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XHOSA MUSIC IN THE CLASSROOM

MÚSICA XHOSA NA SALA DE AULA

David Dargie

ABSTRACT: This article discusses the challenges encountered in the pedagogical approach to the traditional music of the Xhosa people from South Africa. The author presents each of the stylistic and theoretical aspects involved in the musical making of the people in question as well as the difficulties and possibilities of their application in classroom, inside or outside the South African context.

Keywords: South Africa; Xhosa; Traditional music; Musical education.

RESUMO: Este artigo aborda os desafios encontrados na abordagem pedagógica da música tradicional do povo Xhosa da África do Sul. O autor apresenta cada um dos aspectos estilísticos e teóricos envolvidos no fazer musical do povo em questão bem como as dificuldades e possibilidades de sua aplicação em sala e aula dentro e fora do contexto sul-africano.

Palavras-chave: África do Sul; Xhosa; Música Tradicional; Educação Musical.

XHOSA MUSIC IN THE CLASSROOM

David Dargie [1]

1. Introduction.

1.1. The Xhosa People.

The Xhosa are the people of Nelson Mandela. Most Xhosa people still live in their ancient home area, the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The map below shows part of this province. Inset at the top right of the map is a small map of South Africa, the square indicating the position of the part of the Eastern Cape shown by the larger map. The position of Alice, with the University of Fort Hare, is shown near the centre of the map. Mandela is a Thembu, the Thembu being one of the groups of peoples who make up the Xhosa**.** [2]

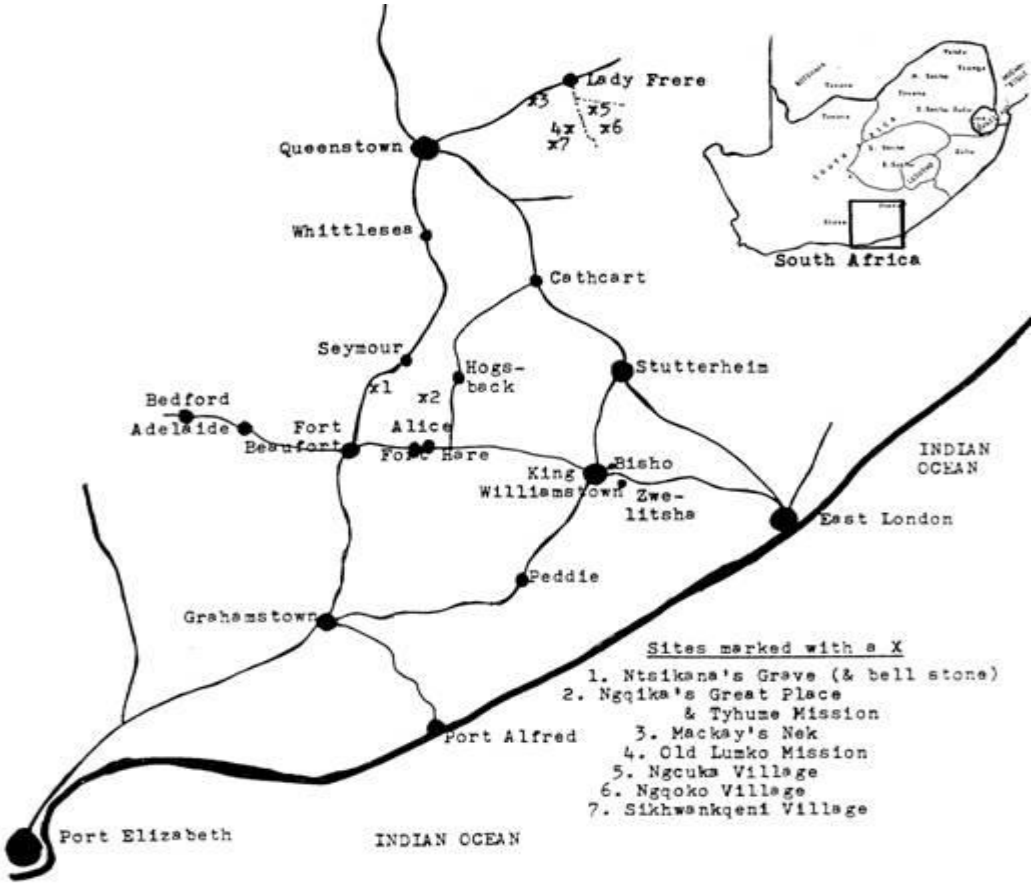

Fig. 1: Part of the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. [3]

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[2] The author's book (DARGIE, 1988) is an attempt to cover the style elements of the music of the western Thembu Xhosa. Thembu music is not only typical of Xhosa music in general, but also features certain rare and highly developed elements not perhaps found in all manifestations of Xhosa traditional music. These include the use of extremely sophisticated rhythm, the use at times of very many polyphonic parts, and the first documented use of overtone singing in traditional African music: the unique types of *umngqokolo* overtone singing.

[3] The map, photos and transcription examples in this article are by the author, except for the photos which include the author, which were taken with the author's camera and at the author's request.

1.2. Various Connotations of the term "Xhosa Music".

These days the term "Xhosa music" refers not only to traditional Xhosa music, handed down from the deep past, but also to neo-Xhosa music in its various manifestations. Neo-Xhosa music is music practised by Xhosa people, which combines techniques taken from or related to traditional Xhosa music with style elements brought in from outside. The source of nearly all these extraneous style elements is western diatonic music, although some influence from other outside sources, mainly from the Zulus to the east, has also made itself felt. Neo-Xhosa music covers a broad spectrum of music, including mission hymns (as adapted to their own musical style to a greater or lesser degree), other church music (including the songs of the African Initiated Churches as well as new music introduced in the "mainline" Churches), school and choir music, popular music and jazz.

In teaching Xhosa music, in school or university in the Xhosa area, all these musical manifestations must be taken into account. In the appendix at the end of this article is a curriculum for the teaching of Xhosa music which attempts to cover the entire area. The curriculum described in the appendix is the basis on which the author designed the course syllabuses which he introduced in 1998 and 1999, for the music department of Fort Hare University in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The syllabuses of course go beyond the teaching of Xhosa music, so that western music, jazz and world music is also taught in the Fort Hare music department. But the Xhosa syllabus itself is the main focus here.

In this article the term "Xhosa music" is used primarily to refer to traditional Xhosa music, unless it is made clear that neo-Xhosa music is under discussion. Traditional Xhosa music has its own scale usages (including some use of microtones), its own harmony, polyphony and structure. It is primarily the Xhosa uses of rhythm, however, which make it difficult to teach Xhosa music as one teaches western music. Because of this difficulty it is good to begin the discussion here with a consideration of teaching methods which are suited to the complexities of Xhosa (especially Thembu Xhosa) music.

2. Teaching Methods.

Teaching African music is something quite different from teaching western music. African music is in many ways a different art form from western music, whether classical or folk music. The primary difference, perhaps, is the approach to musical time. Transcription of western music approaches time as something passive, something which is divided up into note

lengths, so that one minim equals two crotchets equals four quavers equals eight semiquavers, and so on. African music, however, is not based on any form of music literacy. Time in African music is built up actively, with movement patterns in vocal (and other) melody while body movement, which is an inseparable part of all or nearly all African music, moves to its own patterns. A singer may be aware of, and performing, two (or more) different rhythms simultaneously. Even if in some songs there may appear to be no body movement, nevertheless the performers are aware of and feel the underlying rhythms which can appear as body movement.

Another most important difference is in the way African musicians understand their art and express these ideas in speech. Western musicians understand their music in abstract terms. The very word "music" is an abstract term. In Xhosa there is no traditional word which means "music" in the western sense (DARGIE, 1988, p. 61–67). Traditional Xhosa musicians call their music "*iingoma zesiXhosa*" – songs of Xhosa culture. Music is something invisible, something in the mind. Songs are activities of people, which are not only visible but in which the speaker may take an active part.

This terminological difference gives the key to major differences of approach to music performance and learning. Western musicians may learn their music from books. Traditional Xhosa musicians have to learn their music by observation and imitation. This was brought home to the author when, in 1981, he asked a Xhosa player of the *uhadi* musical bow how she learned to play the bow. Her response was that she never learned to play the bow – and yet she was a bow player. She was indicating that her way of learning music was quite different from the way people learn in school. Later she told me how she had observed bow players, and in that way learned to make and play the *uhadi* (DARGIE, 1996, p. 33–4). The bow player in question was Mrs Nosinothi Dumiso, shown with her bow in the photograph in section 2.2.1 below.

Trying to learn from the methods of African music education, the author developed ways of teaching African music to try to suit both African and western students. The following sections 2.1 and 2.2 discuss these teaching methods briefly. In section 2.2.2 the question of teaching Xhosa rhythm is discussed.

2.1. Teaching Xhosa Music to Xhosa Students.

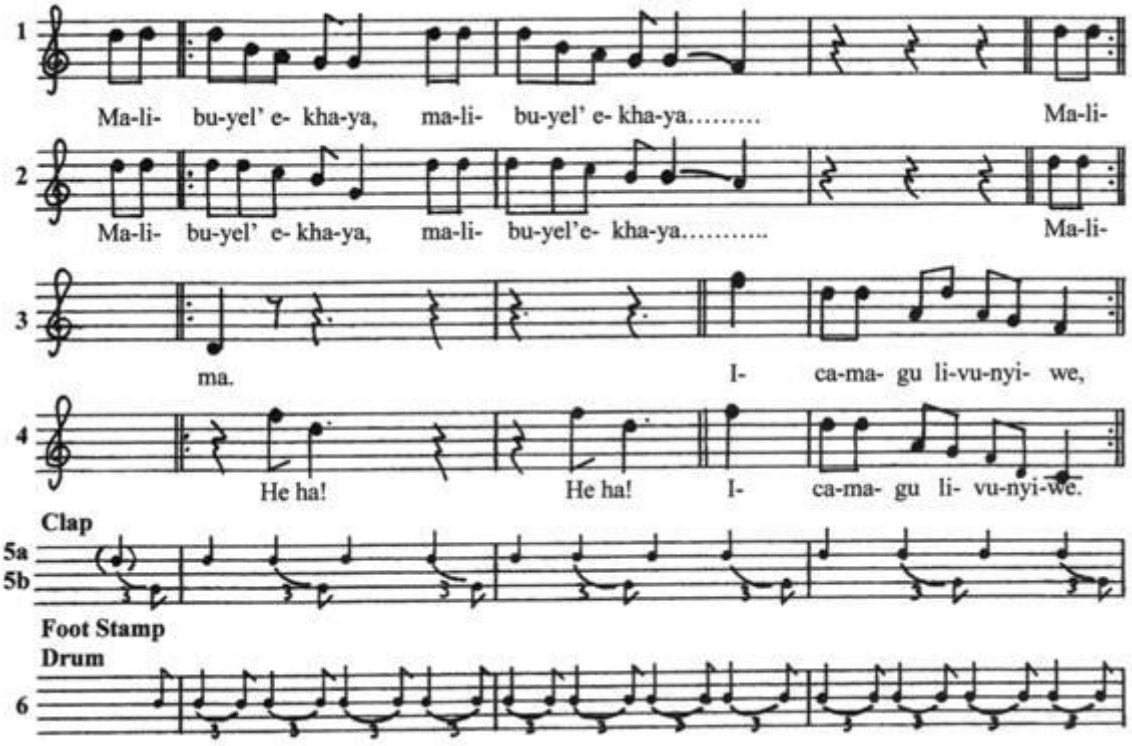
Perhaps all school children in South Africa, and the majority of university students, were either born after the downfall of Apartheid or were too young to have remembered experiences of the freedom struggle. Their awareness of their land and its history means that for many Xhosa

schoolchildren and university students today, traditional Xhosa music is something of the deep past. However, some traditional Xhosa rituals are still practised, which even young urban Xhosas experience. In particular this includes boys' and girls' initation rites, perhaps diviners' rituals and the traditional boys' and girls' *umtshotsho* dance parties, depending on where the children in question were born and grew up. This means that most young people in fact do know certain songs connected with these rites and ceremonies.

This situation may create problems for the music teacher who aims primarily at teaching traditional music. For very many young Xhosa people "traditional music" includes many songs in neo-Xhosa style and using what the author calls "Afro-diatonic" techniques, combining, for example, use of western diatonic scale and harmony with some use of traditional rhythm and form. On the other hand, the fact that many young people do know at least some of the old traditional songs does give the teacher opportunities on which to build. In his teaching at Fort Hare the author has often found it most useful to begin with students, not by trying to teach them traditional songs, but by asking them to teach traditional songs to the other students in the class.

One may therefore expect the students in the class, certainly the Xhosa or other African students, to have some experience of singing traditional African songs. It can be that new students may not realize how much knowledge they already have of how to sing in a traditional way, or perhaps they may take such knowledge for granted. If a Xhosa student teaches a Xhosa song, the others, even if they are new students, will immediately begin to use Xhosa (or other African) techniques. The one teaching the song will usually begin with the call part of the song. If the others know the song, they will at once answer the call (the leader part) with the response (the followers' part) of the song. This they will do without thinking, automatically. If it should happen that they do not know the song, then the one teaching the song will at once begin to sing the response, showing the others how to fit it to his leader part. No explanations will be necessary. The song will be built up very quickly, unless it is a most unusual or complicated song. The ones singing the response will immediately, automatically almost, begin to sing in harmony, each one adjusting to her or his comfortable pitch position. As the follower part comes to its end, the leader will again sing the call, sometimes overlapping with the followers, or else coming in immediately after them without breaking the rhythm. The followers will respond in the same way, either by overlapping or coming in immediately after the call, without breaking the rhythm. If more overlapping parts of the song are known, then some will begin singing those parts as well, fitting into the pattern of the song. Some traditional Xhosa songs have a great many overlapping polyphonic parts, each with different texts and therefore different melodies, beginning at different points of the cycle and all fitting to the basic harmony pattern. In such

songs in the class, those who know the different parts will automatically begin to sing them, and other students will learn from them during the actual singing, joining in with those who know the other parts. It will happen that singers singing the same text will improvise to create harmony parts, and, if one is very fortunate, it may happen that some improvise new polyphonic parts as well. The illustration, example 1 below, is a transcription of a typical song, sometimes used by students in the class.



EXAMPLE 1: The Song *Icamagu livumile*.

Icamagu livumile (or *Icamagu livunyiwe*) is the best-known of all the Xhosa diviners' songs. It is sung to indicate the success of a divination. The texts are:

Icamagu livumile (the song title): The divination has responded (i.e. been successful).

Licamagu livunyiwe The divination has been accepted (by the ancestors).

Malibuyel' ekhaya May it (the successful divination) come back to (bless our) home.

With some variations traditional Xhosa music is based on the overtone patterns of the Xhosa musical bows, especially the large calabash-resonated percussion bow called *uhadi*. Xhosa music, like Xhosa bow music, uses a harmony pattern of two major triads a whole tone apart. The six tones of the two chords give a hexatonic scale, which may be written as F-G-A-B-C-D. For convenience in writing and reading Xhosa music, the author transposes the score to the F major-G major position (as is done here), unless there is a special reason for transcribing at actual pitch.

In the transcription, lines 1 or 3 may be used to start the song, although traditional musicians regard line 3 as the usual leader line of the song. Line 1 is a response chorus which will be sung over and over by most of the group of singers. Line 2 is a version of line 1 using parallelism, creating harmony by parallel movement. Line 3, the traditional leader part, may be sung by only one person. If more than one sing this leader part, then some may use line 4 or a similar variation using parallelism. In an actual performance, especially with traditional singers, improvisation may be used to create other overlapping polyphonic parts. Lines 1 and 3 are essential to the song, although they may be sung in various ways and with differences from what is written in the score. Singers who are closer to the old traditional style are likely to use more complex rhythm and variations especially of the line 3 leader part, as is shown for example in the transcription of this song in the author's book (DARGIE, 1988, p. 138). Many Xhosa students are likely to sing more simplified versions of the song.

When the song has had a chance to get going, and all the students have joined in, then it becomes possible to use what they have performed, on their own initiative, to show the style characteristics of the song. This may be done by repeating elements of the performance, and by transcribing the song in the classroom. Thus the following elements of Xhosa musical style can be shown both by performance and in transcription:

a) The song is in call-and-response form, and is also cyclic. It is constantly repeated without a break in the rhythm;

b) It uses the hexatonic bow scale, and the bow chords;

c) The melodies follow the tones of speech. This can be shown by getting the students (or one of the students) to pronounce the text correctly and carefully, and then compare the spoken tones to the melody;

d) Because melodies using the same text must follow the same speech tone patterns, this results in parallel harmony when the melody is sung at different pitch levels;

e) The rhythms in the song can be demonstrated and analysed. The melodies make some use of additive rhythms, for example, in the first two bars of lines 1 and 2. [4] Perhaps the traditional split rhythm shown in line 5 (5a and 5b) may not be normally used by the students, but it is easily possible to get them to perform it. The foot stamp and the clap create a rapid triplet pulse, which is the rhythm used in diviners' drumming (line 6). This triplet pulse is in cross-rhythm with the voice beats. Traditional diviners use a split dance with this type of drumming, one dancer dancing on the drummer's left hand beat, the other on the right hand beat. It may be

possible also to teach this to the students, in fact, many Xhosa young people will learn it easily if they do not already know it.

As the students become consciously aware of these style elements their respect for their traditional music grows. They become open to deeper study and more advanced performance of their traditional music.

2.2. Teaching Xhosa Music to westerners.

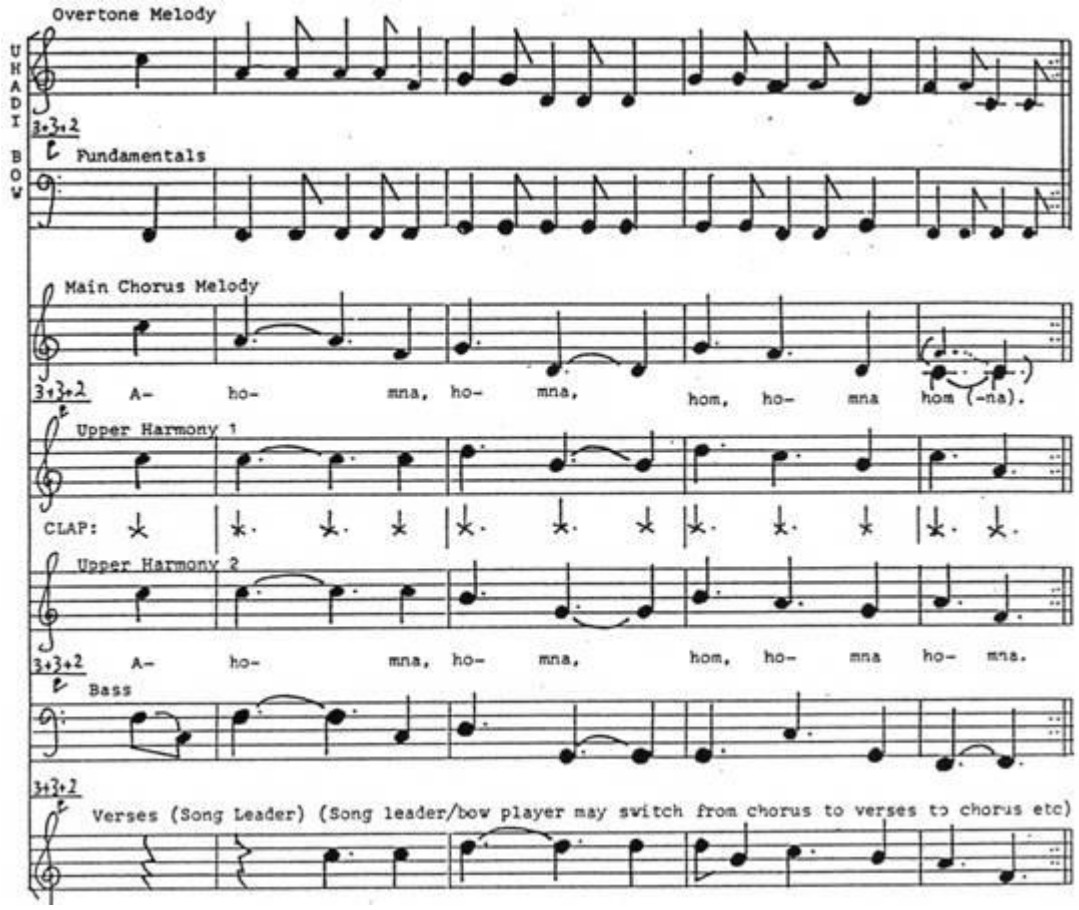
In teaching Xhosa music to Europeans a different approach is effective. Many students in Europe have some knowledge of reading or writing music in staff notation. This is true of all who have received some teaching in western music. European students lack the basic experience of Xhosa music which nearly all Xhosas have, but their music literacy opens up other teaching possibilities.

2.2.1. Introducing Xhosa melody, scale and harmony.

Nevertheless the author has found it extremely useful to begin with an approach based on Xhosa learning and teaching methods. [5] In traditional Xhosa practice people are expected to learn by observation and performance, without being directly instructed in the theory of the music. This works very well also in teaching non-Xhosas. For introducing the Xhosa scale and use of bow harmony, as well as other musical style elements, the song shown in Example 2 is most useful.

[4] Regarding the terms "additive rhythm" and "cross-rhythm", see section 2.2.2 below

[5] African, and in particular Xhosa traditional methods of learning and teaching traditional music are discussed in the book chapter, articles and conference paper by Dave Dargie (1995, 1996, 1997 and 1998)



EXAMPLE 2: The Song of the Prophet Ntsikana, sung with the *uhadi* musical bow.

Ntsikana the son of Gaba, known to Xhosa people as Ntsikana the Prophet, was the first Xhosa Christian. He was converted to Christianity in the absence of any European or missionary in about 1815, having heard a missionary preaching in 1799. After his conversion he began to preach, gathering a group of Xhosa converts. He taught his converts to sing hymns which he composed: he is the earliest Xhosa composer known by name. His songs, which may all be different versions of one original song, are completely traditional in style, although in passing into use in the churches they have become partly westernised (DARGIE, 1988, p. 105–106 and p- 194–206). Among a number of versions of Ntsikana's song recorded by the author, there are two different versions sung with the *uhadi* musical bow. The one in Example 2 was performed by two elderly Xhosa women and recorded at Mackay's Nek Mission, between the towns of Queenstown and Lady Frere, in 1981 (see photo) (DARGIE, 1988, p. 194, 196 and 203–204).

Fig. 2: Two Xhosa women who sang Ntsikana's Song with the uhadi musical bow: left: Nomawuntini Qadushe; right: Nosinothi Dumiso, holding uhadi in the playing position; with missionary Father Arnold Fischer at Mackay's Nek Mission, 1981.

The player holds *uhadi* as shown in the photo, striking the string with the light stick or reed held (in this case) in the player's right hand. As the open calabash resonator is moved away from or back towards the player's breast, the higher overtones are released or damped. In this way the player can follow the melodies of a song.

Based on variations sung by the women and using the usual methods of parallel harmony the author arranged it for several voices, as shown in Example 2. The arrangement may be used to introduce students to the *uhadi* bow and to the Xhosa usage of parallel harmony. The method used by the author is to teach all in the class (or in the group) first the line called "main chorus melody". The text, which is easy to pronounce, is exclamations of praise, addressed to a chief or king, but here addressed by Ntsikana to *Uthixo omkhulu*, the Great God who is in the heavens. It may be necessary to write the text on a board or newsprint, but all should learn to sing it by imitation, and not from written score. When all know the "main chorus melody", then all are taught "upper harmony 2" in the same way. The group is then divided. Half now sing the "main chorus melody", and half sing the "upper harmony 2". In this way all sing Xhosa harmony without any theoretical introduction. Now all learn "upper harmony 1", and then each may

choose which line to sing as once again all sing together. Three part harmony is now being sung. Finally some learn and use the "bass". This line may be sung by basses, but also an octave higher by female voices and high male voices. The four written parts are now spread over the male and female range: the lines of the songs may be sung in octaves by high and low voices, but this does not affect the harmony.

When all have learned the song in this way, then the *uhadi* can be played, demonstrating how each of the three upper parts may be made audible when playing the bow. The different melodies are followed by opening and closing the hole in the calabash resonator against the breast as one strikes the bow string, thereby releasing or damping the higher overtones. The top line of the score shows the "main chorus melody" as realized by the bow, and second line shows the fundamental tones which must be used in order to obtain the required melody overtones. The sung "bass" line focuses on the fundamental tones and lower overtones of the bow. The group may now sing the four part chorus with the *uhadi*, and the player of the *uhadi* may sing the verses of the song using the verse melody in the lowest line of the score. In addition, the group may clap the additive rhythm shown in the "clap" line within the score.

After all have sung the song, then the score transcription may be shown to them to demonstrate visually the scale, melody and parallel harmony patterns which they have sung. In this way participation in performance before seeing the score gives life to what otherwise might have been only a mental exercise.

2.2.2. Introducing Xhosa Rhythm.

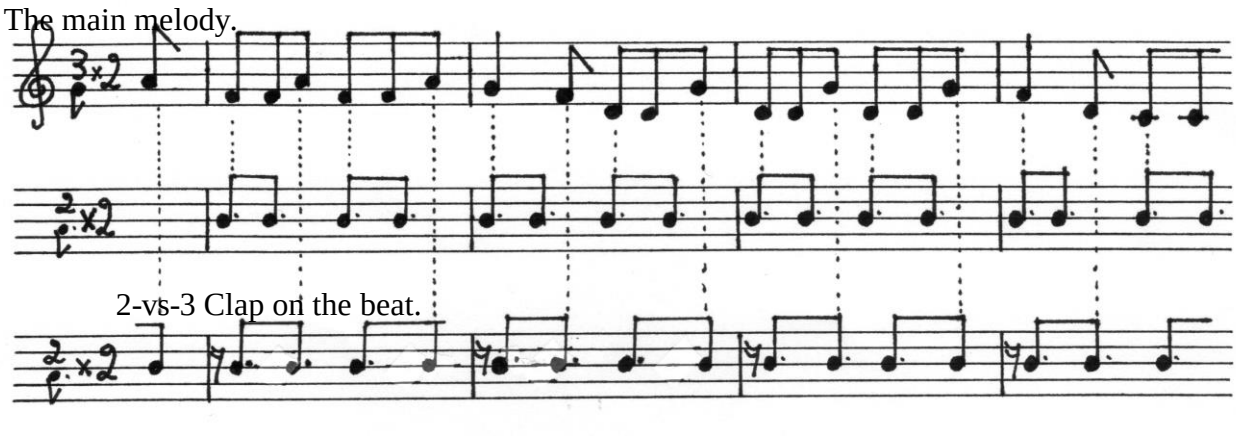
The notion of time in music is conspicuously different in western and in African music. In western music musical time is conceived as something divisible: 1 breve = 2 semibreves = 4 minims = 8 crotchets = 16 quavers = 32 semiquavers, and so on. Thus in western music time is treated as something passive, something which can be carved up into segments. In African music time operates in a different way. Musical time is built up, not divided. For example, when the renowned Xhosa *uhadi* bow player and music leader, Nofinishi Dywili, began an unaccompanied song, she would first set the time by clapping. Then her voice part would be built onto that active time set up by her body movement. Body movement – clapping, dance or whatever, provides the underlying active time which inspirits Xhosa music.

Nofinishi Dywili: *uhadi* master, song leader and master of rhythm.

The Xhosa and their fellow Nguni neighbours the Zulus did not have traditional drumming. The drums now used by diviners (and today also by Zionist Christians) are bass drum types which Zulus and Xhosas learned to make by observing the British military bands in the 19th century (KIRBY, 1968, p. 44–46). Nevertheless Thembu Xhosa use of rhythm, even without drumming, is among the most highly developed in Africa. The interplay of rhythm systems in the voice (and musical bow) parts and body movement in many songs shows that Thembu masters of rhythm are aware of up to four different rhythm systems moving simultaneously in their songs. Such a one was the late master of the *uhadi* musical bow, Nofinishi Dywili (photo above) (DARGIE, 2011). When Nofinishi sang with her *uhadi* bow, her voice part often moved in patterns indicating two rhythm systems at work, and her bow rhythm was also based on different rhythm patterns derived from both the clapping and dance movements used to accompany the song. Thembu rhythms are often disguised by equalisation, use of cross-rhythm and use of delay techniques. The subject would take up too much space to discuss here, but the interested reader is referred to other writings of the author, including Dargie (1988 and 2011).

Additive rhythms, which add together patterns of 2 and 3 beats, are very common in African music. An example is the use of 3+3+2=8 beats in Ntsikana's Song, shown above. Cross-rhythms are also found throughout African music. These are rhythms which use patterns of 3 and 2 simultaneously – for brevity called here patterns of "2-vs-3" beats. As with introducing Xhosa scale, harmony and polyphony to European students, the way of introducing Xhosa use of rhythm preferred by the author is to begin directly by performing without first verbal or written explanations. Example 3 below serves for introducing the idea and practice of cross-rhythm. The teacher should get all singing the melody line, and then draw them into the clapping by clapping as she/he sings, without prior explanation.

EXAMPLE 3: Rhythm Patterns in the "Click Song" (*Igqirha lendlela*).



Xhosa uses of rhythm disguise created problems for musicologists for a long time. [6] One problem was the non-coincidence of voice and body rhythm beats. The simplest Thembu Xhosa form of clap delay technique, which leads to this non-coincidence of beats, is shown in Example 3. The top line of the score shows the voice melody with its triplet rhythm. The second line shows how a 2-vs-3 clapping pattern fits with the voice rhythm. The third line of the score shows the clapping line with typical use of delay technique. In the second line, as indicated by the dotted lines, the clapping main beats coincide with the voice main beats. In the third line this does not happen. By delaying the clap by a half a beat, the point of coincidence is shifted from the voice main beat to the third triplet of the voice beat, again as shown by the dotted lines.

What happens when this clapping delay technique is used is that the performers now use a system of two main beats. The main voice beat has become an up-beat for the main clapping beat. When further changes are brought into the system of the voice beats, then no point of

coincidence between the beat systems is readily perceivable. This happens in many songs, when techniques of equalisation are applied to the voice beats. It took the author considerable effort over many months to "crack" the systems of Thembu Xhosa rhythm, which could only be achieved by learning to feel and perform the rhythms in question.. Describing the insights and information gleaned are beyond the scope of the discussion here. It must suffice to point out that the relatively simple form of delay technique used in Example 3 is most useful for introducing the "problem" to students.

As mentioned above, one should first get the students singing the melody, perhaps only humming or vocalising if the click consonants in the text create problems. (The main text line is *Igqirha lendlela nguQongqothwane* – "The healer of the road is the dung beetle [who cleans the cattle droppings off the road surface]". The q-consonants are clicks, which many students do enjoy to learn.) Then, while the group of students continues to sing or hum the melody, the teacher claps the 2-vs-3 rhythm without prior explanation, relatively easily getting the students to do the same. Then the teacher shifts the clap off the beat, using the clap delay, or alternatively, begins to dance the delayed rhythm, encouraging the students to do the same. Again, this works relatively easily, if the teacher is able to get the students to use their feeling for the rhythm as demonstrated by the teacher. It is most enjoyable to sing and clap and/or dance in this way. Once all have joined in successfully, then the teacher can explain what has happened, perhaps using a written score such as in Example 3. In this way practical performance can be turned into a study of the theory of rhythm.

2.3. The use of other teaching methods.

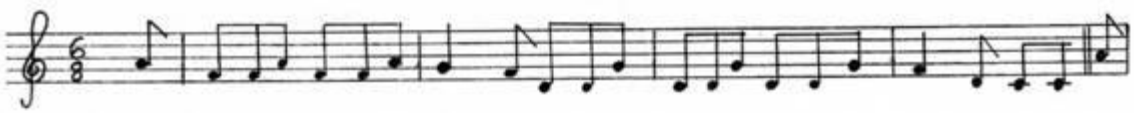
The previous sections have shown the author's attempts to adapt African methods of music teaching to the classroom. Other aspects of the teaching of Xhosa music must necessarily be based on usual classroom methods, for example, for teaching the history of Xhosa music, relating music history to general Xhosa history, and so on. For teaching the theory of Xhosa music, music literacy may be tackled using the usual system of staff notation. All, or nearly all, Xhosa music students can be expected to be well acquainted with sol-fa notation. Sol-fa is used in school music, choir music and in most church hymn books. Many Xhosa students coming to university will have little or no knowledge of staff notation, or of playing the piano. Therefore they most likely will have to adapt to the idea of music being visual. Sol-fa is based on hearing, not on seeing (as is playing the piano and reading or writing on the musical staff). Once students

[6] Dargie (1988, p. 82-87) presents and discusses these problems.

have a reasonable grounding in basic staff notation literacy, then they may be introduced to the use of pulse notation, which is the best way of transcribing the complexities of Xhosa rhythm. [7] For teaching pulse notation the following examples [Example 4, a) to d)] have been produced by the author. The song used in the example is the "Click Song", the same song as in Example 3. The examples place normal and pulse notation of the same music adjacent to each other, so that a student may very easily compare the two systems of notation. The examples include the main sung melody of the song; a version with *uhadi* bow (bringing in more complex rhythm) by Nofinishi Dywili, who was mentioned above; and also a lay-out analysis of the rhythm using normal and pulse notation, showing the use of rhythm delay technique (in the last line of Example 4, d).)

EXAMPLE 4. Transcriptions examples for introducing students to pulse notation. [8]

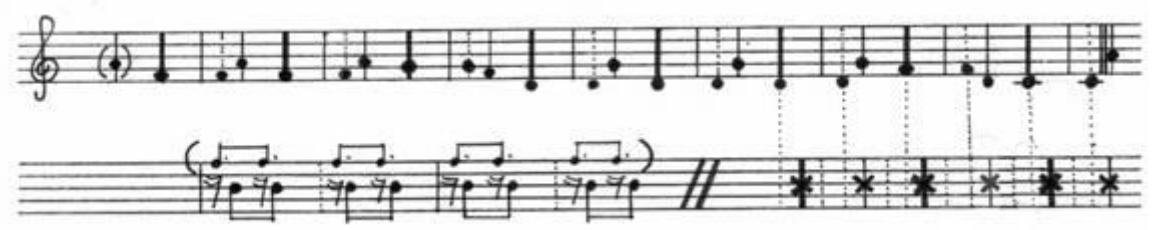
a). Melody: The "Click Song", normal notation.



b). The same melody as in a), in pulse notation.

c). Nofinishi Dywili's *uhadi* version of the Click Song melody, normal notation:

d). Pulse notation version of Nofinishi's *uhadi* melody in c), plus (second line of the score) a lay-out analysis of the rhythm in normal and then pulse notation.



[7] The author developed a system of pulse notation for his transcriptions of traditional Xhosa music: see Dargie (1988, p. 108-12).

2.4. Summing up.

This section (Section 2) has focussed on certain teaching objectives and methods which lie outside the usual pattern of music teaching in western universities, namely, the use of methods based on African methods of music education, and the introduction of the specialized pulse notation transcription method which can be very useful in transcribing African music. It is hoped that what has been offered here will provide an initial insight into the particular teaching approaches used by the author in teaching Xhosa music. Naturally the scope of teaching this music covers a much wider field, both in material and in method, having to do not only with theoretical material but also practical performance in a number of ways. The main purpose here has been to show how attempts have been made to cover some of the differences between teaching western music and Xhosa music.

Importance of listening to the music.

In every aspect of teaching/learning Xhosa music it is of course vital that students should listen to the music, to see it if possible, using audio and video recordings. The best, naturally, is if the students are able to see traditional performers in action, and even to take part if possible under the guidance of traditional musicians. All the talk, all the written materials whether words or music scores, all these cannot compare with even a few minutes of hearing the music and seeing it performed. For this purpose there are the Xhosa recordings in the Hugh Tracey "Sound of Africa" series, now being put onto CD by the International Library of African Music (ILAM) in Grahamstown, South Africa, and also the CDs and DVDs (with accompanying written materials) of Xhosa music produced by the author, and which are also obtainable from ILAM. Fortunately there are a number of Xhosa traditional music groups and musicians actively performing, including the increasingly well-known Ngqoko Traditional Xhosa Music Ensemble, who have performed many times outside of South Africa, including in Europe, the U.S.A. and Canada, and the internationally known bow player Madosini. It may well be possible for students in Europe and America to see and meet the performers. The Ngqoko Group performed this year at the Brave Festival in Poland, and Madosini has performed on two recent trips to Germany.

3. Subject matter.

[8] These examples are taken from the article Dargie (2013).

The subject matter which might be considered necessary for a university level study of Xhosa music is shown in the curriculum in Appendix A below. In addition, because of the close connection between these two aspects of Xhosa traditional culture, Appendix B below provides an introduction to the relationship between traditional Xhosa music and traditional Xhosa religion.

4. The Value of Teaching Xhosa Music.

4.1. Xhosa Music and Xhosa Students.

Fort Hare, established in 1916 in the rural town of Alice in the Xhosa area of Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, was the first university college (later a full university) at which black students could freely study in South Africa. Since its foundation Fort Hare has had close to a 100% attendance of black students, even now that all universities in South Africa are open to students of all races. In typical European colonial style the university for black students was placed in a small undeveloped town in a deep rural area allocated to the Xhosa people, far from the larger whites-only towns and cities. The campus in Alice has little attraction for students from well-off families, which today still includes most white people in South Africa.

A music department was set up at Fort Hare only in the 1970s. The music programs focused on western music as practised by black musicians: school music, choir music, with some attempts at getting students to a medium or low medium level of performance in western music, but no focus at all on traditional African music. As full-time professor of music and head of the music department (1995-2001) the author undertook to convert the music syllabi to a strong focus on African music, not neglecting western music, world music and jazz. This process has continued under three heads of department during the period 2002-2013, the author continuing as a part-time professor from 2002 to the present.

It is clear that, in the minds of government educationists, teaching priorities at university level in South Africa focus on the sciences. These areas were seriously neglected in the education programs, school and university, of the apartheid regime. There is now an urgent need to produce indigenous scientific leaders, agriculturists, medical personnel, social workers and so on. As a result of this the importance of the study of the humanities has been downgraded. In 2002, thanks to bursary money raised by the author (mostly from German donors), the Fort Hare music department was able to take on over 30 new students. More recently, when the present head of the music department, Prof. B. Bleibinger, found over 20 suitable and students keen to

study music at Fort Hare, the university refused to admit them. In 2008 to 2010, for example, the new annual intake for the humanities was limited to 40 students, spread over the departments of English, African languages, Afrikaans (language), history, philosophy, fine art and music. In 2011 the music department was allocated five new students, in 2012 eight, and in 2013 the improved figure of ten. Students for the music department were allocated from students who were not able to find places in other departments. When the author, greeting some of the new music students at the Alice campus, asked one of them why she chose to study music, her answer was: "Because I could not get into Social Work." No further questions of this type were posed by the author to the other new students. In recent years there has been a great emphasis on producing graduates in social work. Under these conditions it is not surprising that the music department could not keep even the students allocated to it, because they either lacked the interest or the talent for the study of music.

Fortunately for the Fort Hare music department, new premises were given to the department at the newer campus which the government has given to Fort Hare in the coastal city of East London. At Alice the only qualification offered in music is a three years Bachelor of Arts degree, with the possibility of doing major courses in music and choral music, a maximum of six year courses in music subjects. The other four courses necessary for a Fort Hare B.A. degree must be made up from non-music subjects. Students need to add a one-year teaching diploma to a Fort Hare B.A. degree in order to find employment as school teachers. In East London, however, Bleibinger was asked to put into place a program for a four year Bachelor of Music degree, composed entirely of music courses. A limit of ten was initially placed on the new student intake for the B.Mus. degree, but fortunately this figure has now been raised to twenty. This change has almost certainly been taken because of initiatives within the university, showing that the university leadership has increased faith in the value of the music studies offered by Fort Hare. [9] The first students for the B. Mus. degree in East London were admitted this year (2013), and most fortunately these new students are all musically talented and have themselves chosen to study music. A large proportion of them have studied music at school before coming to university – still a rarity in South Africa.

A severe problem long facing music teaching at Fort Hare has been another inheritance from the time of apartheid. Under the apartheid regime, black students were forced to study in schools for blacks only, under the degrading system called "Bantu Education". The teaching

[9] The author has just heard with great regret that the music department in another South African university is to be closed. Like Fort Hare that university is also a formerly underprivileged university set up for a particular language group in South Africa.

was inadequate, the subject matter aimed at submission to the programs of the apartheid policy rather than at any high level of education. Schools attended by whites under the apartheid regime were well provided with teachers, equipment and materials. The educational goals were high, the teachers mostly properly trained. 1994 saw the final downfall of apartheid – on paper. It will take many years to heal the damage caused by that inhuman system. One particularly regrettable area of damage which is still strongly present is the damage to the school system. Although now students can be admitted to any school in South Africa irrespective of race, the great majority of black students still have to study in the same schools where they would have been forced to, under apartheid. It will take many years to build up a properly qualified work force of teachers to serve those schools. Music teaching in these schools is almost non-existent, being limited mostly to participation in the school choirs. These school choirs, in fact, often create problems for the schools. The place held by sport in the whites-only schools of the apartheid time was held by the choirs in the blacks-only schools. This continues in those schools now in the early post-apartheid era. Choir competitions are considered so important that one often hears complaints from parents that time for classes is taken up by choir practices, and that involvement with choirs interferes with the pupils normal class work. And yet in only a very few schools is music itself a school subject.

This neglect of music at school level, and the limitations placed on the study of music at tertiary level could have very regrettable consequences in the future. South Africa is a country battling to bring itself into a viable economic condition in the twenty-first century, so perhaps it is not of much relevance whether South African students study western classical music or not – at least, at times that seems to be an attitude of some powers-that-be. But if South Africa loses its traditional music heritage, it will be a tragedy. Through the old traditional music many African people can keep in touch with their roots – culturally and historically. Learning traditional music can give people respect for and understanding of their forebears, it can give them pride in themselves and in their place in the world. These are things which must not be lost. Many young Xhosa people today do not know their own traditional music. They are growing up in a post-apartheid world in which African music can seem to mean African pop music, church songs and choir songs, while the songs sung by their ancestors for hundreds of years, the old musical instruments and music techniques are being forgotten. That is why it is necessary to teach Xhosa music to young Xhosa people, even though it seems very strange that the teacher should be white and the students black.

Among many Xhosa people of the Eastern Cape there is indeed a deep respect for their own culture and a love of their traditional music. This must be said about the local government

and about the senior Xhosa people of that province. The down-grading of music studies mentioned earlier is not due to Eastern Cape policies, but may be rather from attitudes in central government. The author has never encountered any resentment when he performs or teaches traditional Xhosa music, even when, with his white skin he sang the ancient song of Ntsikana with the *uhadi* bow, leading his students at the dedication of the re-built grave of Ntsikana the prophet in 2002, as shown in the photo below.

The re-dedication of the grave of Ntsikana the Prophet in 2002: left: the author sings Ntsikana's Song with *uhadi* musical bow, with students of the Fort Hare music department; right: the author leads those attending in another (unaccompanied) version of Ntsikana's Song.

4.2. Xhosa Music and people outside South Africa.

The value of teaching Xhosa music to Xhosa students lies in helping those students to achieve a healthy national pride, a faith in themselves through awareness of their roots, their ancestors and their history. These are aspects of Black consciousness. The value of teaching Xhosa music to non-Xhosas lies in the same values, from a different aspect. If one can give non-Xhosa people a respect for the Xhosas through an appreciation of the value and beauty of Xhosa music, then that is surely something important in today's world, when it is becoming

increasingly necessary to break down the barriers between people, to build up respect of all peoples, to break down prejudices and the distrust of foreign people and their cultures.

The author has taught Xhosa (and other African) music in various places in Europe, America and the Far East, both through courses in universities and colleges and in church music conferences, including several organised by the World Council of Churches and other bodies. There is a deal of misunderstanding about African music (and African people) in many places. By demonstrating the high level of sophistication in an orally transmitted music such as Xhosa music, one can call on respect to be shown for that music and therefore for the talents and indeed, the very humanity, of the people whose music it is.

Some people are more open than others, some countries encourage intercultural exchange more than others. Surely it is time that people all over the world, who consider themselves to be 'civilised', should take pains to learn about foreigners. In many ways this is happening. However, more could still be done regarding music. Music is something human and enjoyable. Every human being should be able to enjoy the music of any and all other human beings.

Music is like a language, a language however, which can and must be learned primarily by listening. It is mostly not necessary to offer a great deal of explanation about music, as long as people have the opportunity to listen to it and, if possible, to perform it. How wonderful it would be for the people of Mandela if their music was being enjoyed all over the world, on radio, on television, in live performances. The author has lived in Germany since 1989, but not once has he heard one piece of traditional Xhosa music in broadcast in that country, not even the completely extraordinary Xhosa *umngqokolo* overtone singing which has drawn increasing international attention since the author discovered it in 1980. How marvellous it would be if at least some schools or universities included some aspects of Xhosa music in their world music teaching programs. Xhosa music has some claim to be different from every other music in the world: why should the world not share it and enjoy it?

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APPENDIX A: XHOSA MUSIC CURRICULUM at University Level.

The music curriculum for teaching Xhosa music at Fort Hare University music department, designed and put into place by Prof. D. Dargie and further developed by Prof. B. Bleibinger, covers the following areas: [10]

Music Theory and Musical Style Elements.
Scale: Bow scale and bow theory. Other usages. Also: Neo-Xhosa music and Afro-diatonic techniques.
(The techniques of Xhosa music have been very greatly influenced by the use of music bows, especially the *uhadi*, a large, calabash resonated percussion bow which has been the most important Xhosa music instrument for (probably) many centuries.)

Choral music: music transcription in staff and sol-fa notation.

Melody: Text, speech tones and melody.

Harmony: Harmony in bow theory. Other usages.

Rhythm: Voice rhythm, body rhythm: dance; Additive rhythm and cross-rhythm.

Form: structure – phrase and sentence; cyclic form, call and response structure. Other usages.

The classification of traditional songs: ancestor cult and traditional rites and ceremonies. (Pages 3 to 6 of this hand-out cover these aspects of the study of Xhosa music.)

Transcription of traditional Xhosa music, and composition of music in Xhosa style.

Instruments.

[10] The Fort Hare music curriculum is not limited to Xhosa music. Western music, world music and jazz are also taken into account. Recent upgrading of the department has enabled an increase in staff members and therefore a broadening of teaching areas.

The musical bows: *uhadi, umrhubhe, ikatari, inkinge, umqangi*. Bow classification and related matters.

Other instruments: membranophones: drums and friction drums.
Aerophones: whistles, horns etc.
Idiophones: rattles etc.
Chordophones (other than bows): recent instruments, including *igitali* and *utot'omdaka*.

Voice usages:
Overtone singing: "Ordinary" *umngqokolo, umngqokolo ngomqangi*, other (overtone) *umngqokolo, ukutshotsha*.

Other voice usages: Boys' *umngqokolo, ukuvukutha,* et al.

Music terminology in Xhosa.
Conceptualisation: abstract thinking and concrete thinking; The Xhosa musical terms.

History of Xhosa Music.
Xhosa history: the deep past, the middle past, recent history. Relationship of music to history: traditional music, mission and school music, neo-African and neo-Xhosa music, Afro-diatonic music.

Known musicians: Ntsikana the Prophet; Theo Soga, J.K. Bokwe; the sol-fa composers: Tyamzashe et al; the popular musicians: Makeba, Singana et al.

Practical Music Performance.
Singing, playing musical bows, playing marimbas, drumming et al.; overtone singing including *umngqokolo*.

Instrument building.
Making musical bows, drums, marimbas; other instruments (rattles, horns…).

Tuning instruments, especially marimbas.

Music Technology.
Introduction to electronic music and related matters; recording machines – audio and video; music and computers (including transcription, analysis etc.)

Teaching Xhosa Music.
Methods of teaching all aspects mentioned above.

Teaching by letting learners teach songs etc.

Music composition workshops.

Outreach.

Teaching and workshops for school children.

Instrument workshops: teaching AIDS/HIV victims and other to make instruments as a way of earning.

Field research: research recording and field investigation.

Assisting local people to form music performance groups.

Music in Traditional Xhosa Life.
The next four pages provide a brief anthropological view of Xhosa music and its place in traditional Xhosa life.

APPENDIX B: XHOSA TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND TRADITIONAL MUSIC.

The Ancestors.

In traditional Xhosa life, where and when the Xhosa people lived in a totally traditional way, traditional religion was essential in every aspect of life. The main focus of traditional Xhosa religion was and is the ancestors.

The ancestors (often called the "Shades") are figures of the past who have a special relationship to the living. The word meaning "ancestors" in Xhosa is *izinyanya*, but they are often called *amaKosi*, meaning the "Chiefs" or "Lords". They include the actual physical ancestors and dead family members of all the living, and also persons who were members of the clan or chiefdom cluster, and who are remembered and held in reverence.

The ancestors influence the lives of the living. The ancestors keep a strong interest in their descendants, in the continuation of their line, and in their well-being. But they expect their descendants to remember them and show respect to them at all times, in various ways. If a man neglects his ancestors, then he can expect to be punished. Respect is shown to the ancestors through the various rites and ceremonies of traditional religion.

The shades of the ancestors were considered to remain close to the living. In a traditional Xhosa homestead, which included perhaps several houses and a cattle byre, the ancestors are considered to live at the cattle byre, because of the importance of cattle in the life of the people, and the love that a man has for his cattle. Cattle are the wealth of the people. When a man's son marries, then traditionally he would have to pay a certain number of cattle to the family of his son's wife as a bride-price.

Slaughtering for the ancestors.

For certain rituals involving the ancestors, the family would have to slaughter a white ox or, if they cannot afford an ox, a white goat. The slaughtered animal then becomes the main food at a feast attended by the ancestors. These days people speak about slaughtering for the ancestors. Such a slaughtering is not considered to be a sacrifice to the ancestors in the biblical sense. However, this was not understood by many missionaries, who considered the ancestors to be false gods worshipped by African peoples.

This was certainly never the case with the Xhosa. The ancestors have power to help, and also to punish their descendants. But above the ancestors is the Great God, called (now in Zulu, and formerly in Xhosa) *UNkulunkulu* (the Great-Great one). The usual traditional name of the Great God is *uQamata*. When the first Christian missionary came to the Xhosa in 1799, the name for

God used in his preaching was *uThixo*. This is the name of God used in the Churches. Xhosa people do not agree whether it was used as a name for God before the missionaries came. The word *uThixo* came from the Khoi – the people called "Hottentots" by the colonists.

Normally traditional Xhosa people do not pray to *uQamata*, except in special circumstances. If there is a serious drought, or famine, or war, then the king or chief would lead his people onto a mountain and there pray to *uQamata* for help. For the normal affairs of life, people would have recourse to the ancestors.

Traditional Religion and Life.

Traditional Xhosa religion followed the pattern of life itself, through its rites and ceremonies. Every important step in a person's life is reflected in the rites and ceremonies associated with every stage of life. In these notes the focus is the traditional rites and ceremonies of the Thembu Xhosa people of the Glen Grey district, the area around Lady Frere (see the map). There are twelve main groups of peoples among the Xhosa, and many sub-groups. The religious pryctices of all these groups are basically similar, but various differences do occur. What is said here about the Thembu Xhosa of Lady Frere may not apply exactly to other Xhosa people living even a relatively short distance away.

The main aspects of life in which Xhosa traditional religion plays a role are birth, growing up, initiation into adulthood, marriage, solving the problems of life, activities, celebrations and social events, and death. Problem-solving is centred round a very special group of people: the diviners. The diviners are the people who keep their people in touch with the ancestors, and who can help people with the guidance of the ancestors.

Beer and the ancestors.

Beer plays a most important part in traditional Xhosa life. Beer is called *utywala*. The traditional home-brewed beer, made from sorghum, is called *umqomboti*. *Umqomboti* is very nourishing and relatively mildly alcoholic. It is much more healthy to use than commercially produced beer, and even more so then brandy, which has been provided by the whites to the great detriment of the Xhosa people from as far back as the early 19th century, when the unfortunate Xhosa king Ngqika was introduced to it and almost destroyed by it. Today in many villages the role formerly played by *umqomboti* has been largely taken over by brandy, causing drunkenness, addiction and serious damage to many people, men and women.

The drinking of *umqomboti*, and nowadays any form of alcohol, is considered to be a focus in social life. Therefore it is necessary to include the ancestors in the event, by pouring some beer (or brandy) onto the ground, or the floor of the house in which the event is taking place. Many rites and ceremonies include the drinking of alcohol, sometimes as a sign that the ancestors are involved. In a village households will take turns in brewing *umqomboti*, so that the beer will be ready for drinking at different homesteads in succession, and the people will circulate from homestead to homestead for the drinking of the beer. These are not simply drinking parties. The ancestors are involved, and so the songs sung at beer involve ancestors figures and tell of events involving the ancestors, except for certain light-hearted drinking songs.

The role of Singing.

The concept "music" is an abstraction used in European languages. The Xhosa language does not work like that. The nearest way in which one can say "Xhosa music" in Xhosa is *iingoma*

zesiXhosa: "Songs of Xhosa culture". A song is not something abstract. It exists as something done by people, and includes both singing and the body movement associated with a particular song. The body movement includes clapping, stamping the feet rhythmically, and dancing.

Every traditional song is associated in the minds of the people with some or other rite or ceremony. Some rites and ceremonies are performed without singing. For example, rites associated with birth. The reason is that a new-born child is very vulnerable, and sounds of singing might attract the attentions of evil spirits, to harm the child. (In fact, avoiding loud celebrations around the new-born certainly does lessen the risk of infection for the child.)

There are also various celebrations which use song, but which do not have their own special songs. At such celebrations then the various people attending will use the songs of their particular group: children use children's songs, diviners use diviners' songs, and so on.

Here then are the main song types, and the rites and ceremonies with which they are associated.

Song types and the rites and ceremonies associated with them.

Following the pattern of a human life, here are the main rituals which have their own songs:

* Boys' and girls' dance parties.
The dance parties of girls and boys are called *umtshotsho* (plural *imitshotsho*). There are two types of such parties: the dances for the younger boys and girls, and the dance parties for the older boys and girls (called "old boys" and "old girls"). Both groups hold their dance parties inside a large round house. A very important different is that the older boys and girls will go during their *umtshotsho* to the cattle byre, where they are given some beer to share. Going to the cattle byre and the use of beer shows that the ancestors are being involved in the *umtshotsho*, an important step in the growing up and education of the participants.

* Stick-fighting.
Stick-fighting is part of the education of boys, their preparation for adulthood. Groups of boys from different villages will come together for the stick-fighting, which is a kind of sport. However, in recent times the practice of using very dangerous sticks with metal heads has come in, resulting in serious injuries and even deaths, so the police have tried to stamp out the practice. On the way to the stick-fights, the boys will sing stick-fighting songs, called *amagwijo* (singular *igwijo*). In the old days the men would also have had their war songs, but these days no-one remembers the old war songs.

* Boys' initiation.
Boys' initiation involves the initiands living in a temporary hut in the veld, apart from the community. They are instructed by older men to prepare them for adulthood. In former times the boys would spend a number of weeks in the initiation camp, but these days, for economic and school reasons, the time is much shorter. So certain dances and songs practised during the camp in the old days have fallen into disuse.

When the boys are ready, then the ceremony of circumcision takes place. Unhygienic practices have led to quite a number of serious illnesses and deaths resulting from the necessary cutting, and various initiatives have been taken to try to avoid the danger. Sometimes the boys go to a hospital or clinic to have the actual cutting done.

There are various songs associated with boys' initiation, songs sung by the women (including the mothers) saying farewell to their boys, and a famous song addressed to the supervisor of the cutting (called *uSomagwaza* – the father of the cutting). When the boys go into the initiation camp, they are still children. As soon as each has been cut, he is a man, which changes hie relationship to parents and family.

* Girls' initiation.
Girls' initiation is designed to prepare a girl for marriage. When a girl has passed through initiation, she is considered ready for marriage, but she is only considered to be a woman after she is married. These days many people find this unsatisfactory. In the past all the girls (ideally) would be married, and the practice of polygamy played a part in this. Nowadays in fact many women do not marry, and it is obviously false to regard an unmarried woman of mature age as a girl.

There are many songs associated with girls' initiation. At the initiation, the women perform a round dance called *umngqungqo*, for which there are many songs. There is also a very beautiful song addressed to the man who is delegated to supervise the girls being initiated, who is called *idindala* (from a former Afrikaans word, *diener*, meaning a policeman).

* Young men's dance parties.
There is a special dance party, which has its own songs and its own dance style, called *intlombe yabafana*. This means "the dance party of the young men", and it is attended by the newly initiated (and unmarried) young men, and the women of their age group, who in the old days were still called "girls". This *intlombe* brought the young people together, and therefore helped to promote marriages.

* The Diviners.
The diviners (*amagqirha*, singular *igqirha*) are the mediums between the living and the ancestors. Constant illness is considered to be a sign from the ancestors that the sick person is being called to be a diviner, so diviners' apprentices are called *abantwana bagulayo*: "sick children".

The diviners have their own songs, sung with drum(s) and leg rattles These songs are used for the diviners' rituals and divination sessions, and for many rites and ceremonies including family rituals of various sorts.

These are some of the main song types. There are others: the much-loved (musically9 song for carrying off a girl for marriage, work songs, lullabies, songs of the Zionist Christians and songs of the *amaGqobhoka*, another Christian semi-traditional group. There are also the songs of Ntsikana the prophet, who died in 1821, and who is the only composer of that time (and possibly the only traditional composer) known by name today.

As mentioned, for many of the socio-ritual gatherings (parties called *imigidi*, weddings, praying on the mountain with the chief, and so on) there are no special songs. At an *umgidi*, for example, women will sing *umngqungqo* songs, children (and also adults) will perform *umtshotsho* songs, diviners will perform their songs and dances, and so on.

These days many of the old songs and dances are falling into disuse. But there are a growing number of Xhosa music groups dedicated to keeping the old music alive. Perhaps the best-known of these is the Ngqoko Traditional Xhosa Music Group, from the village of Ngqoko near Lady Frere. The Ngqoko Group have arranged their song performances into concert form, partly

based on performances of songs according to ritual type, and partly based on performances with instruments (the musical bows, *uhadi*, *umrhubhe* and *ikatari*), and with the remarkable Thembu Xhosa overtone singing called *umngqokolo*.