

Acknowledgements

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ATTACHMENTS

1. DVD of the African Neo-Traditional Choral Music Programme of the Drakensberg Boys' Choir: *Amaculo Ase-Afrika*
2. CD of the African Neo-Traditional Choral Music Programme of the Drakensberg Boys' Choir: *Shosholoza*
3. Recordings, programmes, and other relevant material of the three practical modules of the study.

ABSTRACT

This study deals with African neo-traditional choral music of sub-Saharan- and Southern Africa, with specific reference to extemporisation.

The research focussed on the evolution of this music through an amalgamation of western choral music and African indigenous and traditional musical practices of sub-Saharan and Southern Africa. Specific reference to the syncretism of western music, which came to Africa through colonisation, and the way African indigenous musical traditions influenced it, is preceded by descriptions on African indigenous musical practices and western choral music traditions. The incorporation of traditional folk songs into African *makwaya*, or “choir music”, was inevitable. This development saw the birth of African neo-traditional choral music as a formal part of many choirs’ programmes.

A description of five sample choirs engaging with this music was followed by a case study on the Drakensberg Boys’ Choir. The way these choirs deal with different aspects regarding the preparation and performance of this music highlighted many parallels with African indigenous traditions. It also emphasises the important role of this music in choral performance, as well as choral education. As a genre in evolution, one aspect of this music, namely extemporisation, was studied in more detail in order to suggest another way of engaging with this music.

Not only is choral extemporisation a possibility in African neo-traditional choral music of Southern Africa, but it is also a flourishing art form in Scandinavia. In Norway and Sweden it also utilises characteristics and techniques of folk music, which raised the status of this music to be a major art form. This notion prompted the suggested application of choral extemporisation to African neo-traditional choral music of Southern Africa. Even if any method of extemporisation may be utilised, it is proposed that characteristics of African sub-Saharan- and Southern African indigenous music be applied. This may result in the incorporation of more of these African indigenous elements in the neo-traditional choral music discussed than the current western harmonic emphasis. However, the suggestion is seen as a next step in the evolution of this music, which corresponds with international practices, and not to return to indigenous practices as such.

Key Terms:

Choral Music; Neo-Traditional; African; Drakensberg Boys’ Choir; Extemporisation; Improvisation.