodgson 1984, 20). Abare Teshome writes that “Ethiopianism is considered as both [a] religious movement in establishing an independent Christian church, and struggle for freedom from colonial oppression” (2017, 309). Graham Duncan discusses the foundations of Ethiopianism:

Ethiopian roots can be traced to biblical times and the then known regions of northern Africa. This Pan-African expression of Christianity was based on the text of Psalm 68:31: “Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.” It encapsulated a sense of cultural and political identity amongst black people throughout the African continent as an affirmation of the place black people have in God’s salvific plan. (2015, 199)

Teshome’s statement correlates with the assertion by the Xhosa people, since the movement, under Ntsikana’s African leadership, was an organised group of African Christians which was independent, although there could be no breaking away from the mission church (Hodgson 1984, 20).

Ntsikana composed four hymns which formed part of services he held. Folklore has it that the hymn generally known as “*Intsimbi kaNtsikana*” (Ntsikana’s Bell) was chanted by him while he was standing outside his hut and that his congregation would follow him into his hut after the singing of the hymn ended. To settle his congregation, Ntsikana would begin singing another of his hymns, “*Dalibom*” (Life Creator). Ntsikana’s belief was that God is the creator of life. The “*Round Hymn*” was then sung by Ntsikana as a means of pacifying his congregation after preaching had taken place (Hodgson 1984, 37). Dettterbeck (2002, 307) writes:

Ntsikana converted to Christianity and began to formulate the rudiments of an indigenous Christian theology. At the center of Ntsikana’s worship stood a set of hymns, the composition of which was sparked by his mystical experiences and visions.

Xhosa musical tradition is embedded in the compositions of Ntsikana despite the fact that he was motivated and inspired by the Christian teachings of the missionary movement. He tried to make the Christian ideology more available to the people of his community; this is observable in the musical form and style of his compositions. Ntsikana was, however, distinct from the missionary converts that came after him. He continued to reside with his own people, mixing Christian (and thus European) musical features with Xhosa traditions, and maintained the passing on of cultural heritage from generation to generation. To transmit the religious messages, Ntsikana utilised a broad variety of symbolism and imagery relating to priestly life, hunting, and fighting. With these images and symbols, Ntsikana was capable of engaging with people on an emotional level and of remaining relevant to the lives of the Xhosa people (Detterbeck 2002, 308). For instance, the second line of his “*Great Hymn*” states: “*Ungu Wenawena Kaka lenyaniso*” (Thou art Thou, Shield of truth). Here he refers to God as the only shield in an unpleasant situation. He uses *ikaka*, which was an ox-hide shield Xhosa warriors used in battle. Thus, he praises his God by using the “familiar imagery of war” (Hodgson 1980, 43). In addition, it appears that dancing probably accompanied the singing of Ntsikana’s hymns; this was a rare phenomenon in the mission churches as it was prohibited by the missionaries, who saw it as a heathen practice (see Chapter 2); however, there is no documented proof of this (Detterbeck 2002, 309). The belief that Ntsikana’s hymns were accompanied by dancing is plausible since Xhosa traditional music incorporates both singing and dancing.

In 1876, 1885, and 1914, a set of Ntsikana’s tunes was transcribed and issued in tonic sol-fa by John Knox Bokwe (Okigbo 2010, 48). The arrangement of Ntsikana’s hymns by Bokwe is distinguished by “falling melodic lines and frequent tonality shifts between the first and second degrees of the scale (the *vu* and *va* in Xhosa terminology)”; this can be heard in the “*Great Hymn*” where the major triad patterns are shifted harmonically. This shift in tonality is used in all Xhosa traditional music, having developed from the music bow’s musical overtone patterns (Detterbeck 2002, 309). To understand how this tonal shifting occurs, one must understand how the bow is played.

There are four types of Xhosa musical bows: *inkinge*, *umrhube* or *umqhagi*, *ikatari*, and *uhadi*. The focus here is on *uhadi*, which is a large bow with a resonator attached. Traditionally, the resonator is a calabash, and the beater is a reed or light stick approximately 1.5 metres long. The instrument is played mostly by women, who place the calabash opening

on the chest. The fore finger is then used to hold the string against the thumb nail to obtain higher fundamental tones, while, for lower fundamental tones, it is released (Dargie 2020, 209–211). To release or dampen overtones, the player opens and closes the calabash opening. For higher overtones that are audible, the calabash must be opened further, and the higher overtone produced then becomes the melody tone which the player follows. Additionally, “the other audible overtones enable *uhadi* to produce harmony with the melody” (Dargie 2020, 211). Two fundamental whole tones, for example, F and G, are used by a player on *uhadi* (Dargie 2020, 212). The tonal foundation of “*Great Hymn*” is provided by the two root-note alternations with the separate overtones.

Ntsikana’s compositions, as Xhosa as they are, contain several European components. The music now relies on the bar line, there are rhythmic forms and pitch modifications, a departure from the falling melody lines, as well as harmonic and melodic content changes. Detterbeck (2002, 310) writes, however, that:

The attempt to notate Ntsikana’s hymns in tonic sol-fa itself must be seen as problematic as it forces the compositions into a rigid melodic and rhythmic grid, necessarily effacing individual features in the original ... Ntsikana’s compositions are part of an oral tradition, and have been handed down from one generation to another.

There is a belief, though, that when Bokwe attempted to notate Ntsikana’s hymns, the authentic compositions had already undergone mutation through oral transmission and that Bokwe might have altered or corrected the compositions in accordance with his music training, as he had been exposed to Western hymns and the performance practice and teachings of the missionaries (Detterbeck 2002, 310).

Hence, despite Ntsikana being the first Xhosa hymn composer, it is likely that the way we hear his work is not necessarily authentic. Nevertheless, his influence has been immense. After Ntsikana and the publication of his “*Great Hymn*” by Bokwe, the composition of Christian music by converts was encouraged by the missionaries (Dargie 1987, 320). The introduction of a form of notation referred to as tonic sol-fa had a substantial and lasting impact on this music.

3.3 Missionary music education: The introduction of tonic sol-fa

For more than a century and a half, the tonic sol-fa system has been used as the main method

of the reading and practice during the choral competitions held by the black communities in South Africa (Akrofi, Smit and Thorsén 2007, 146). In local, non-professional, communities, the tonic sol-fa method has become an essential tool of the musical culture. Indeed, its notation has continued to play a notable role in encouraging and preserving choral music as the main facet of national identity (Akrofi and Stevens 2004, 311).³

Tonic sol-fa originated in England as a choral singing teaching method and was developed by John Curwen in the early 1840s. The method was disseminated to every part of Britain as a way to attain societal reform and increase Christian reverence. In South Africa, tonic sol-fa was encouraged by the Christian missions and later by schools supported by the government (Stevens 2007, 37). It was promoted in three separate stages, beginning with attempts by the British community in South Africa to reproduce musical culture. This was followed by its use in the evangelical activities of the missionaries and, finally, by its promotion in schools (Stevens 2007, 39).

Thomas Daines (1829–1880) introduced the tonic sol-fa method to the mission schools in the Cape Colony. Daines was a dentist from England and resided in King William’s Town in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. He offered part-singing and sight-singing classes “presumably to the European community” in around 1860, when Grey’s Hospital in King William’s Town appointed him as the resident dentist (Stevens and Akrofi 2011, 225). It is recorded that in 1862, Daines was instructing tonic sol-fa in King Williams Town to a “Bantu” choir and to local learners at St Matthew’s Mission close to Keiskammahoek in the Eastern Cape. By 1867, the choir, now 200 to 300 voices strong, were performing music by Purcell, hymns, and multi-part songs using tonic sol-fa as the method of teaching and learning (Stevens and Akrofi 2011, 225).

The tonic sol-fa method in South Africa was also pioneered by Christopher Birkett, who is described by Henry Nixon as “the father of the [tonic sol-fa] system in Cape Colony” (1898, 23). Birkett trained as an educator at Westminster Training College in England in 1853–1854, and he migrated to South Africa in about 1854. In South Africa, he worked in Cradock,

³ Choirs form such an important part of current South African musical society that the National Choir Festival was established in 1978 as Ford Choirs in Contest and became a major festival attracting a number of church, community, and teachers’ choirs. The festival was the first to award prize money to winning choirs. In 2000, the South African Schools Choral Eisteddfod was introduced. The festival partnered with First National Bank for four years. The festival takes place annually from April to July, and school choirs perform a mixed repertoire of Western art music (oratorios, operas, etc.), South African choral music (see Chapter 5).

Healdtown, and Grahamstown (now Makhanda) in the Eastern Cape. Birkett is first documented to have used tonic sol-fa in Grahamstown at a Sunday school in 1863, although he already began teaching the method in the mid-1850s when he arrived in South Africa. In Grahamstown, a class of over 500 members of the local and European communities was later documented to have been conducted by Birkett using the graded certificate examination system of the Tonic Sol-Fa College (Stevens 2007, 39–40). Following Birkett’s attempts at teaching tonic sol-fa to a choir of mainly Fingo⁴ members, choral pieces by popular composers such as Mendelssohn, Handel, and others are documented to have been excellently performed by the choir. According to Stevens, “To his credit, Birkett apparently set out to build a greater degree of mutual respect between the indigenous and Colonial communities through music” (2007, 40). In 1871, Birkett issued a book entitled *Penult Psalms-tunes, or Ingoma*, a collection of one hundred hymn tunes notated in tonic sol-fa (Stevens 2007,40).

Tonic sol-fa was generally used in mission stations around Port Elizabeth, Kaffraria (see Figure 3.1 below), and Bantuland.

⁴ The term Fingo (*Mfengu*) is defined by the Dictionary of South African English as “a member of a Xhosa-speaking people descended from the remnants of several refugee groups displaced during the Mfecane, and who settled in the eastern Cape and southern Transkei during the 1830s” (Dictionary of South African English 2021).



Figure 3.1: A map of Kaffraria – now the Eastern Cape region of South Africa (map from GlobalSecurity.org 2021).

The method was widely encouraged at Lovedale Missionary Institution, which was among the Cape Colony’s most notable missions as regards academic work. Located in the Eastern Cape Province, west-northwest of East London, the Lovedale Mission had been established close to the hinterland town of Alice in the 1820s by a group of priests from the Glasgow Missionary Society. The mission’s intent, apart from religious pursuit, was the local community’s – Xhosa people’s – education (Stevens and Akrofi 2011,226).

Stevens (2007, 41) writes:

Tonic sol-fa was being taught at ‘native day schools’ by indigenous teachers trained at Lovedale Institution and much was made of the ability of local indigenous people to assimilate and utilise tonic sol-fa notation in their singing, not only hymns, but also larger works such as the “Hallelujah” chorus from the Handel’s *Messiah*.

At Lovedale Mission, the establishment of a printing press was one of the essential ways of promoting the education of local Xhosa communities. From 1823, the printing press produced academic and evangelical publications comprising Christian literature, school and hymn books, and a Xhosa bible. Tonic sol-fa-notated music production was empowered by this printing press and led to the publication of music composed by indigenous South Africans, including Reverend John Knox Bokwe (1855–1922) and Enoch Sontonga (1873–1904), who were both students at Lovedale (Stevens and Akrofi 2011, 226). These composers and their tonic sol-fa-notated music compositions are discussed in the following section.

3.4 The first generation of indigenous choral composers

The practice of choral music by indigenous Africans, as a form of art, was established between 1850 and 1930. This period's most influential composers were Enoch Sontonga and John Knox Bokwe. The music of these composers contains facets from African tradition, although it was based primarily on the Western style of hymnody (Mugovhani 2010, 61). In this section, I focus on Bokwe and Sontonga, early composers of indigenous choral music in South Africa.

3.4.1 John Knox Bokwe

John Knox Bokwe was born in 1855 near the Lovedale Mission, in a village called Ntselamanzi, and he belonged to the Ngqika Mbaba clan. When Lovedale opened as an educational establishment on 21 July 1841, his father, Jacob was among the first learners to register. Bokwe was named by his father after John Knox, a member of the Scottish Presbyterian church. At a young age, Bokwe attended the community mission school and was instructed by the grandson of Ntsikana, William Kolbe Ntsikana, and William Daniel Mindwana, one of his teachers. Later, in 1866, Bokwe was “admitted to the preparatory classes at the Lovedale Institution where he continued on to the college in 1869 and finished his schooling four years later” (Millard 2019, 45). To pay for his fees, Bokwe began to work at the establishment, and in 1867 he was receiving his food and 25 cents a month for assisting in the missionary house (Millard 2019, 45).

Bokwe became a Christian minister, the first among the Xhosa people, after he graduated from Lovedale. Since he was a pupil of James Steward, the then principal at Lovedale, Bokwe was assigned the roles of supervisor and private secretary of the telegraph office (Detterbeck 2002, 313). He was multi-skilled – as an interpreter, book-keeper, choirmaster and musician. Bokwe also joined the Lovedale brass band, of which he became a noted member (Mpola 2007, 31). In the course of his career, Bokwe was preoccupied by music, and he gave most of his time to the arrangement and composition of sacred songs and Christian hymns in his language, Xhosa. The Lovedale Press received numerous requests from school and church choirs requesting copies of Bokwe’s compositions (Detterbeck 2002, 313–314). Veit Erlmann (1983, 136) writes:

Bokwe’s arrangements of the hymns became repertoire standards throughout the country and middle class choirs sang them in literary debating circles and political meetings in early Kimberley, and in mission stations in Natal. For generations to come Bokwe’s songs became the daily bread for African schoolchildren.

3.4.1.1 Compositions

Bokwe began composing in 1875. His pieces received public attention and include numerous hymns and his masterpiece, “*Vuka Deborah*”. In 1885, *Lovedale music* or *Amaculo aseLovedale* were composed and published by Bokwe (Skota n.d., 7; Millard 2019, 46). “*Amaculo aseLovedale*” is a collection of twelve authentic songs notated in tonic sol-fa. It contained songs that were reprints and had been published as addendums in *The Christian Express* and *Isigidimi Sama-Xhosa* (newspapers) from midyear 1875. The song collection is arguably among significant “early sources of *amakwaya* compositions” (Detterbeck 2002, 314).

In a developing, new society of African Christians that was fashioned on European values, Bokwe became aware that his compositions were not representative of his origins. After he notated Ntsikana’s music (which was full of traditional Xhosa musical elements), he was reminded of the significance of safeguarding traditional knowledge. Thus, Bokwe’s main concern became to find a solution to the issue of the European composition of hymns meddling with the Xhosa language’s comprehensibility and poetic beauty (Detterbeck 2002, 314). Bokwe strove to compose tunes that would accommodate accepted Xhosa accentuation

in speaking which could be preserved in singing so as to prevent the diminishing of the Xhosa language in singing, some which might be caused by a variety of accents in hymns that were badly composed. His compositions are examples of the earliest hymns set with Xhosa verses although, unfortunately, they contained linguistic deformations (Detterbeck 2002,315; Shepherd 1937, 100; Bokwe 1922, iii; Kirby 1959, 39). In 1884, Bokwe assisted with the compilation of the first hymnbook in Xhosa. He is recognised as having made an exceptional contribution to “Xhosa religious music” (Millard 2019, 46).

3.4.2 Enoch Mankayi Sontonga

Enoch Sontonga was born in the Eastern Cape not far from Uitenhage in 1873, and he belonged to the Mpinga clan of the Xhosa-speaking peoples. He was a teacher, like Bokwe, trained at Lovedale Institution (Coplan and Jules-Rosette 2005, 287; Mpola 2004, 62) and was also a multi-skilled lay preacher, a non-professional photographer, choirmaster, composer, and a virtuoso poet (Coplan and Jules-Rosette 2005, 287). In Nancefield, Johannesburg, he was associated with the Methodist mission school in the area. In addition, he belonged to the African Presbyterian Church led by Reverend Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba; his “preaching role in the church was expressed in his deep desire for the Holy Spirit to descend on the African continent” (Mzondi 2018, 41). This is conveyed in the chorus of the famous “*Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika*”, a Xhosa song he composed in 1897 “for his school choir” (Mzondi 2018, 41).

The music of “*Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika*” was composed when Sontonga was 24 years old, after he had written the first verse and chorus. Sontonga wrote the song’s opening stanza in Xhosa, and it premiered publicly at the 1899 ordination ceremony for the first minister of the Methodist church, Reverend John Hlengani Mboweni, a Tsonga. Later, the song was sung by Sontonga’s choir while they were touring Natal and Johannesburg, after which many other choirs sang it too (Copland and Jules-Rosette 2005, 287). The piece was supposedly written free of political protest thinking and was first shared as a Christian African hymn. Nevertheless, the honest views of the text and the clarity of the folk-like tune “made a direct and instantaneous appeal to all Africans who were beginning now to extend their horizons beyond the limits of their individual tribes” (Rhodes 1962, 11).

On the African continent and in then colonial South Africa, “*Nkosi sikelel' iAfrica*” was

associated with four major developments: The song was composed 26 years after the ordination of the first African Presbyterian Church minister, Reverend Tiyo Soga, which he attained from Glasgow University in Scotland (Mzondi 2018, 41). It was composed during the era of Ethiopianism, which had its foundations in Psalm 68:31 – “Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands to God” (“Bible Gateway Passage: Psalm68:31 –King James Version” n.d.). This was the period that inspired the establishment of Africanindependent churches following the early African church leaders’ separation from mission churches. The independent churches were formed with the aim of reflecting the socio-economic religious circumstance of Africans, and they were established in Natal, the Transvaal, and the Cape Colony of South Africa and in other African countries. The song became a prayer for God to bless Africa and raise her horn, a request for the Holy Spirit to descend on the African continent, and for God to bless the African family, as is conveyed in the song’s last stanza (Mzondi 2018, 41–42).

The song was composed ten years before the mobilisation of Africans in the Cape Colony to fight the Voters Registration Act, which was referred to as *Tung’ umlomo* (Sew up the mouth) by the local people. This Act was passed in September 1897 with the aim of deliberately depriving indigenous people of their voting rights. Moreover, in 1912, the song was used as the African National Congress’s (ANC’s) anthem (Mzondi 2018, 42). Following Sontonga’s death in 1905, the Ohlange Institute Choir directed by Reuben Caluza sang “*Nkosi sikelel’ iAfrika*” after the closing prayer of the ANC’s first meeting on 8 January 1912 (Coplan and Jules-Rosette 2005, 287). In the streets of Johannesburg, prior to 1919, the song was employed in political protests. It was even recorded in London on 16 October 1923 being sung by ANC founding member Solomon Plaatje with accompaniment on the piano by Sylvia Colenso. At all the meetings, the song was sung at their close once it had been adopted as the official anthem of the organisation when it changed its name, in 1925, from the South African Native National Congress to ANC. “*Nkosi sikelel’ iAfrika*”, with its more timeless and universal view, had replaced “*iLand Act*”, a song by Reuben Caluza protesting the Natives Trust and Land Act of 1913, which had incorporated dispossession as part of the anthem of the ANC (Coplan and Jules-Rosette 2005, 287).

Samuel E.K. Mqayi, one of the most influential Xhosa-speaking poets of his time, later added seven stanzas to the original song (Mzondi 2018, 42). In 1927, all the verses of “*Nkosi*

sikelel' iAfrika” were published in the form of a pamphlet in the Eastern Cape by the Lovedale Press. In 1929, it was incorporated in *Ingwade Yama-culo ase-Rabe*, the Presbyterian Xhosa hymn book, “where it was given the unique benefit of transcription in staff notation”. On 11 June 1927 already, it had been issued in a Xhosa poetry book for schools as well as published in *Umteteli wa Bantu*, a newspaper (Coplan and Jules-Rosette 2005, 287).

The song has been embraced as the nation’s anthem by the Azanian People’s Organisation, the Black Consciousness Movement, and the Pan-African Congress of Azania. It has been translated in numerous languages and was modified after it spread beyond the borders of South Africa. It is sung in Zimbabwe and Namibia and is the national anthem of Zambia, Tanzania, and South Africa (Mzondi 2018, 42). In South Africa, to form the nation’s new and current anthem, the anthem of the apartheid government of South Africa, “*Die Stem*” written and composed in 1918 by C.J. Langenhoven, was officially amalgamated with the song (Mzondi 2018, 43).

After Sontonga’s death at the age of 32 in 1905, his songs were used far and wide by choirs in South Africa. His grave site was lost for many years but after thorough research, it was discovered in Braamfontein, Johannesburg (Mpola 2004, 63).

The pioneers of choral music laid the foundations for writing African indigenous music since they had sought to represent who they were and wanted to communicate the circumstances of an African during colonisation. They were thus promoting nationalism through choral music and became influential to the generation of composers that followed.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the pioneers of South African indigenous choral music and their compositions, beginning with the oral composer, Ntsikana kaGaba. He was the son of Gabawho belonged to the Ngqika clan, and the first convert among the Xhosa people. His conversion to Christianity came independently of missionary contact. Ntsikana had heard J.T. van der Kemp preach, but he never became a fully-fledged member of a mission, received

instruction on the scripture, or learned a Western hymn. He composed four hymns after his mysterious conversion to Christianity, and later began his ministry independently of the mission churches; there he instructed his disciples, thus laying the foundations for an African Christianity. His hymns were later transcribed into tonic sol-fa notation by John Knox Bokwe who was a product of missionary education.

Missionary education introduced the instruction of tonic sol-fa notation to South Africa. This was pioneered by Thomas Daines and Christopher Birkett, who taught it at the mission schools in the Cape. The tonic sol-fa method produced the first-generation composers of indigenous choral music, such as Tiyo Soga, John Knox Bokwe, and Enoch Sontonga. The music of these composers was promoted by the establishment of the Lovedale Press in 1823. The press published newspapers, Bibles, hymn books, and tonic sol-fa music compositions. John Knox Bokwe and Enoch Sontonga laid the foundations for indigenous choral music compositions. Bokwe produced a song book titled *Amaculo ase Lovedale* as well transcribing Ntsikana's hymns, and his compositions were popular in the schools. Enoch Sontonga composed "*Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika*", a hymn which became a symbol of hope for the indigenous African people when they were being oppressed by the colonial rulers. "*Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika*" was popularised by Reuben Caluza and his Ohlange choir. The South African Native National Congress, which was founded in 1912 and which became the ANC, adopted Enoch Sontonga's hymn as its official anthem in 1912. The hymn was modified and later became the official anthem of South Africa.

In the next chapter, I discuss the second-generation composers, those who came after the pioneers of indigenous choral music – Assegai Kumalo, Reuben Caluza, Benjamin Tyamzashe, and Pulumo Joshua Mohapeloa – how indigenous choral composition practice developed, and their contributions to the African identity.

CHAPTER 4

The Second Generation of Black Choral Composers in South Africa:

The Identity of Choral Music during Apartheid

4.1 Introduction

The first generation of South African indigenous choral music composers, that is, those who came almost 30 years after the death of Ntsikana kaGaba, based their compositions primarily on the Western hymnody structures but bravely incorporated African languages such as Xhosa, Zulu, Sesotho in the text of the music, as discussed in the previous chapter. These first-generation composers who had emerged from the mission institutions surprisingly did not follow and model their compositions on the traditional African music style of Ntsikana's hymns and, as a result, their "compositions were purely Western in idiom" (Detterbeck 2002, 311). However, the second-generation composers of South African indigenous choral music were more motivated to include African features other than the vernacular language(s) in their compositions. They wanted them to be more African, and they also drifted away from religious themes to those that were secular and concerned social experience. As language concerns were their motivation, the composers began to play with rhythmic experimentation. However, their compositions were still largely Western as they retained the melodic and harmonic structures of the Western musical systems. The composers were working towards rhythmic modifications, using driving and energetic examples and as a result a form of musical nationalism emerged; this was first evident in the field of choral music (Detterbeck 2002, 324).

In this chapter, I provide brief biographies and discuss features in the compositions of the South African indigenous choral music composers Alfred Assegai Kumalo (1879–1966), Reuben Tholakele Caluza (1895–1969), Benjamin Tyamzashe (1890–1990), and Pulumo Joshua Mohapeloa (1908–1981). I selected these composers based on the minimal literature that is available on early indigenous choral music composers, as discussed in Chapter 1. Hereafter, they are referred to as the second-generation of black choral music in South Africa. In addition, this chapter examines how the music compositions of this second generation of composers influenced the struggle for liberation in South Africa. In this

chapter, the terms music, composition, piece, and song are used interchangeably, as composers in this generation regarded their choral works as songs.

4.2 The second-generation of black choral music composers in South Africa

4.2.1 Alfred Assegai Kumalo

4.2.1.1 History

Alfred Assegai Kumalo was born on the 4th of January 1879 in Edendale, Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal). He was the fifth child of his Zulu parents, who were Christian and were both musical as they were members at the Edendale Church Choir. When Kumalo was a young boy, he used to secretly shed his Western clothes, dress himself in a lion skin, called *umutsha* in isiZulu, and go join *ukushikisha* and *indlamu* Zulu traditional dances. As Christians, his parents forbade these interactions, but Kumalo continued and, to some extent, grew up experiencing both a Christian and traditional lifestyle. Musically however, “apart from these encounters, his early musical background had been mainly restricted to mission hymns” (Rycroft 1991, 9–10). Kumalo received his education in Edendale and, in 1893, he completed Standard 9, the second last year of high school, at the Nuttall Training Institution. His family moved to the Witwatersrand in 1894, to Krugersdorp, and then Johannesburg in 1895, where he assisted in his father’s cartage business by transporting goods as an ox-wagon driver. Aside from dedicating much of his free-time to music-making, in the 1890s, he worked as a clerk, interpreter, and office-boy (Rycroft 1991, 10).

In 1899, amidst the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer war, Kumalo returned to Natal, and years later, in 1903, he became a member of the Edendale Choir. Music continued to be his favourite pursuit, and he mastered the banjo while working as a clerk in Pietermaritzburg. Kumalo was then employed in Durban at the Municipal Affairs Department from 1917 to 1928. During this time, he was able to compose a significant amount of music. In addition, he led the Kings of Harmony, a choral group that sang in close harmony, later forming the Zulu Male-Voice Party in Durban in 1923 (Rycroft 1991, 10).

4.2.1.2 Compositions

Kumalo began composing seriously in around 1899; his first composition was “*Wayaphi uThandiwe*” (Where did Thandiwe go?). It is in this piece, and others that were to follow, that he was attempting to “recapture the Zulu idiom and rhythm and modernise it into a Western musical form” (Kumalo cited in Rycroft 1991, 17). See the excerpt of text and Figure 4.1 below:

<i>Wayaphi uThandiwe, bantu?</i>	Where did Thandiwe go, people?
<i>Wayaphi uThandiwe?</i>	Where did Thandiwe go?
<i>Bath' usenyangeni,</i>	They say she is at the doctor's
<i>entashingeni; ekudeni, A-ho! A-ho! A...</i>	in the desert; in the distance, A-ho! A-ho! A...

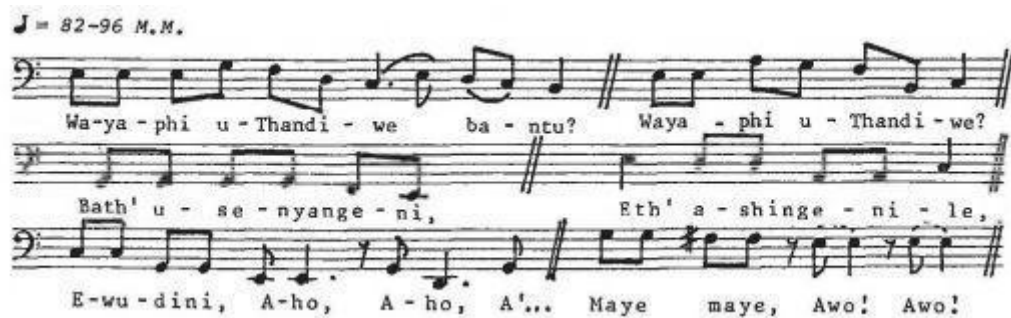


Figure 4.1: A staff-notated transcription of “*Wayaphi uThandiwe*”, a piece by A.A. Kumalo (cited in Rycroft 1991, 24)

At a later point, Kumalo was commissioned to write the music for a nativity play by Mr Edward Jali and ended up composing three pieces for the play. However, before the play was finished, Mr Jali obtained a scholarship to go train as a medical aid at Fort Hare in the Eastern Cape, and the play was never finished (Kumalo cited in Rycroft 1991, 18). Of the three pieces Khumalo wrote, he claimed that one of them was one of his leading pieces. He commented: “One of the songs I wrote is a very popular song, “*Intokozo*”. Even to this day, I think it is one of the leading songs” (Kumalo cited in Rycroft 1991, 18). See the excerpt from the text and Figure 4.2 below:

<i>Nans' intokozo, kubantu bonke bomhlaba,</i>	Here is the joy, for all the people of the
--	--

earth,

Nans'indab'imtoto'imtoti,

Here is a lovely story, *imtoto' imtoti kubantu bonke;*
the loveliest to all people;

Nans'intokozo, kubantu bonke bomhlaba,

Here is the joy, for all the peoples of the earth,

Kuvel'izindaba ezimnandi;

There comes good news;

(Rycroft 1991, 18)



Figure 4.2: A staff-notated transcription of “*Intokozo*” a piece by A.A. Kumalo (cited in Rycroft 1991, 24)

Additionally, four children’s pieces were composed by Kumalo; however, they were published without asking his permission – a matter which was later settled between the publishers and Kumalo. The aforementioned pieces with the following titles were published in the book *Amaculo Ezingane Zesikole* (Ngubane 1959, 29–37): “*Ubucubu Obuhle*” (Good hornbills), “*Batheza Izinkuni*” (They’re gathering firewood), “*Inkwali*” (Grey-winged partridge), and “*Sesifikile*” (We have arrived) (Rycroft 1991, 25). The texts of these pieces address societal matters and teachings, such as Zulu sayings and proverbs, education, Zulu traditions and customs; the last one is a joyous portrayal of the excitement of learners at school (Rycroft 1991, 25–26).

4.2.1.3 Contribution to African identity

The use of secular texts based on societal issues and Zulu customs and traditions indicates that Khumalo had it in mind to retain and communicate, through his music, his indigenous identity at a time when his fellow countrymen were being heavily influenced by the Western

culture and values brought by the missionaries.

Khumalo wrote several compositions in Zulu later in his life, such as his 24 songs in *Izingoma zikaKumalo* (Kumalo's songs) (1967); however, "he was not rated as the foremost Zulu composer of his time — that honour being held by Reuben Tholakele Caluza" (Rycroft 1991, 5). A few compositions by Kumalo were published, and many of them were popular among African choirs (Rycroft 1991, 5).

Kumalo died on the 9th of December 1966 after not fully recovering from a stroke he had suffered (Rycroft 1991, 5). Through his choral compositions, Kumalo promoted and preserved an African identity, that is, the Zulu language and culture, and through performances this awareness of this African identity was communicated to the indigenous population of South Africa.

4.2.2 Pulumo Joshua Mohapelo

4.2.2.1 History

Pulumo Joshua Mohapelo was born on 28th of March 1908 in Lesotho's mountainous eastern district, Mokhotlong, in Molumong village. His family were Christians who had been converted in the nineteenth century by the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society, a group of Swiss-French Protestant missionaries from Paris. Mohapelo was the third generation of his family of converts. His parents were Reverend Joel Mohapeloane Mohapelo and Candace Sehorane Matong, and of their ten children, Joshua Pumulo was the fourth. After receiving his elementary schooling in his village of Molumong, Lesotho, he went on to further his education. He went south to the mission station in Morija, a town in Lesotho, and attended middle school at the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society's training college (Lucia 2016, xxvi). Mohapelo received music tutelage from Florence Mabile. He learned the harmonium, tonic sol-fa and staff notation, and music education, in addition to his academic subjects. In 1927, Mohapelo was awarded a junior certificate and, in 1928, enrolled in the Cape Colony's South African Native College (SANC) in order to complete his matriculation certificate. However, Mohapelo "was forced to leave the SANC and go home to his father's parish in Mohalinyane, western Lesotho" (Lucia 2016, xxvi) after he became ill with tuberculosis. His hopes of studying medicine after obtaining his senior schooling certificate had been annihilated. To

distract himself at home while recovering from his condition, and following a correspondence course, Mohapeloa began to compose (Lucia 2016, xxvi–xxvii).

4.2.2.2 Compositions

Growing up, Mohapeloa was exposed to different kinds of vocal music, including folk songs, Basotho composers' music composed in tonic sol-fa, Western composers' oratorio and opera choruses, and African and European hymns. The first pieces Mohapeloa composed were first performed by a choir he started in Mohalinyane, and from there his pieces became popular in other districts, spreading to other choirs. By 1934, he had composed over 30 pieces, and in 1935 his compositions, notated in tonic sol-fa with Sesotho texts, were published as *Meloli le Lithallere tsa Afrika* (African songs and extemporary harmonisations) by the Morija Sesuto Book Depot (Lucia 2016, xxvii). Eight of Mohapeloa's songs were recorded in Johannesburg in December 1936 by Gallo Studios, and they were performed by the Morija Training Institution Choir under the baton of Bennie Mashologu, Mohapeloa's neighbour. It is thought that Mohapeloa's songs were probably among the first South African choral compositions recorded by Gallo (Lucia 2016, xxvii.).

Meloli II was Mohapeloa's second songbook, produced in 1939. He then received a scholarship from the Basutoland's Director of Education and was able to enroll as a part-time student at the University of the Witwatersrand's (Wits') Music Department, in Johannesburg, where, from 1939 to 1942, he took the following music courses: Composition, Counterpoint and Harmony, and History of Music. At Wits, Mohapeloa attended a music theory course by W.P. Paff and lectures by Percival Kirby. Mohapeloa's Wits student record proved that he was passing his part-time courses; however, he could not complete a diploma or degree as his courses did not add up to full years of study, "but the musical techniques he learnt reveal[ed] themselves as an expansion of his musical grammar in works written after 1942" (Lucia 2016, xxvii). Personal communication of his with David Coplan (1976 and 1978) reveal that Mohapeloa's work showed effects of the new knowledge he acquired from Wits, which he had wrestled with; this is also evident in the change of his composition style in *Meloli III* (1947) (Lucia 2016, xxviii).

Lucia (2016, xxviii) writes:

A 34-year-old African composer steeped in Sotho folk music and mission-trained styles of choral writing (in tonic solfa) must have struck an odd chord at Wits in the late 1930s...Composer Stanley Glasser, who was an economics student at Wits when Mohapeloa was there, warmly remembers “Josh”, recalling that Kirby and Paff “were highly impressed with Mohapeloa as a musical phenomenon, remarked on his musicianship, the originality and imagination of his pieces and were somewhat puzzled as what best to do for him”.

In his compositions, Mohapeloa borrowed elements from Sotho music, such as the harmonies and use of modal scales, rhythmic patterns, motifs, and phrases. In addition, “some aspects of cadencing and chord usage from mission influenced hymnody, elements of Western (especially Swiss) folksong, and traces of Western classical music” were apparent (Lucia 2011, 67). He hybridised choral music by employing the Sesotho language, rhythm, and musical elements in his compositions; he is recognised for such throughout southern Africa (Lucia 2011, 67).

“*Mokhotlong*” is one of the songs by Mohapeloa in which he praises the town he grew up in, and it is an example of the utilisation of dance rhythms that are present in traditional Sotho dances. The piece is based “on the traditional Sotho dance, *seakhi*, in which two groups of three quavers are followed by one of two quavers” (Detterbeck 2002, 324). See Figure 4.3, a short excerpt of “*Mokhotlong*” written in tonic sol-fa, below:

KEY: G Ka morethetho oa Seakhi

1	2	3
s : m :- l :- :- - :-	s : l : l s :- : l s :	s : s :- l :- :- - : l
m : d :- r :- :- f :- .d	d : d : d d :- .t, r t, :	d : t, :- d :- : f l, :-
Le rō - na hle me-	ba-na ba Mō - kho- tlong	Re mo - tlo - tlo
d' : s :- f :- :- l :- .fe	ho-le-la) ea Mo-kho- tlong	Re mo - tlo-tlo
d : d, :- f :- :- r :- .re	s : m : m s :- .m : f r :	m : r :- d :- : l d r -
	m : d : l, m :- .s, : r s, :	d, : m, :- l, :- : r l, :-
4	5	6
s :- .m : r m :- : t, l, :	s : m :- l :- :- - :-	s : l : l s :- : l s :
t, :- .l, : f, d :- : m, m, :	m : d :- r :- :- f :- .d	d : d : d d :- .t, : r t, :
ka ha-e la rō - na;	Le rō - na hle me-	ba-na ba Mo - kho-tlong
m :- .d : l, l :- : r d :	ho-le-la ea Mokho-tlong	
m :- .l, : r, l, :- : se, l, :	d' : s :- f :- :- l :- .fe	s : m : m s :- .m : f r :
	d : d, :- f :- :- r :- .re	m : d : l, m :- .s, : r s, :

Figure 4.3: “*Mokhotlong*”, a song by JP Mohapeloa (cited in Detterbeck 2002, 325)

Mohapeloa incorporated many animal noises, such as birdsong, in his compositions and included “descriptions of people going about their daily rural or urban business, descriptions of villages, towns, rivers, mountains, weather” (Lucia 2011, 67). In his compositions, which are often short, from one to four minutes long, Mohapeloa wrote about the history and the geographical terrain of urban and rural South Africa and Lesotho, as well as about individual experiences and societal issues. His songs also document rural life, in contrast to the life of migrant workers on the mines. These highlighted the hardships of Africa at the time (Lucia 2011, 67). An example of such a composition is “*Meluleutsa*”. Mohapeloa states that it is dedicated

To the young generation of the Basotho, who can defy divisiveness and face the challenge
Lesotho 'm'a Basotho has offered to eradicate poverty, ignorance, soil erosion, disease,
and fear. (Mohapeloa cited in Lucia 2011, 67)

Mohapeloa died in 1981 and was buried on Morija’s Eastern Edge graveyard. In 2011, the South African Music Rights Organisation (Samro) sponsored the Mohapeloa family’s erection of the tombstone of Joshua Mohapeloa. His music is all still under copyright and, because he was a Samro member, the music rights are administered by Samro (Lucia 2016, xxix).

4.2.2.3 Contribution to African identity

By incorporating Sesotho traditional music elements in his choral compositions, documenting the daily rural life of the indigenous people, and writing about the geographical terrain, cultures, and the history of southern Africa (as mentioned above), Mohapeloa was able to preserve his culture’s language and heritage and to communicate the African identity of the indigenous people through his music.

4.2.3 Benjamin Tyamzashe

4.2.3.1 History

Benjamin Tyamzashe was born on the 5th of September 1890 in the Malay camp in Kimberley. He was the fourth child of seven children. His parents were Reverend Gwayi Tyamzashe, who belonged to the Mangwevu clan of Xhosa lineage, and Rachel Tyamzashe (McKriel), the daughter of a missionary of French and Scottish ancestry. Two years after the death of his father, Benjamin Tyamzashe moved with his family to live with his uncle, Peter Tyamzashe, in King William's Town – in the province that is now known as the Eastern Cape. While the children settled in Mngqesha village, their mother went back to Mafikeng to live with her people (Hansen 1968, 43–44).

Born to a musical family – his parents were lovers of Western art music – Tyamzashe was also exposed to the music of the Malay community where he grew up until he left Kimberley at the age of nine. In Kimberley, his home was situated near the Malayan community's mosque, which allowed him and his friends, who were a mixed group of Africans, coloureds, and Europeans, to watch the ceremonial proceedings. It is here that Tyamzashe learned about the culture of the Malay. He was impressed by their music and musical abilities, especially their chants, which he also took part in singing (Hansen 1968, 45–46). In addition, with the diamond mining that had begun in Kimberley in 1867, people from different parts of the country migrated to the area; this may have exposed young Tyamzashe to different kinds of music. Thus, his mind was broadened by outside ideas and influences (Hansen 1968, 45–46).

Tyamzashe had no musical training until he moved to King William's Town, where he was taught basic skills by his older brother, James, who had received his music training from his father, Gwayi (Hansen 1968, 48). A year later, Benjamin was registered at the Lovedale Missionary Institution, and in 1909 he left with his family and moved to Mafikeng. He went to Mahonyane in Mafikeng to continue with his schooling but unfortunately this did not include any formal music education (Hansen 1968, 48–52).

Between 1910 and 1911, Tyamzashe began a teaching career at the Methodist Mission Institute, first in Dordrecht, and then in Vryburg. Later, in 1913, he went to Tiger Kloof where he taught singing, art, and geography. It is during this time that he contacted London's

Tonic Sol-fa College and undertook a correspondence course in which he began learning about harmony and counterpoint, style and form, music history, music appreciation, verbal and musical expression, and tonic sol-fa and staff notation. It is also around this time, in 1917, that Tyamzashe began to compose his own music (Hansen 1968,53–54).

4.2.3.2 Compositions

Tyamzashe composed numerous pieces over a period of 50 years; he began composing from his late twenties onwards, and his compositions were performed in churches, schools, and educational institutions. Many of his pieces, especially his earlier compositions, are undated; however, later in his life, he began to date his works. His pieces can be divided into the following periods: first period (in Tiger Kloof, from 1913 to 1924), second period (in Cala, from 1925 to 1950), and third period (in Zinyoka, from 1950 until his death) (Hansen 1968, 63–66). In 1917, Tyamzashe composed his first song, “*Isithandwa sam*” (My beloved), which he dedicated to the sister of his first wife, marking her unexpected death. Detterbeck (2002, 328–329) writes:

“Isitandwa sam” (My Beloved) is Tyamzashe’s earliest work, written in 1917 while he was at Tiger Kloof (1913-1924). In this song, Tyamzashe employs a linear style of writing which is the result of the horizontal approach to composition... Especially in the second section, the composition develops a sort of counterpoint. These “pseudo-polyphonic” passages, which seem to have been inspired by call-response structures prevalent in traditional African music, are created by an imitation of melodic and rhythmic figures previously presented in another part.

The musical elements mentioned by Detterbeck can be seen in the following excerpt, in dual notation, of “*Isithandwa sam*”:

Più mosso

The musical score is written for a vocal soloist and a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass). The tempo is marked 'Più mosso'. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score consists of four systems of staves. The vocal line is on the top staff of each system, and the choir parts are on the three staves below. The lyrics are in Swahili. The first system shows the vocal line starting with a fermata on a whole note, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The choir enters with a similar melody. The second system continues the vocal line with a fermata on a whole note, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The choir enters with a similar melody. The third system continues the vocal line with a fermata on a whole note, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The choir enters with a similar melody. The fourth system continues the vocal line with a fermata on a whole note, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The choir enters with a similar melody.

Ndo - su - ka - ndi - ti - ni - na Msi - ndi - si wa - mi

Figure 4.4: “*Isithandwa sam*”, a piece B Tyamzashe (cited in Detterbeck 2002, 329)

Following “*Isithandwa sam*”, in 1925 Tyamzashe composed his second song titled “*Iindonga zeTsomo*” (The Tsomo riverbanks). The composition quickly gained popularity after it was produced and performed. Thereafter, Tyamzashe continued composing pieces about natural phenomena or the terrain. These themes are prevalent in the songs he composed in his second period. Examples of these include “*Isibhakabhaka*” (The sky), “*Ilima*” (The hoeing party), “*Amafu*” (The clouds), “*Phumalanga*” (Sunrise), “*Inyanga*” (The moon), and the like. It is important to note that both the text and music were written by him, as this was the tradition of the Cape Nguni, rather than having a librettist and composer work separately. In fact, as Hansen mentions, this is still the case (1968, 66–67).

In the 1920s, at the departmental choir competitions, it was made compulsory for black choirs, then referred to as Bantu choirs, to sing only European songs. In ground-breaking fashion, however, Tyamzashe was the “first to be allowed to present a Xhosa song for such a competition... Music-Inspector S.J. Newnes granted him permission to do so” (Hansen 1968, 68). His choir performed one of his compositions, “*iVoti*” (The vote). This song, and “*Hai Abant’ Abamnyama*” (Ho, the black people), was published in 1929 by the Lovedale Press, and it is in these pieces that Tyamzashe began to compose about socio-political issues of that time. However, as much he composed these pieces in trying times when the white minority was dominating the black majority in South Africa, “*Hai Abant’ Abamnyama*” lacks the bitterness one would expect; rather, it exhibits a sense of humour and is filled with patriotism (Hansen 1968, 68). Commenting on this piece, Hansen (1968, 134) writes,

“*Hai Abant’ Abamnyama*”, written between 1925 and 1929, is different in every respect from his other songs. The harmony is simple, and the melody upon which he usually lavishes such care, is conspicuously “unmelodic”; it is much more of a fan-fare. The rhythm however, is the most striking feature of the song.

Tyamzashe often rearranged the voice parts of many of his second period compositions for different voices. In addition, he also altered the text and made changes to the melodic passages if he felt it necessary (Hansen 1968, 68).

During the third period, Tyamzashe composed on a variety of subjects, such as the installation of kings and chiefs, songs for the churches, nature songs, and songs for special occasions. It was during this time that “*IBhisho likhaya lam*” (Bisho is my home), Tyamzashe’s favourite song, was composed, in 1951. In this song, the composer reveals the “love for his home, and his pride in his ancestry” (Hansen 1968, 68–69); that is, his African identity under colonial rule. Other famous examples of his compositions include: “*Ah! Velile! Ah! Zwelidumile*” (Ah! Velile! Ah! Zwelidumile), a song composed in 1961 for the installation of the Gcaleka chief, Zwelidumile, and the Ngqika chief, Velile; “*Ezants’ eCoalbrook*” (Down in Coalbrook), composed in 1960 after the Coalbrook disaster;⁵ “*Inkulungwane yeBayibhile yesiXhosa*” (Century of the Xhosa Bible), composed for the Xhosa Bible 100th anniversary celebration in 1959; and *Isikhukhukazi* (The hen), a song celebrating Queen Elizabeth II’s coronation in 1953 (Hansen 1968, 69).

From 1965, Tyamzashe composed music for the Catholic Church: he wrote a set of antiphons for the children’s services after he had finished his large work, *Missa I*. After this large work, Tyamzashe continued to compose several sacred works and later began to work on his second mass, *Missa II*. However, working on the second mass was difficult for Tyamzashe as he had no new ideas, and he decided to put it aside. Thus, *Missa II* never got under way (Hansen 1968, 69–70). However, Tyamzashe continued with his craft and, in September 1966, he completed “*I-komplini*” (Compline), a musical with a liturgical setting, which demanded a lot of hard work from him. After this large work, Tyamzashe left the church and went to Zinyoka, in the now Eastern Cape, where he continued to produce his later secular works (Hansen 1968, 69–70).

Tyamzashe was heavily influenced by four sources from which the Western style in his compositions can be traced. These are band music, popular English songs, sacred and secular Victorian salon music, and church hymns (Hansen 1968, 72–73). The latter he learned during his childhood at the Congregational Church; he was also exposed to the hymnody of the Wesleyan and Presbyterian churches at Lovedale. In fact, the tunes of the hymns by Bokwe and Soga were his favourites. Tyamzashe also became familiar with the music of different

⁵ On January 21, 1960, 435 miners – 429 African and six white miners – died when 900 pillars caved in and the miners underground were crushed by the rockfall at the Coalbrook mine in the northern Orange Free State, south-west of Vereeniging (*New Age* 1960).

churches including the Apostolic, Dutch Reformed, and Anglican churches. All of his works exhibit the characteristics of the four-part harmony found in so many Western hymns, which shows how influential the church hymns were on his choral composition style giving his compositions a “religious character” (Hansen 1968, 73–74).

Benjamin Tyamzashe contributed substantially to the development of South African choral music and was conferred an honorary Master of Arts degree by the University of Fort Hare in 1975. Tyamzashe was a “revered figure in the social and musical life of his day and ranked as one of the greatest and most prolific composers produced by Africa as well as one of the foremost educationalists” (Mpola 2007, 66). In 1978, on the 4th of June, Tyamzashe died at Frere Hospital in East London, Eastern Cape; he was buried on the 17th of June at Zinyoka (Mpola 2007, 66).

4.2.3.3 Contribution to African identity

In his compositions, Tyamzashe was able to preserve his cultural heritage and language. His compositions also became his political voice in order to address societal issues, especially those concerning the daily hardships of an African in colonial South Africa such as the violation of human rights, systematic oppression, and discrimination.

4.2.4 John Makhoza Masiza

4.2.4.1 History

Hamilton John Masiza was born on the 7th of September 1894 at Somerset East in the Eastern Cape (then known as Cape Province). He was the second son of Reverend John Masiza, a Methodist minister, and so, at a young age, Hamilton Masiza began to sing church hymns. He received his higher education at Fort Hare after attending at Lovedale, Healdtown, and public schools in Grahamstown (Makhanda). When he was studying at Fort Hare, Masiza completed a correspondence course with the Curwen Memorial College, London, from which he obtained a licentiate in tonic sol-fa. In addition, at Healdtown Institution, he trained and qualified as a teacher and, for a period of over thirty years, he was a principal. After he had qualified as a teacher, Masiza became a preacher in Somerset East, in the Methodist Church.

In Kimberly, he was musically active as the choir conductor of the Abantu-Botho Musical Association, which was famous. He was also a member of the Kimberly Joint Council, and the General Secretary of the Southern African Bantu Board of Music and of South African Coloured Cricket Board (Mpola 2007, 40; Okigbo 2010, 56; Skota 2014, 187).

4.2.4.2 Compositions

Masiza composed a few pieces which Oxford University Press published in a collection. These include: “*Ngase milanjeni yaseBabilone*” (By the rivers of Babylon); “*i-Jubili*” (Jubilee); “*Soziwe*” (Our nation); and “*Vukani mawethu*” (Wake up, my people/Wake up, my countrymen). Although he did not produce as a large number of compositions as his counterparts, he became famous when “*Vukani Mawethu*” was recorded by the Kilnerton Institute Choir, from Pretoria, and became a hit song. This composition “inscribed him in history as one of the most important African nationalistic composers of his time” (Okigbo 2010, 56). See in Figure 4.5, the opening theme of “*Vukani Mawethu*”, below:

Thème n° 1



Figure 4.5: “*Vukani Mawethu*”, a piece by H.J. Masiza (Khumalo 1998, 63)

The composition addresses the societal issues current at that time – during colonisation – and it portrays the black people’s circumstances, such as Africans not being united and how Africans were being exploited by the colonisers. This is evident in the text setting of composition, as follows:

VukaniMawethu!

Hai,usizi

lomnt’omnyama eAfrika

Zonk’izizwe zisibeka phantsi

on kwenyawo

Asivani,asithembani.

Koda kubenini, Nkosi?

Wake up my people!

Oh, how sad the plight of

Black people in Africa

All the nations trample

us

We are not united, we do not trust

one another.

How long O Lord?

<i>Koda kubenini, Bawo?</i>	How long, O Father?
<i>Zonk'izizwe zisibeka phantsi</i> on <i>kwenyawo</i>	All the nations trample us.
<i>Koda kubenini, Nkosi?</i>	How long O Lord?
<i>Koda kubenini, Bawo?</i>	How long, O
Father? <i>Vukani, mawethu!</i>	Wake up my people
<i>Nimanyane;</i>	Be united;
<i>Ityala likuthi,</i>	The fault lies with us,
<i>Vukani!</i>	Wake up!

(Okigbo 2010, 57)

4.2.4.3 Contribution to African identity

The text of this composition above speaks to the African identity of indigenous people at a time when they were influenced by Western heritage. In the first three lines, the composer is saddened by how the Western nations do not respect indigenous African people and see them as inferior. The reasons for this treatment are provided in line 4 where the composer highlights the cause as disunity and mistrust among Africans as some have abandoned their traditions and converted to Christianity. In the last lines (10–13), the composer calls for unity among Africans, so as to avoid the division and mistreatment they had previously allowed. The text calls for Africans to go back to their traditions and cultures, to be united against the Western cultures, and to be proudly African.

Hamilton, in this composition, addresses the victimisation of Africans and their experiences during European colonisation by employing the Biblical psalms' poetic strokes just as the pioneers of South African indigenous choral music before him did. Thus, the issues addressed in the composition are “integrated with prayer for God’s intervention and [a] call for unity in action” (Okigbo 2010, 56–57), as was also the case with Enoch Sontonga’s “*Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika*”, as discussed in the previous chapter.

On the 17th of September 1955, Masiza died at the age of 61 years (Mpola 2007, 40).

4.2.5 Reuben Tholakele Caluza

4.2.5.1 History

Reuben Tholakele Caluza was born on the 14th of November 1895 near Pietermaritzburg – at Siyama, in Edendale, KwaZulu-Natal. He was the only son, born into a Christian family that was musically minded. In fact, he was the grandson of the first Zulu to sing and teach using staff notation and the first conductor of a choir at Edendale, Mlungumnyama John Caluza. Reuben Caluza began his musical journey at an early age when he started singing in the Presbyterian Church Choir in Pietermaritzburg (De Beer 1967, ii; Okigbo 2010, 54). His father sent him to Ohlange Institute after he had attended schools in Edendale. At Ohlange Institute, Caluza accompanied the kindergarten classes on the organ, an instrument he was already familiar with and could play (De Beer 1967, ii).

At the Ohlange Institute, Caluza grew musically and began to gain experience; when he was a student in his final years, he oversaw ensembles, a mixed choir, and a male quartet. He trained the choir after the departure of Mr Lingard Bophela, who had been the choirs' conductor and, supported by Dr John Dube at Ohlange, went on tours with the ensemble in the Union of South Africa to raise funds for the institute (De Beer 1967, 3; Okigbo 2010, 54). The Ohlange Institute choir popularised Enoch Sontonga's "*Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika*" by singing it on their tours. It was during this time that Caluza began to compose works, including "*Isangoma*" (A sangoma); "*U-Tokoloshe*"; "*Umthakathi*" (The witch); "*Intandane*" (Orphan); "*Ixegwana*" (The old man); "*Umtaka baba*" (Father's child); "*Sanibona*" (Hello); "*MtakaDube*" (Dube's son); "*Vulindlela*" (Clear the way); "*U-Solomon*" (Solomon); "*Sikhulekela*" (We worship); "*Umantindane*" (Orphans); and "*Umshado*" (Marriage) (De Beer 1967, ii).

In 1930, Caluza organised a voice ensemble, a double quintet, at Ohlange Institute and took it with him to England to record Zulu songs with His Master's Voice Gramophone Company. In England, the double quintet recorded Zulu traditional songs with the company, thirty song arrangements by Caluza as well as forty-five of his own compositions. After the recordings were completed, Caluza went to the Hampton Institute in Virginia, USA, and the double quartet members returned home to South Africa. At the Hampton Institute, Caluza composed *Reminiscences of Africa*, a rondo for a string quartet and orchestra while he was completing his music studies for a Bachelor of Music degree, which he obtained within the four years he

spent there (De Beer 1967, iii). He taught Zulu traditional songs to a vocal ensemble, a quartet, composed of students from West Africa that he had organised at Hampton Institute. The quartet was well received in the southern states of the USA, where they toured performing Negro spirituals and Zulu traditional songs as their repertoire (De Beer 1967, iii). This inclusion of the Zulu traditional songs indicates his pride of his Zulu heritage, his African identity.

After completing his studies in music at Hampton Institute, Caluza produced two works for string quartets, which he had composed in the two-and-a-half years he spent at Columbia University, New York, undertaking his studies in music education. In 1937, Caluza left Columbia University and returned to his home. Here, he continued to write during the ten years he spent teaching at Adams College, KwaZulu-Natal, where he was the head of music. These compositions include the following choral works: “*Inanda Seminary*”, “*Ufufunyana*” (Demon), “*Izimfashini*” (Fashions), and “*U-Mancosana*” (Mancosana). Furthermore, Caluza assisted with popularising, through performance, the choral music of other black South African choral composers as well as his own compositions by using the choirs that had been trained by him. These choirs toured South Africa annually (De Beer 1967, iii–iv).

4.2.5.2 Compositions

In the late 1920s, when Caluza was at the Ohlange Institute, he published his first book, a Zulu songbook entitled *Amagama Ohlanga LakwaZulu* (Names of the Zulu nation) with the Lovedale Press. This was his first publication; within six months, the Lovedale Press sold a thousand copies (De Beer 1967, iv). Caluza’s style evolved after he left the Ohlange Institute in 1915. He began “to experiment with a new style, blending African-American musical influences, ragtime music (*iRagtime*) and neo-traditional song material” (Detterbeck 2002, 327). His compositions reveal that he was not interested in composing in strict European musical forms, although he did incorporate some of those musical forms in his compositions; however, he did not allow them to dictate his music.

Though Caluza’s music is African (written mainly in Zulu), he did not abandon Western art music systems. For instance, he followed the rules of European harmony, such as avoiding parallel fifths and octaves; having the rising-seven notes; doubling the third on the submediant and supertonic minor chords; and doubling fifths and roots. He used chromatic

notes occasionally, but his music is diatonic and has a simple harmony. The compositions also display the following chord progressions: tonic (I), subdominant (IV), and dominant (V), which are the principal harmonies that he used, either as repeated replicas or in different positions. In addition, in order for the music to have flow and be interesting, Caluza also made use of accented and unaccented passing notes between the chords, which are all traditionally Western in approach (De Beer 1967, 7).

Rhythm, however, is one of the striking features in Caluza's compositions in which he moves away from the usual European approach. He used syncopation and often also introduced variations on the rhythmic material. Thus, Caluza is recognised as "one the pioneers of written reproduction of rhythmic Bantu music" (De Beer 1967, 10). Like Tyamzashe, who was discussed earlier, he was both composer and lyricist in his compositions; he wrote mostly about events rather than telling a story – and his text in the music was in prose form (De Beer 1967, 14). An example of this is "*Intandane*" (Orphan): he begs for women to take responsibility and care for their families at home. He also addresses a challenge to the culture of men leaving their homes and then being lured and then trapped by the city life (Okigbo 2010, 54). See text of "*Intandane*" below:

Intandane

Ningibona ngijenjenje

Ngiphuma kwelaseNatali

Ngizofun' umtakabab'ose

brother *washiy' izintandane*

Washiy' umhlolokaz' ekaya

home *Wat' uzosebezelayena*

Kodwa noko wafik alapo

Kungayi lubuyayo

Nakokuwemfan' oshi' umami

Ehluphek' ekayaeswel' ukuti

Udhlani

Naz' izinyembezi zake

Ekalela wena umfana

Esho eti mayemayeyek'

Umtanami

Mus(a) ulibalautshwala,

Orphan

You see me as I am

(nginje –emphasis)

I am coming from Natal

I'm searching for a

who left orphans behind

He left his responsibility at

He said he is going to work for it

But since he arrived here

He never returned

Even you boys [here] who left your mothers behind

Poor at home with nothing

to eat

Here are her tears as she

cries for you boy

She says maye oh my

dear

Stop drinking beer,

<i>utshwal' isimenc' isimence</i>	worthless beer, worthless
<i>esidakisayo</i>	intoxicating traditional
	brew.
<i>Mus(a) ulibal' ezimhlop'</i>	Stay away from the women,
<i>Ezimhlop' bes' ukut' uyakohl'</i>	White women [light-skinned] for which you for get
<i>uyadingek' ekaya</i>	you are needed at home
<i>Yini nawe Bhuti,</i>	What's it with you brother,
<i>Kwenzenjani Bhuti?</i>	What's happening brother?
<i>Wapenduk' umbhunguka</i>	You've turned into a
<i>waseRautini.</i>	Gauteng prodigal.

(Okigbo 2010, 55)

In this text, the composer highlights the realities of the colonial era in South Africa which saw an indigenous people slowly losing their African identity due to the dominance of Western cultures. Here, Caluza shows how indigenous men from the rural areas (of Natal) fell for the Western ways of life in the cities where they forgot their traditions and their responsibility to take care of their families back home. Caluza addresses the dangers of the Western cultures for African cultures; that is, how Africans can lose their identity in the process of assimilation to Western cultures. Caluza's compositions are different from those of the nineteenth century indigenous choral music composers – both in their rhythmic innovation, and also because the early composers were all concerned with nature, history and religion, and restricted their compositions to those themes. Caluza was sensitive to political and social injustice and selected themes that addressed events and societal issues, especially the socio-political issues of the time. Though he was merely a composer and teacher, and not a politician, he began to politicise his music and “regarded his pieces as mouthpieces for socio-political issues” (Detterbeck 2002, 326). Okigbo (2010, 54) also comments on Caluza:

He fought to instill a new sense of direction in his Natal and South African urban black audiences, who were struggling under the combined burden of the global economic depression and growing political repression under the white minority government.

This is evident in his piece “*Silusapho lwaseAfrika*” (We are an African family), sometimes referred to as “*I-Land Act*”, which is one of a number of similarly themed compositions, such as, “*Vul' indlela Umtaka Dube*” (Dube's son, pave the way), “*UBhungca*” (Oxford bags),

“*Woza Umfowethu*” (Come Brother), and “*Sanibona*” (Hello). Caluza used these as vehicles to address the socio-political aspirations and experiences of his people, who were black South Africans. He composed “*Silapho lwaseAfrika*” as a response to the Land Act of 1913, in terms of which black people in South Africa were dispossessed, removed from the land of the ancestors, and prohibited from owning land. By means of this composition, he communicated with his fellow countrymen, challenging them to be resilient to the white government’s system of oppression, just like their forefathers had been during early period of colonisation (Detterbeck 2002, 326; Okigbo 2010, 55). See the text of “*Silusapho lwaseAfrika*” and Figure 4.6 below:

Si Lu Sapo or I Land Act

<i>Si lu Sapo lwaseAfrika</i>	Our generation of Africans
<i>Sekalela izwe lakiti</i>	We cry for our country
<i>Mzulu nomXhosa noMsutu</i>	Zulus, Xhosas, and
<i>Sothos hlanganani</i>	come together
<i>Mzulu nomXhosa</i>	Zulus, Xhosas,
<i>noMsutu hlanganani</i>	and Sothos, come together
<i>S’kala ngeLandAct</i>	Let’s cry about the Land Act
<i>Umtet’omub(p)i</i>	The right whichour
<i>Owawelelwa amanxusa</i>	compatriots fought for
<i>Ukukalela thina luhlanga</i>	Our cry for the nation
<i>Ukubasiliteng’ilizwe</i>	is to have our country
<i>Skalel’inganezobaba</i>	We cry for the homeless
<i>ezimihamb’im’ezweni</i>	sons of our fathers
<i>Zingenandawo yokuhlala</i>	Who do not have a place
<i>in elizweni lokoko betu</i>	this place of our ancestors

(Okigbo 2010, 55–56)

Si lu Sapo or i Land Act.										R. T. CALUZA.		
KEY B ₉ .										D.C.		
s ₁ : d ₁ l ₁ : r ₁	t ₁ : m ₁ l ₁ r ₁ : d ₁	s ₁ : m ₁ l ₁ f ₁ : l ₁	s ₁ : m ₁ n ₁ l ₁ r ₁ : d ₁	s ₁ : m ₁ d ₁ l ₁ : r ₁ d ₁								
Si lu sa po	lwa se A-fri-ka	si ka le la	i - zwela ki	ti Mzu lu no mXo sano								
s ₁ : s ₁ l ₁ : l ₁	s ₁ : d ₁ l ₁ t ₁ : s ₁	d ₁ : t ₁ l ₁ : l ₁	s ₁ : d ₁ d ₁ l ₁ t ₁ : s ₁	s ₁ : d ₁ t ₁ a ₁ l ₁ : l ₁ l ₁								
m ₁ : m ₁ l ₁ f ₁ : f ₁	r ₁ : s ₁ l ₁ f ₁ : m ₁	s ₁ : s ₁ l ₁ f ₁ : f ₁	r ₁ : s ₁ s ₁ l ₁ f ₁ : m ₁	m ₁ : s ₁ s ₁ l ₁ f ₁ : f ₁ m ₁								
Si lu sa po	lwa se A-fri-ka	si ka le la	i - zwela ki	ti Mzu lu no mXo sano								
d ₁ : d ₁ l ₁ f ₁ : r ₁	s ₁ : s ₁ l ₁ s ₁ : d ₁	d ₁ : d ₁ l ₁ f ₁ : r ₁	s ₁ : s ₁ s ₁ l ₁ s ₁ : d ₁	d ₁ : d ₁ m ₁ l ₁ f ₁ : r ₁ l ₁								
t ₁ : t ₁ : m ₁ n ₁ l ₁ r ₁ : d ₁	s ₁ : m ₁ d ₁ l ₁ : r ₁ d ₁	t ₁ : t ₁ : m ₁ n ₁ l ₁ r ₁ : d ₁	m ₁ : m ₁ f ₁ l ₁ n ₁ : r ₁									
Msutuhla-nga na ni	Mzu - lunom Xo - sa no	Msutuhla-nga na ni	S'ka lange Land Act									
s ₁ : s ₁ : d ₁ d ₁ l ₁ t ₁ : s ₁	s ₁ : d ₁ t ₁ a ₁ l ₁ : l ₁ l ₁	s ₁ : s ₁ : d ₁ d ₁ l ₁ t ₁ : s ₁	d ₁ : d ₁ d ₁ d ₁ t ₁ a ₁ l ₁ : l ₁									
r ₁ r ₁ : s ₁ s ₁ l ₁ f ₁ : m ₁	m ₁ : s ₁ s ₁ l ₁ f ₁ : f ₁ m ₁	r ₁ r ₁ : s ₁ s ₁ l ₁ f ₁ : m ₁	s ₁ : s ₁ l ₁ l ₁ s ₁ : f ₁									
Msutuhla-nga na ni	Mzu - lunom Xo - sa no	Msutuhla-nga na ni	S'ka lange Land Act									
s ₁ : s ₁ : s ₁ s ₁ : l ₁ s ₁ : d ₁	d ₁ : d ₁ m ₁ l ₁ f ₁ : r ₁ r ₁	s ₁ : s ₁ : s ₁ s ₁ : l ₁ s ₁ : d ₁	s ₁ : m ₁ : m ₁ l ₁ f ₁ : r ₁ l ₁									
				Si ya	ka la				nga			
r ₁ : r ₁ m ₁ l ₁ r ₁ : d ₁	d ₁ : d ₁ r ₁ l ₁ d ₁ : t ₁	f ₁ : l ₁ l ₁ s ₁ : m ₁	m ₁ : m ₁ f ₁ l ₁ n ₁ : r ₁									
Um te t'o mu bi	o wawe le lwa	a ma nxu sa,	u ku ka le la									
l ₁ : l ₁ l ₁ : l ₁ : s ₁	s ₁ : s ₁ s ₁ : l ₁ s ₁ : s ₁	d ₁ : l ₁ l ₁ s ₁ : d ₁	d ₁ : d ₁ d ₁ d ₁ t ₁ a ₁ l ₁ : l ₁									
f ₁ : f ₁ f ₁ l ₁ f ₁ : m ₁	m ₁ : m ₁ f ₁ l ₁ n ₁ : r ₁	l ₁ : f ₁ l ₁ n ₁ : s ₁	s ₁ : s ₁ l ₁ l ₁ s ₁ : f ₁									
Um te t'o mu bi	o wawe le lwa	a ma nxu sa	u ku ka le la									
s ₁ : - s ₁ l ₁ d ₁ : - s ₁ m ₁ : - l ₁ s ₁ : s ₁ s ₁ : s ₁ l ₁ d ₁ : d ₁	d ₁ : t ₁ : l ₁ s ₁ l ₁ f ₁ : -											
lo mte to	o wa we	le - lw'a	ma nxu sa	e yo ka le la								

Figure 4.6: An excerpt of “*Silusapho lwaseAfrika*”, a piece in tonic sol-fa by R.T. Caluza (Detterbeck 2002, 327)

In the text of “*I-Land Act*”, Caluza calls for unity among the Nguni (Xhosa and Zulu) and Sotho tribes in the face of the 1913 Land Act passed by the colonial government. In a manner, Caluza urges the indigenous peoples to forget about tribalism and come together in unity as Africans to fight for their African identity in their ancestral land, which the white oppressors were dispossessing them of. It is evident from the text that Caluza was promoting African nationalism among his fellow countrymen.

4.2.5.3 Contribution to African identity

Caluza's compositions had a significant role at the time when the national culture of the Nguni people was emerging in the late colonisation period in South Africa. His compositions, because they "openly voiced a criticism of those members of the black middle class who were slavishly imitating Western culture at the expense of their own" (Detterbeck 2002, 326-327), were popular among all the Nguni nations in South Africa. Caluza based several of

his pieces on the ragtime⁶ dance called *ukureka* (from the term “ragtime”), infusing features of the ragtime music genre with the vernacular lyrics of the music. This also made his compositions more popular because, at the time, ragtime was “one of the most popular forms of musical entertainment” (Detterbeck 2002, 327).

Through his music compositions, Caluza was able to preserve and advocate for his culture, that is, in his case, the Zulu language and Zulu traditional music. He is recognised as one of the most prolific among black South African choral composers and as having had an influence on the later generation of composers (De Beer 1967, 15).

4.3 Streets sounding choral: The role of choral music in apartheid South Africa

4.3.1 Apartheid in South Africa: a brief overview

From 1948 to the early 1990s, the lives of South Africans were governed by a system of legal racial segregation referred to as apartheid. The term “apartheid” originates in Afrikaans, which is today one of the official languages in South Africa, and means separateness (Roux-Kemp 2014, 254). This system emerged in 1934 as a slogan that was popular among white Afrikaans speakers who were supporters of the National Party (Mhlauli, Salani, Mokotedi 2015, 204), and it was later advocated by Hendrik Verwoerd, who was the prime minister of South Africa at the time, and who is known by South Africans as the architect of apartheid (Roux-Kemp 2014, 254). It is important to note that apartheid in South Africa did not, however, begin in 1948 when the National Party became the governing political party; this kind of racial discrimination system dates from the “days of colonial rule when the Dutch first settled at the Cape in 1652 and their establishment of a fort at Table Bay” (Mhlauli, Salani, Mokotedi 2015, 204). The Dutch settlers initiated acts of racial discrimination when they denied water resources and grazing land to the indigenous inhabitants of Cape, the Khoi and San people (Mhlauli, Salani, Mokotedi 2015, 204). When the National Party came into power in South Africa in 1948, the system of racial segregation developed to suit the policies and agenda of the government of the day.

⁶ The term ragtime is defined by Edward Berlin (2013, 1) as a “style of popular music that flourished from the mid-1890s to 1918. Its main identifying trait is its ragged – i.e., syncopated– rhythm. While today it is most commonly thought of as a piano style, during the ragtime period the term also referred to other instrumental music, to vocal music, and to dance.”

Mhlauli, Salani, and Mokotedi (2015, 205) write:

The subsequent formation of apartheid as a legalized system of racial discrimination was influenced by the emergence of Afrikaner nationalism, an ideology that promoted Afrikaner supremacy and pride in response to British invasion as well as the threat from blacks, who were resisting subordination.

The National Party wanted to control over every sociopolitical system in South Africa; to this end, it designed the apartheid system so that, through political and economic deprivation of others, it would put white people before any other race (Mhlauli, Salani, Mokotedi 2015, 205). For the black population of South Africa, this was a continuation of the colonial system of racial segregation; this, however, with the Afrikaners' National Party at the helm, was abeginning of a harsher, and more brutal and inhumane period. During apartheid, black people were controlled in almost every aspect. For instance, the apartheid government laws ensured that it could control the growth of the black population, and it tried its utmost to diminish the value of black culture. Black people were not allowed to congregate in large numbers without permission, they were separated from their families, and they “were forcibly relocated from one geographical location to another” (Oline 2013, 181).

Furthermore, using divide and conquer tactics, the apartheid government mandated that black people from different cultural backgrounds could not communicate effectively with their fellow countrymen as they were displaced and travelling without a permit was prohibited (Oline 2013, 181). Black people, however, resisted these apartheid government laws and voiced their dissatisfaction through boycotts, protests, and uprisings. For instance, before the Soweto uprising of 1976, the apartheid government passed a law instructing all schools to teach in Afrikaans, and in response black school learners engaged in mass protests. More than five hundred school learners were killed by state security. However, through the resilience of black people, their culture refused to die (Oline 2013, 181).

4.3.2 Choral music in the struggle

Throughout the twentieth century, black people in South Africa resisted oppression by using choral music to “preserve their cultural traditions” (Stone 2015, 40), fundraise for their communities, support and comfort the suffering, mobilise the masses and dispense

information, and “to protest against the government’s policies” (Stone 2015, 40). Black South African choral composers and church musicians addressed black South Africans’ experience through their music, as discussed in this chapter, with Masiza and Caluza being the figures who were most prominent in linking the earlier and later generations of composers (Okigbo 2010, 57).

4.3.3 A protest in music: Mzilikazi Khumalo’s “*Ma Ngificwa Ukufa*”

Mzilikazi Khumalo was born on the 20th of June 1932, on the farm belonging to the Salvation Army, in KwaNgelu, KwaZulu-Natal. He had developed an inclination for music as a schoolboy when he became involved with choral music (“Mzilikazi James Khumalo Stephen Khumalo” n.d.). Khumalo sang at weddings, attaining experience in music in this manner. It is at this time that “he was exposed to the dynamics of group composition” (Detterbeck 2002, 332). He was also exposed to folk music through his mother, who used to sing for him and was fascinated by traditional music. Later, Khumalo learned to play the euphonium and performed Western music with the Salvation Army. By using the music he played on the euphonium and the traditional styles he learned in his youth, “Khumalo began to search for a distinctively ‘African style’ of choral composition” (Detterbeck 2002, 332). In the late 1950s, Khumalo began to write music, and in 1960 he composed his first piece, “*Ma Ngificwa Ukufa*” (When I die).

In “*Ma Ngificwa Ukufa*”, the nature of grand apartheid is reflected upon by the composer. Khumalo adopted the text from Dr Benedict Wallet Vilakazi’s poem and set it to music. However, he altered the text to incorporate his own words (“*Akukho’ mlungu, akukho’ pasi, Kulele izinkulungwane zakhithi*”, which translates as “In death there is no discrimination, No white man to ask you for pass, There lie thousands of our people resting”) before the piece’s middle section – as the composition is in ternary (A-B-A) form – in which he voices his dissatisfaction and protests against the carrying of passbooks (Detterbeck 2002, 329), which had been made compulsory by the apartheid government. The people’s frustrations are expressed in the music and in the text of the piece., The lives of the indigenous people of South Africa are mirrored in the composition: things they hated and relished, their aspirations, and their concerns (Mugovhani 2010, 64). See the text of “*Ma Ngificwa Ukufa*” below:

Ma Ngificwa Ukufa

<i>Ngimbeleni phansi kotshani,</i>	Bury me beneath the grass
<i>Duz enezihlahla zomnyezane</i>	Next to the willow trees,
<i>Ngozwa nami lapho ngilele,</i>	There in my resting-place will I hear,
<i>Utshani ngaphezulu buhleba,</i>	Above me the grass whispering;
<i>Lala sithandwa, lal'uphumule.</i>	Sleep dear one; sleep and rest in peace.
<i>Akukho 'mlungu, akukho 'pasi,</i>	In death there is no discrimination;
	No white man to ask you for a pass,
<i>Kulele izinkulungwane zakhithi.</i>	There lie thousands of our people
<i>resting, Ziyagiya, Ziyagiya ziqethuke,</i>	Everybody dancing and rejoicing.
<i>Ziyagiyazonke.</i>	Everybody dancing
<i>Lapho amagatsh 'ayongembesa</i>	There will the branches of trees cover me,
<i>Ngamaqabunga, agcwel 'ubuhlaza,</i>	With leaves evergreen,
<i>Utshani ngaphezulu buhleba,</i>	And above me will the grass whisper;
<i>Lala sithandwa, lal'uphumule.</i>	Sleep dear one; sleep and rest in peace.

(Mugovhani 2010, 64)

According to Khumalo, the politics of the apartheid regime had begun to influence their music as composers: the difficulties the black population was facing in their country and their lack of rights and power had begun to creep into their work. Khumalo had composed “*Ma Ngificwa Ukufa*”, which at first he had titled “*Koze Kubenini?*” (Till when?), as a political statement and, moreover, as a cry: “till when oh Lord are we going to suffer like we do” (cited in Detterbeck 2002, 331). However, when the composition was prescribed for national choir competitions, it raised concerns among black teachers and choir masters because of its text. The chairman of the African Teachers Association of South Africa contacted Khumalo and advised him to revise the title piece to “*Till when oh Lord*” so to avoid imprisonment on Robben Island (Detterbeck 2002, 331-332).

“*Ma Ngificwa Ukufa*” is composed in a Western musical style. However, Khumalo inserted a Zulu dance section with an African rhythm in the middle – B – section of the composition (see Figure 4.7). This section has an “almost psychological dimension: it becomes the only

space that grants freedom from oppression or restriction” (Detterbeck 2002, 332), and voices a desire black South Africans had during the apartheid era: to be free from their oppressors.



Figure 4.7: An excerpt of “*Ma Ngificwa Ukufa*”, a piece by M Khumalo (cited in Detterbeck 2002, 331)

Mzilikazi Khumalo was among a number of choral composers who used their compositions to communicate messages during apartheid. Black South Africans also began to use choral singing, adapting church hymns, in their protests against the apartheid government and its oppressive system (see the following section).

4.3.4 From church to protest: The adaptation of gospel hymns to protest songs

Liberation songs before and during the apartheid era were used to bring change to the political climate in the country. However, before the apartheid era, choral songs were not confrontational but peaceful and were not openly political as they were written in a Western hymnody style (Tönsing 2017, 5), with the pieces’ lyrics speaking about “the drama of black life and allow[ing] for an insight into the experiential world of black South Africans during this period” (Gray 2004, 89). The reason for the lack of confrontation was that the early

African leaders had been educated in mission institutions, where they were influenced by Western music styles and had accepted them as a culture superior to their own. It was during this era that Enoch Sontonga's hymn, "*Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika*", became famous, especially after the ANC had adopted it as the party's official anthem (see Chapter 3). Though the hymn signifies solidarity and protest, it was not composed as a political song. Later, the hymn "became a symbol of resistance" (Tönsing 2017,5).

Furthermore, after the ANC was founded in 1912 and the Land Act was passed in 1913 (see Chapter 3) – which marked the beginning of intense hardship for the black population in South Africa – a shift was evident in the style of the liberation songs: as they moved away from the hymn-like style to ragtime, an Afro-American music style (Tönsing 2017, 5) which was an influence of touring minstrels (see Chapter 2). This disconnecting from the sounds of the colonisers can be taken as a deliberate shift and a form of quiet protest. Reuben Caluza advocated this music style in his compositions and choir singing. For instance, in his piece titled "*Idipu eTekweni*" (Dipping in Durban), Caluza addresses the dehumanising conditions introduced by a hygiene system in Durban in 1923: as they looked for work, black people had to undergo dipping in the city (Gray 2004, 93). See the translated excerpt from "*Idipu eTwekwini*" below:

Idipu eTekwini

What are you people in Durban saying about dipping?

What is chasing people away from Durban?

You fellow countrymen, long live the black nation.

Talk on our behalf, *Mafukuzela*! [John Dube!]

(Gray 2004, 93)

The 1930s and 1940s saw the development of a new variety of songs from the hymn compositions as a result of the resistance towards white domination that had grown among black South Africans. In response to government censorship and absolute control, black South Africans turned back to church hymns and they attached provocative lyrics to them. They did not alter the tune of the hymns, though they substituted the text of a hymn for

another. Thus, the texts of the hymns drifted away from references to Biblical figures and a new way of secularising hymns was born (Detterbeck 2002, 148). The adaptation of hymns for political use as resistance or liberation songs was easy because of the hymn's "folk song qualities" – it was easy "to fit new words to an already existing musical text" (Pewa 1984, 34). To my mind, this was also very provocative as the oppressors would have had little to no idea of what was being said or sung; thus, a message of protest was being relayed under their noses. In addition, according to George Mxandana (cited in Detterbeck 2002, 149), who was the choir master of *Imilonji kaNtu Choral Society* from Johannesburg, the move to adopt hymns and use them for political ends began when people realised that the hymns that were being sung in churches had no relevance to the political struggle of black people. They wanted Christianity, the churches, to be involved in the struggle and help in any way to aid the people. In this way, black South Africans were able to educate and raise awareness among themselves regarding political issues using hymns and music in general (Detterbeck 2002, 149).

Christians were also active in the liberation struggle in South Africa because people reacted in a spiritual manner to injustice and thus also made the struggle a spiritual matter. Also contributing to this was the fact that, as mentioned above, "the early political leaders were mostly people educated in the mission schools, trained in choral singing" (Tönsing 2017, 7). Thus, the link between the political struggle and the church had been there from the beginning. Churches were a safe space to organise movements and to mobilise people as they were free from the restrictions that were placed on African gatherings for political reasons. Interestingly, there was no distinction between political songs and hymns as they occupied a parallel position during the struggle for liberation (Tönsing 2017, 7).

In 1948, political tensions intensified in South Africa when the apartheid system was introduced. This saw the emergence of resistance songs that were composed in response to the laws of the apartheid which were diminishing black people's lives in South Africa. In the 1950s, resistance songs about anti-pass laws and education were performed in public passive demonstrations (Tönsing 2017, 5–6). However, these songs were not different to those of pre-apartheid era. Okigbo (2010, 57) writes:

...choral works identifiable with individual composers began to give way to more informal gospel choruses (*amakorasi*), short repetitive phrases set in call-and-response form. This simplified format was particularly suitable to the kind of mass demonstrations

that characterised the antiapartheid struggles of the 1970s and 1980s.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented biographies of the second-generation of indigenous choral music composers, such as Assegai Kumalo, Pulumo Joshua Mohapelo, Benjamin Tyamzashe, Hamilton Masiza, and Reuben Caluza. These composers' music was used as a political tool during the late colonial era and during apartheid. The pre-apartheid composers raised socio-political issues relevant to black people by means of music in which they incorporated messages that they wished to communicate to their fellow countryman. For instance, Hamilton Masiza composed "*Vukani Mawethu*" (Wake my people) in which he laments the indigenous African's experience and victimisation. Reuben Caluza composed "*iDipu eTekwini*" (Dipping in Durban) in which he addresses the dehumanising conditions black people faced in seeking work in Durban when they were dipped for the purpose of hygiene. Another composition of his, "*I-Land Act*", was composed as a response to promulgation of the Land Act of 1913. In it, he addresses his fellow countrymen, challenging them to be like their forefathers and be resilient to the white system of oppression.

Apartheid became a reality during the second half of 20th century. Composers such as Mzilikazi Khumalo were influenced by the politics of the time, and they began to protest through the medium of music. For instance, in "*Ma Ngificwa Ukufa*", (When I die), he laments the nature of grand apartheid. Khumalo expressed the difficulties of his fellow African people at a time when they had no rights, no position to make a stand, and no power under the white apartheid oppressors. During apartheid, there was also the emergence of a form of protest song in which gospel hymns were adapted by black South Africans, their text modified to fit the context of the struggle. These were sung in protests.

Choral music, both secular and sacred, played a vital role in the struggle for liberation in South Africa as composers used their music as a political tool and their voices to raise socio-political issues, raise awareness and educate their fellow countrymen, and instill the idea of nationalism and resistance to their oppressors. This was successful because of the nature of choral music. This music style accommodates any theme, and the music requires a group of people for its performance. Thus, the singing of choral compositions and hymns,

which became protest songs, brought people together and united the majority black South Africans against the white minority's oppressive apartheid regime in South Africa. Through song, the people found a sense of being and the strength to fight for the liberation they desired in their country.

In the chapter that follows, I present biographical sketches of the apartheid and post-apartheid composers: Makhaya Mjana, Christian Thanduxolo Ngqobe, Qinisela Sibisi, and Sibusiso Njeza, and discuss their contribution to the development of the choral practice in South Africa. Additionally, I examine the role of choral music festivals in promoting choral music, especially indigenous choral music, in South Africa.

CHAPTER 5

Choral Composers and Their Influence in the Post-colonial Period

5.1 Introduction

The colonial era and apartheid regime in South Africa gave rise to black indigenous choral composers who learned the rudiments of music composition both informally and formally at the mission institutions and in their leisure time. Some of these composers wrote their music in tonic sol-fa notation, and later some composed in both tonic sol-fa and in staff notation (see Chapter 3). The music of these composers was vital to the promotion of black nationalism and in resisting the white oppressors during colonial period and in the apartheid era as their music was politicised to raise social issues (see Chapter 4). As part of the contribution to the development of a South African choral canon, this chapter presents biographical sketches and discusses the compositions of several post-colonial and post-apartheid South African indigenous choral music composers: Makhaya Mjana, Christian Thanduxolo Ngqobe, Qinisela Sibisi, and Sibusiso Njeza. These Nguni (Xhosa and Zulu) composers have been selected for discussion in this chapter based on the popularity of their choral compositions in South African choral competitions and festivals. Moreover, this chapter discusses how choir competitions such as the National Choir Festival (NCF) and the South African Schools Choir Eisteddfod (SASCE) promote choral music in South Africa.

5.2 Post-colonial, post-apartheid indigenous choral music composers

Amakhwaya have become a national phenomenon in today's South Africa. Most cities, towns, and even villages around the country have functioning choirs that actively compete in competitions which are held weekly in each district. From my own experience, I have noted that black South Africans have come to identify *amakhwaya* with a sense of national pride and a sense of ownership. Choirs are no longer thought of as a colonial product but rather as a South African past-time, a passion that involves people from a variety of backgrounds spending copious hours engaging in serious music. In addition, due to the use of tonic sol-fa, many choirs are able to read serious compositions and to engage with the choral pieces of the past and the present. In order to understand the significance of the competitions one must

understand how they came about.

5.3 Choir competitions: A tradition promoting and sustaining choral music in South Africa.

This section of the study discusses the vibrant tradition of choral competitions and festivals and their role in promoting and sustaining choral music in black communities in South Africa. The two choir festivals under discussion are the Old Mutual NCF and the SASCE.

5.3.1 A brief background to choir competitions in South Africa:

The tradition of choir competitions began in the late colonial era, at mission schools, where significant features were inter-school and inter-house competitions among the students of different disciplines, such as the arts, debating, and sports. These competitions were formalised early in the twentieth century. Thereafter, competitions also became important for school choirs as they received encouragement through teachers' associations (Detterbeck 2002, 201). However, the formal organisation of school choral competitions began only in the 1930s, with the introduction of the Transvaal Eisteddfod, which was promoted by Mark Radebe, Hamilton Masiza, and Benjamin Tyamzashe. The choral festival was an outcome of a 1929 conference attended by devotees of black music who gathered in Kimberley in the Northern Cape Province (Detterbeck 2002, 203). The plan of this initiative was to construct a new fraternal tradition under the guidance of the middle class and put an end to *marabi*⁷ music. Thus, the syllabus of the eisteddfod favoured indigenous choral compositions as well as English choral songs; however, it excluded the music styles of the proletariat, such as *marabi* (Erlmann 1986, 116). The eisteddfod was embraced nationwide in 1934, and from that point, it came to the forefront of "middle-class music nationalism" (Erlmann 1986, 116).

The foundation of the eisteddfod gave rise to several similar local and provincial choir competitions which, in South Africa today, "attract hundreds of choirs and form the main focus of school musical activities" (Erlmann 1986, 116).

⁷ Christopher Ballantine (2001, 1) defines *marabi* as a "pan-ethnic city music, developed in South Africa's urban slums (principally those of Johannesburg) during the second and third decades of the 20th century. A rhythmically propulsive dance music, *marabi* was forged principally by unschooled keyboard players who were a notorious part of the culture and economy of illegal slum yard liquor dens."

5.3.2 The Old Mutual National Choir Festival

South Africans are well known for celebrating their cultures, tradition and everyday life with their voice raised in song – something that has been shared by community, school, and church choirs for generations. Nothing celebrates this joy in song more than the Old Mutual National Choir Festival (NCF), which has brought the best of choral music to the continent for 42 consecutive years.

(National Choir Festival, Old Mutual, n.d.)

The NCF began in 1978 when the vehicle manufacturer, Ford, decided to be more involved in the country after its international trade relations were affected by the policies of the apartheid system. In light of this, the company saw the need to contribute towards conserving South Africa's cultural heritage (Detterbeck 2002, 229). Ford targeted choral music since choral competitions and events had become popular. Ford also saw that it could invest in the black middle-class which made indigenous choral music. The motor company thus made plans to establish a choir festival to promote the company's image. The company founded a choir festival and named it, "Ford Choir in Contest". Many choirs, up to thirty from around Johannesburg, participated in the festival's first competition (Detterbeck 2002, 229).

The festival was the first of its kind in South Africa to award prize money to the winning choirs; previous choir competitions had awarded certificates and trophies. By this means, the festival attracted many choirs – they were stimulated by the prize money (Detterbeck 2002, 230-231). Ford Choirs in Contest played a vital and influential role in the development of choral music in communities since it targeted tertiary institutions, churches, and adult choirs: It promoted choral music to adult choirs (Detterbeck 2002, 231). In a way, the festival challenged the then prevalent notion that choral music was for school pupils and teachers, rather than for adults. Before the Ford Choirs in Contest began, teachers' choirs had dominated the adult choir sections in choral competitions. Interestingly, community choirs later evolved from the teachers' choirs as they depended on school resources, such as rehearsal space at schools' facilities, and they had teachers as their conductors. (Detterbeck 2002, 231-232).

Other companies became envious of Ford's success and community influence that had derived from their intervention. Soon, new choir competitions and festivals emerged, such as

the Oude Meester, the Transnet South African Tertiary Institutions Choral Association, the Sasol Choral Festival, the Nation Building Massed Choir Festival, and the Caltex-Cape Argus Massed Choir Festival (Detterbeck 2002, 234).

Ford Choirs in Contest underwent several changes, with different sponsors, after Ford sold its South African division due to the pressure the politics in the country at the time placed it under. The festival was rebranded as the NCF. Later, the contest was co-sponsored by Telkom and Old Mutual (Detterbeck 2002, 232).

At the time of writing, the Old Mutual NCF is still active and continues to attract many choirs nationally. These participate in the festival's regional eliminations and finals. Furthermore, it was festivals such as this and other choral competitions and festivals that introduced black community choirs to Western art music and to the indigenous choral music of local composers such as Mzilikazi Khumalo, Qinisela Sibisi, and Sibusiso Njeza who are discussed in this chapter.

5.3.3 South African Schools Choral Eisteddfod

The South African Schools Choral Eisteddfod is an extra-academic programme that falls under the Department of Basic Education. The eisteddfod is managed, monitored, and coordinated, by the National Coordinating Committee which comprises non-government organisations, representatives of teachers' unions, the Department of Arts and Culture, and Department of Education's provincial and national officials (Louw 2014, 16). The eisteddfod was introduced in 2000 and on its second anniversary, in 2002, First National Bank partnered with the Department of Basic Education to sponsor the programme for four years (Dzorkpey 2011, 9). The eisteddfod was founded with objectives which include using "school music competitions and/or festivals as a vehicle to restore a value system based on the principles enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa"; developing "choral and instrumental music in all primary and secondary schools;" and popularising "South African national symbols in all schools" (Dzorkpey 2011, 10). In this manner, the African identity, indigenous languages, cultures, and national heritage of South Africans would be maintained through choral music.

The competitive choral eisteddfod begins in April and ends in July each year. School choirs begin to compete at district elimination rounds, with the winners advancing to represent their

districts at the provincial finals; the choirs that qualify at this round progress to represent their provinces at the national finals (Dzokerpey 2011, 5–11). Music is prescribed annually for school choirs that compete in the eisteddfod. The music is divided into the following categories: soli, small ensembles (duets, trios, etc.), male and female voice choirs, and mixed choirs. The music prescribed comprises Western art music (opera, oratorio, etc.), Afrikaans choral music, and indigenous choral music by black South African composers in any South African indigenous language (Dzokerpey 2011, 13–14).

The eisteddfod has become significant for the promotion of music in public schools where music is not offered as a subject; that is, in the majority of schools in South Africa (McConnachie 2016). In this way, school children whose school choirs participate in the eisteddfod are introduced to music at an early age, from primary school through to high school, as I experienced in Makhanda in the Eastern Cape: I began my music journey in 2009 when I joined my high school choir, which annually participates in the South African Schools Choral Eisteddfod, and it is here that I was introduced to the art of singing and learned how to read tonic sol-fa since the prescribed music, to date, is in dual notation (staff and tonic sol-fa notation). I was fascinated by the music prescribed for the eisteddfod, that is, as above mentioned, Western art music, Afrikaans, and black South African composers' choral music. The eisteddfod is well organised by the Department of Basic Education and Department of Sports, Arts and Culture, and choral conductors and their school choirs take it seriously – it is all about proving who is the best, and this creates a sort of drama around this annual choral competition. This eisteddfod continues to promote the vibrant tradition of choral music in black communities through the tradition of church and community choirs, which also sing in other choral competitions and festivals organised for community choirs, for example, the NCF.

The composers discussed below represent a group of musicians who inspired a nation of African choristers by producing material that is home-grown and continues to instill a sense of pride in African identity.

5.4 Makhaya Hector Mjana

5.4.1 History

Makhaya Mjana was born in 1953 on the 7th of November in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth. In a family of five children, Mjana was the only son. He went to Lovedale College where he trained and obtained his teacher's certificate. Mjana comes from a family that is musically inclined, and he was exposed to choral music through his sister, Phumza Mjana. The story goes that when his sister attended choir rehearsals, Makhaya used to follow her there. However, his artistry was elicited by the church and the schools he attended. He was inspired by indigenous choral composers such as Michael Moerane (1904–1980), Mzilikazi Khumalo (born 1932), Fikile Gwashu (1909–1979), and Benjamin Tyamzashe (see Chapter 4). Mjana was a good singer, and also became a choir trainer, training various school and adult choirs. He was the choir master of a Port Elizabeth-based choir, Joy of Africa, which participated in a number of choir competitions, including the national Old Mutual/Telkom choir festival (now the Old Mutual NCF), which they won a number of times (Mpola 2007, 47–48).

5.4.2 Compositions

Mjana composed various pieces commissioned for special occasions. For instance, in 1990, he composed the piece titled “*Qingqa Lovedale*” (Stand up Lovedale) for its 150th birthday celebration. In 1991, he composed “*Halala Nokholeji*” (Hail college) when Oliver Reginald Kaizana Tambo was installed as the first black chancellor of Fort Hare. In the same year, Mjana composed “*Halala Govan Mbeki*” (Hail Govan Mbeki) in honour of the father of the former president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki. In 1994, the national government commissioned composers to write a new version of “*Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika*”; Mjana was one of these composers (Mpola 2007, 48). It is important to mention that most of Makhaya Mjana's compositions are in tonic sol-fa notation, and several of his compositions have been transcribed to dual notation for choir competitions and festivals. In fact, I have performed Mjana's compositions at the O.R. Tambo Choral Festival, which is organised annually by the Eastern Cape Choral Music Association.

For Makhaya Mjana's contribution to African music, the University of Fort Hare awarded

him an honorary master's degree in May 2001 (Mpola 2007, 48). Following a short illness, Mjana passed away at the age of 66 on the 28th of February 2019.

5.4.3 Contribution to an African identity

Mjana wrote music on secular themes that focused on societal issues, national history and symbols, and celebrating national icons. It is through his music that he was able to promote and preserve his language as well as his cultural and national heritage.

5.5 Christian Thanduxolo Ngqobe

5.5.1 History

Christian Ngqobe was born in Flagstaff, Eastern Cape, in 1957 to a musically inclined family. His mother was the principal of Hlwahlwazi Junior Secondary School for over twenty years and his father was active musically at social functions, where he played the accordion. Ngqobe was involved in music from an early age. He joined school choirs and, after finishing high school, attended Lovedale College from 1979 to 1980, where he received his teaching training (Mpola 2007, 54).

5.5.2 Compositions

In 1995, Ngqobe began to compose his first piece, "*Makhesijonge I-RDP*" (Let's look at the RDP), which was performed at competitions organised by the Transkei Choral Association. Ngqobe was also active as a choir conductor in Flagstaff, where he conducted Ndaliso Secondary School Choir and Sakhumzi Adult Choir. It was with the latter that he premiered most of his compositions (Mpola 2007, 54).

Ngqobe was inspired by various conductors, such as Sheila Speelman and Mzandilwe Mathews. In his compositions, his Christian upbringing is evident from the titles and can be heard in pieces such as "*Ayikhw' Indlela MaKrestu*" (Christians, there's no way) and "*Masimanyane MaKrestu*" (Christians, let's unite). He is a popular composer, and the Old Mutual Choir Festival has been prescribing his pieces since 1996. One of his works, an

oratorio titled *The Crucifixion*, first premiered at the Grahamstown National Arts Festival in July 2002, performed by a choir from Mthatha, MAVA (Mpola 2007, 54). According to Mpola, “the work is an extended series of choral songs” (2007, 54) which are all in tonic sol-fa notation. His work has been recognised as comprising a significant contribution to South African choral music. A copy of the work is available and accessible on the shelves at the Department of Music and Musicology sound library at Rhodes University.

Thanduxolo Ngqobe passed away on the 18th of March 2007. He was influential in Alfred Nzo and O.R. Tambo districts. At the time, he was working as an assistant manager for arts and culture at the Department of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture of the Eastern Cape.

5.5.3 Contribution to an African identity

Ngqobe also shared his knowledge of choral conducting through workshops he conducted, and for this reason, choirs from his region and the surroundings achieved wonders at choir competitions (South African Government 2007). His dedication to keeping *amakhwaya* alive and robust contributed to the musical well-being of the country. In his compositions, mostly on sacred themes, he preserved the *Xhosa* language. He also promoted Christianity in black South African communities as part of their identity.

5.6 Qinisela Sibisi

5.6.1 History

Qinisela Sibisi was born in 1963 in KwaMashu, KwaZulu-Natal (personal communication, 2021). When he was young, he was diagnosed with poliovirus and had to be in an environment with medical care and assistance. In light of this, he moved from his home to a Lutheran Church missionary institution where he could receive medical assistance (Sibisi 2020). Here, Sibisi was exposed to Western music – at the missionary institution, they grew up with prayer, choral music, and hymns, including compositions by the pioneers of indigenous choral music in South Africa. He was also exposed to traditional Zulu music as the missionary institution was located in rural KwaZulu-Natal. Performing indigenous music was not uncommon there, as that area of KwaZulu-Natal promoted African indigenous and traditional music (Sibisi 2020).

In 1976, Sibisi returned to KwaMashu and to his home. By this time, apartheid and resistance to it had both intensified. At first, Sibisi wanted to be a medical doctor; however, he attended a high school that was close to the University of Zululand where Professor Khabi Mngoma was running a community programme that introduced black students from KwaZulu-Natal to music studies. Sibisi was introduced to Western art music compositions that he had never imagined existed, such as the music of George Fredric Handel. He was also part of a full orchestra comprising black musicians who performed large Western pieces. He was inspired by this, and he wanted to compose the kind of music he had heard there. Thus, he decided to pursue music after high school (Sibisi 2020). Sibisi studied music at University of Zululand with Professor Khabi Mngoma and completed his degree in 1985. In 1987, he completed his second degree, a diploma in teaching; he began teaching in 1988 (personal communication, 2021).

5.6.2 Compositions

Initially, Sibisi composed mostly Christian music as he was inspired by the environment of his upbringing. He was also inspired, however, by South African indigenous composers such as Mzilikazi Khumalo, Khulekani Magubane, Michael Mosoeu Moerane, and Phelelani Mnomiya (Sibisi 2020). Sibisi has composed several pieces from the time he was young; however, he does not recall the titles nor possess copies of the music. In 1987, he started composing the first movement of his *Zulu Mass in B-flat*; he continued to compose subsequent movements over the next 16 years, when he had time and when he was inspired. Finally, in 2003, he completed the work (personal communication, 2021). *Zulu Mass in B-flat* is in isiZulu; it is well-known in South Africa and internationally. In this mass, Sibisi adapted and modified the Latin Roman Catholic Church liturgy text to fit the Zulu language. The music has been criticised as Eurocentric; however, it is rooted in Zulu rhythms and employs the call-and-response patterns evident in African traditional music (Sibisi 2020). In addition, Sibisi's compositions are written in dual notation.

Sibisi retired as an active music educator at the end of April 2020 (personal communication, 2021). However, he is still active as a music composer, mostly writing commissioned works, for instance, this composition “*Gandhi*”, which was commissioned by the Province of KwaZulu-Natal government in 2014 to commemorate Mahatma Gandhi's *satyagraha*

(non-violent resistance) in relation to South Africa's apartheid government (Sibisi 2020). Some of his compositions are prescribed in choral eisteddfods and choir festivals in South Africa, where they are performed with pride.

5.6.3 Contribution to African identity

By incorporating Zulu traditional music rhythms and the use of African musical patterns such as call-and-response, for instance, in his *Zulu Mass in B-flat*, Sibisi has preserved the Zulu language and cultural heritage.

5.7 Sibusiso Njeza

5.7.1 History

Sibusiso Njeza was born on the 17th of March 1982 in Centane, Eastern Cape. He grew up in nearby Butterworth, where he was exposed to music through the 12th Apostolic Church. Njeza was also exposed to other music outside the church. In the village where he was raised, he used to play soccer. Spectators would – sing on the sidelines of the pitch while the boys played. He also learned to play several instruments, such as the guitar and drums, and he would sing with his friends. He was also musically involved at school: he joined the school choir which, together with the choral culture of choir festival, influenced his “musical upbringing” (Njeza 2020). Furthermore, when he was young, he was fascinated by the church choir rehearsals that took place at his home. He was particularly interested in how the choristers read sheet music. He spent a lot of time with the musicians and eventually learned to read both staff notation and tonic sol-fa notation. However, this was not the only musical interest he had. He and his friends in the village formed an *isicathamiya* group and learned to sing the music of Ladysmith Black Mambazo from cassettes. Njeza was the lead singer of that group (Njeza 2020). Njeza thus grew up with a deep appreciation of choral music, both Western and traditional.

Choral music became ingrained in Njeza when he was at Msobomvu Senior Secondary School in Butterworth. At the school, he was hesitant to join the choir but after listening to the African compositions the choir sang, decided to do so. The choir was conducted by an

indigenous choral composer, Thanduxolo Mahlangeni, and they learned many choral pieces composed by indigenous South Africans. Njeza was fascinated and inspired by Thanduxolo Mahlangeni and looked up to the choir director (Njeza 2020). It was during his Standard 9 (Grade 11) year that Njeza became aware of his gift for composing. He was a chorister at Sakhabengoma Choral Society in Butterworth when he started hearing music in his head, a choir singing music he had never heard before. It was so disturbing that it gave him headaches and he thought that he was ill. In order to cure himself, he went into seclusion and turned to his friend, Nceba Marau, to teach him how to compose so he could write down the music in his head. From that point, Njeza began to compose music. With such minimal experience, he was embarrassed to share his music, but Nceba Marau encouraged him, and he eventually shared his compositions with the conductor and introduced them to the choir (Njeza 2020).

In 2002, after completing his matric, he enrolled for a Bachelor of Music degree at Rhodes University in the Eastern Cape. However, his family thought that he was enrolling for a Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting degree. Njeza continued composing while at Rhodes and, since he was performing music with fellow music students, he no longer felt embarrassed. He composed several pieces while at Rhodes and after he graduated (Njeza 2020).

5.7.2 Compositions

Among his choral compositions, Njeza also composed large-scale works, including *Mandela: The African Opera* (2014), and *Amagokra* (Heroes) (2018). These operas were all commissioned by Cape Town Opera. While writing *Mandela: The African Opera*, he worked closely with Nelson Mandela and his family to ensure the success of the opera. Sadly, Mandela did not get to see the final product because he passed away in December 2013 (Njeza 2020).

Njeza's individual compositions, such as "*Ingqanga*" (Bateleur eagle), "*Umthetho*" (The law), "*Waza wamuhle Mzantsi*" (South Africa, you're beautiful), and "*Eloyi*" (My God), have been extremely popular at choral competitions and festivals to date. For his compositions, he writes themes that are both sacred and secular. For instance, "*Umthetho*" is based on the scripture, and "*Waza wamuhle Mzantsi*" addresses the beauty of the South African terrain. In his compositions he combines African musical styles (such as call-and-response and syncopated rhythms) and Western musical styles. His composition "*Ingqanga*" (see Figure 5.2), which

commemorates the late Professor Khabi Mngoma, who advocated music education in the black communities in South Africa, has been the flagship composition for the NCF, which attracts a number of black community choirs. All of Njeza's compositions that are performed in choir festivals, and those he has produced recently, are written in dual notation.

Music and Words By Sibusiso Njeza

Andante

Doh is Ab

The musical score is for a choir piece titled "Ingqanga" by Sibusiso Njeza. It is written for seven voices: Soprano, Alto, SOPRANO, ALTO, TENOR, Bass, and BASS. The tempo is marked "Andante" and the key signature is B-flat major (three flats). The time signature is 3/4. The score includes Xhosa lyrics and dual notation (Sesuto and English). The lyrics are: "He-she ntsi-zwa! He-she! he-she". The score is written in dual notation, with Sesuto and English lyrics provided for each voice part. The score is written in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major, and marked Andante. The score includes Xhosa lyrics and dual notation (Sesuto and English).

Figure: 5.2 An excerpt from “*Ingqanga*”, a composition by S. Njeza

“*Ingqanga*” is one of Njeza's most beautifully composed pieces. It captures certain Xhosa traditional music or African music elements, such as the Xhosa language, polyphony, call-and-response, repetition (of some movements), and syncopated rhythms; however, the composition follows the Western musical system rules of harmony. For instance, the aforementioned Xhosa traditional music elements are evident in the first movement, as illustrated in Figure: 5.2, where the composer begins the piece with a polyphonic vocal style, that is, with seven individual voices. These voices begin and end at different points, and they

differ in phrasing and rhythm. Call-and-response is initiated by the male voices (tenors, bass 1 and 2), and their call receives response from the second female voices (soprano 2 and alto 2), which call and receive responses from the first female voices (soprano 1 and alto 1). The time signature of the music is 3/4 (3 crotchet beats in bar); however, the feeling of the music makes it feel like it is in 6/8 (6 quaver beats in bar), a feel also prevalent in Xhosa traditional music. This is the result of the utilisation of triplets to achieve the syncopation intended for this piece. Syncopated rhythms are prevalent throughout the music.

5.7.3 Contribution to African identity

In his music, Njeza showcases his African identity by incorporating these Xhosa traditional music elements such as the above-mentioned syncopated rhythms, call-and-response, polyphony, and repetition. He writes his libretto in both English and his vernacular language, Xhosa, thus preserving his language and cultural heritage. For instance, in *Madiba: The African Opera*, Njeza together with his librettist, Unathi Mtirara, explores the life of Nelson Mandela from his youth days in his home village of Qunu, in the Eastern Cape Province, until his adulthood. This opera is important in the national heritage of South Africa since Mandela is an important figure, an icon, who is among those who fought for the liberation of black people during apartheid, and became the first black president of the Republic of South Africa in 1994.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced post-colonial and post-apartheid South African indigenous choral composers by providing biographical sketches of Makhaya Mjana, Christian Thanduxolo, Qinisela Sibisi, and Sibusiso Njeza. The music of these composers is written in tonic sol-fa (Makhaya Mjana and Christian Thanduxolo Ngqobe) and in dual notation (Qinisela Sibisi and Sibusiso Njeza). Almost all of the composers were exposed to music through churches. Composition is a gift to those with no musical training, and a skill to those who are trained at university. The music of these composers incorporates African features such as call-and-response, repeats (movement), and syncopated rhythms, and the texts are in African languages, Xhosa and Zulu. Harmonies are central to the Western temperament scale and are governed by Western musical system rules. Composers write about both sacred and secular themes, and the theme depends on their inspiration. Their compositions are performed at

concerts and, primarily, in church, school, and community choir competitions and festivals, such as the NCF and the SASCE.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

This research aimed to explore and understand how, during the colonial and post-colonial eras in South Africa, choral music was used by black people to promote black nationalism and to preserve their identity. Based on an historical analysis approach, the research has shown how choral composers used their choral compositions to foreground the importance of being an African, to maintain African culture, and to remain united as Africans during and after the colonial era in South Africa. Themes that emerged during the analysis of the choral music composers' works and background highlight that language was used as a cultural tool rather than, necessarily, music. However, certain musical elements such as syncopated rhythms, polyphonic textures, and form – cyclical, or repetitive movements – mirroring that of South African traditional music, emerged. This must be noted that it will be a fertile ground for further research, and a deeper consideration of these elements and factors would be a great benefit to the development of this canon. In addition, the research has aimed to make a contribution to the development of a South African choral canon which can be used as a pedagogical resource to revalue African music contributions in this country. Notable composers discussed are Ntsikana kaGaba, John Knox Bokwe, Enoch Sontonga, Assegai Kumalo, Pulumo Mohapelo, Benjamin Tyamzashe, Hamilton Masiza, Reuben Caluza Makhaya Mjana, Christian Ngqobe, Qinisela Sibisi, and Sibusiso Njeza.

6.1 Summary

Chapter 2 provided an overview of the evolution of choral music in South Africa which commenced when South Africa was colonised by the Dutch East India Company in 1652 and continued with the arrival of missionaries from England, France, America, and Scotland in the 1820s. These missionaries established missionary institutions where they taught hymn-singing to the local populations, and later converted them to Christianity. Minstrel shows arrived in South Africa in the second half of the nineteenth century, and African indigenous choirs such as the African Native Choir, Zulu Choir, and Ohlange Choir were

established in the mission schools after being inspired by the minstrel show groups. The aim of this chapter was to discover the origins of choral singing and choirs which have become an integral part of life for many people in black communities in South Africa.

Chapter 3 presented Ntsikana kaGaba, the first convert in the Xhosa region, who orally composed the first indigenous hymns and began his own church that had no connection to mission churches. In addition, the use of tonic sol-fa was introduced. The chapter also discussed the Western hymnody style in the songs by the first composers of indigenous choral music, such as John Know Bokwe and Enoch Sontonga. The aim of this chapter was to gain an understanding of how the early indigenous choral composers wrote their music.

Chapter 4 presented academic biographies for the second generation of indigenous choral music composers, such as Assegai Kumalo, Pulumo Mohapeloa, Benjamin Tyamzashe, Hamilton Masiza, and Reuben Caluza. It was shown that these composers used their music for political purposes – to address socio-political issues and black people's circumstances during the late colonial period. There was, in addition, a discussion of how choral music continued to be used as a political tool during the apartheid regime. The aim of this chapter was to understand how the selected composers used their music to contribute to liberation struggles during and after colonialism.

Chapter 5 also provided biographical sketches, discussing the music of post-colonial and post-apartheid composers such as Makhaya Mjana, Christian Ngqobe, Qinisela Sibisi, and Sibusiso Njeza. Moreover, the importance of choir competitions and choir festivals in promoting and sustaining choral music in South Africa was highlighted. The aim of this chapter was to introduce the indigenous choral music composers whose music is extremely popular in the black choral community and to introduce new, emerging composers.

6.2 Recommendations for further research

- Choral music is a popular music genre in South Africa; however, as has been highlighted in this research, there is insufficient literature on this topic. Despite there being many black composers who have written, and many who still are writing, choral music, they remain unknown. More research needs to be undertaken to

promote literature on South African indigenous choral music.

- With the completion of this thesis, it is my opinion that the Department of Higher Education and the Department Basic of Education should encourage the inclusion of South African indigenous choral music and traditional music history in their institutions' music curriculum so that students and school learners can learn about local composers and their music.
- The Department of Arts and Culture should support more choral competitions and festivals so as to motivate choral composers to write music for these festivals, all the while being mindful of the important role that this music plays in the formation of a positive African identity and the sense of belonging that members of choirs feel. In addition, the department should consider documenting the lives of local composers and their music, encouraging that knowledge to take a place in the public domain so that it can be appreciated nationally and internationally.

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