

**A cultural biography of an acclaimed Queen of
Xhosa music, MADOSINI MANQINENI, and her
contributions to Xhosa cultural music.**

Mzikantu Zungula Plaatjies

Supervisor:
Dr D.D. Hansen, Ph.D.

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Music (by Performance and by Dissertation).

University of Cape Town

November 2005.

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature:

MZIKANTU ZUNGULA PLAATJIES

Date: 14-11-2005

DEDICATION

To both my parents, Shadrack Mziwoxolo and Louisa Ntombiza Plaatjies, especially my late mother whom the Almighty called before she could even see her sibling grow. To the present and next promising generation this is for you. Take good out of it and leave the rest.

“Human knowledge is circumscribed, and each of us has his own limited vision. It is the duty of each to make his vision wider, approximating more nearly to the larger truth of things. And the study of all the facts within the historian’s reach will help him in this endeavour.” G.M. Trevelyan, “Bias in History,” *An Autobiography and Other Essays*, 1946, p.68.

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Abstract.

The main objective of this study is a musical ethnography on Madosini Manqineni, a prominent individual in African cultural music today, with an established reputation abroad, but who has not yet been given any attention in scholarship. This study was motivated by my great admiration and respect for Madosini, who is recognized as a "specialist musician", a notion that did not exist in pre-colonial times. In this study I am concerned with biography, which also needs some historical data. My writing comes from my position as a professional musician who was also a long-term student of Madosini. Although certain areas of her life are not fully available to me, I set out to explore how and why she became a professional musician, the social circumstances which encouraged her to cultivate her music, first in the customary way, which later became more individual and personal. Chapter 1 places the subject in her historical and cultural background, with a summary of main events in Mpondomise history and Madosini's family predecessors of the Dosini clan. Chapter 2 looks at events in Madosini's childhood which laid the foundation of her musical career, experiences of sets of customs, social and musical, in a rural/traditional environment; restrictions of a physical defect which encouraged concentration on self-accompanied song, and song-stories. Chapter 3 concerns Madosini's handling of the **intsomi** tradition, but also contains critical debate on **intsomi** as 'folk tale' as an 'oral literature', with reference to earlier scholars; the Xhosa approach to **intsomi** and an example of such by Madosini, in the Xhosa language, with English translation. Chapter 4 looks at Madosini as a teacher, composer and musical specialist, and contains a detailed account of my experiences as her student; Madosini's idiosyncratic procedures in bow performance practice, in song composition, and their impact on my career as a professional musician. Chapter 5 provides a summary of the preceding chapters and a commentary on Madosini's contributions to Xhosa music. The dissertation ends with an epilogue, paying tribute to Madosini, whose achievements continue to encourage young musicians to promote cultural music and to take new directions with it, thereby ensuring its continuity down the generations.

Acknowledgements.

The author is especially grateful to Ms Madosini Latozi Manqineni for her fullest co-operation throughout the course of this work. Dr D. D. Hansen who gave up so much time reading my manuscript and for making corrections and suggestions. Your specialized help is very much appreciated. The author acknowledges the assistance of bursaries and materials provided by the University of Cape Town and people who knew Madosini in the Libode district. Credit is given to all of the following in alphabetical order for their co-operation. The names of those who know Madosini Latozi Manqineni bear an asterisk, e.g. Mr Gontshose Mfabe*, Dr Shadrack Plaatjies*, Mr Tolotolo Khathula Mbelana*. Mr Lungile Gadezweni, your help, assistance and almost everything in this research is noted. Without you the dissertation would not have materialized. I also feel I would be lacking in appreciation if I were to omit to mention a Thembu tribesman Mr Mdlane Koni who, with endless patience and goodwill, allowed me to interview him. Matron M. Pheko, the hospital itself is your second home. Thank you for your insights. Without your assistance nothing could have materialized. Mr Nceba Simayile, for his skill in photography and guidance in a Thembu territory. It is good to know you and what you are capable of doing.



Preface.

This dissertation was motivated by my great admiration and respect for Madosini, who is recognized as a “specialist musician”, a notion that did not exist in pre-colonial times. In this study I am concerned with biography, which also needs some historical data. My writing comes from my position as professional musician who was also a long-term student of Madosini. I set out to explore how and why she became a professional musician, and the social circumstances which encouraged her to cultivate her music, first in the customary way, and which later became more individual and personal. My approach to my topic is a dialectical one i.e. “thinking and talking about music” (Blacking 1990:231). This approach involves two methods of interacting with my subject:

- (a) Talking to her about her life of music, as an analyst and also as a user of music, and;
- (b) Performing music – from Madosini’s repertoires as well as my own, as a way of knowing her thoughts about music and her playing method and techniques.

Most of my data was collected during ongoing talks with Madosini, when time allowed us to sit and have relaxed conversations. This did not happen regularly because both of us are professional musicians and teachers, and our public commitments take us to other towns and cities in South Africa, and also abroad. Madosini has been particularly active during the past five years, traveling about and holding workshops in Gauteng and Tshwane when she is not abroad. In these circumstances we had to find time for shorter informal interviews with guided conversations. On many occasions we have performed together on stage, and these occasions –and the rehearsals – presented opportunities to make music together, which, like learning music, is a good and enjoyable method of exchanging musical experiences.

I also had informal conversations with Madosini’s friends and relatives, and community members who know her well, and who made themselves available during the time I carried out research. Their collections and observations were invaluable for this dissertation. I also spoke with people who came to be associated with Madosini more recently and the observations and viewpoints they offered on issues raised in our talks were also very useful and stimulating.

Certain areas of Madosini's life were not available to me. There were times in our conversations when she clearly did not wish to pursue a topic in her personal life, and so I never gained access to it. Nor did I ever pressure her. If she felt I was about to intrude, she would simply not reply to my question, or deflect it with another question. Because of this, there are some unavoidable gaps in my account of Madosini's life and music. The extent of my treatment of my topic was largely governed by her contributions. She speaks no English and so we conversed in our mother tongue, Xhosa. The translation of the data into English was troubling for me, and even very problematic at times, because of the need to find the correct English words in order to convey Madosini's information without distorting its meaning.

To provide the necessary historical, sociological and musicological content for this biography, I consulted some major publications on these aspects, and concerning the Southern Nguni in particular. Notable are W D Hammond-Tooke, who is regarded as a foremost scholar of Southern Nguni anthropology, and Monica Hunter's timeless book on Mpondo society and culture contact (1936, 1961). There is much published and unpublished literature on musical bows in southern Africa, and the main authors consulted are P R Kirby, D K Rycroft, G Kubik, D Dargie and D Hansen. For oral literature, R Finnegan (1970) and H Scheub (1975) provide valuable insights into the song-story tradition, of which the Xhosa **intsomi** is representative.

The finding of this study is that Madosini's life of music is not led by theories of art for art's sake. Her music carries a far more individual and personal character, and has been inspired by the experiences of Mpondo, Mpondomise and Thembu social life, and by the multiculturalism of the wider South African society. This study has been for me a new, and a challenging experience of writing, and I hope that I have not overstated myself in it. I also hope that I have produced a useful account that invites readers to know and appreciate Madosini's music, and that I have done justice to the achievements of this great lady of Africa.

CHAPTER 1

Madosini's forebears: The historical and cultural background.

Memoirs of man, as noted by Trevelyan (1946), in life are continuous processes. This therefore, gives us an indication that unpacking Madosini Manqineni's history is unpacking her roots and these are bound up with the stories, legends of the Mpondomise people and their history, enshrined in oral tradition and the genealogies of chiefs, and ultimately with the branches of the Manqineni family tree. During our long conversations about her life and experiences, Madosini constantly made references to events that had happened or were purported to have happened in the history of the Mpondomise. For this reason I have felt it necessary and appropriate to provide a summary of the Mpondomise tribal history pertaining to events recounted by Madosini herself, and which have been documented in the published literature.

Hammond-Tooke provides a detailed account of Mpondomise history. This publication, entitled *Command and Consensus*, critically examines the 'Development of Transkeian Local Government' for which study the Mpondomise formed the basis because, being a more conservative group, they were typically '...an example of a Transkeian people undergoing political change' (1975:43ff).

Although amaMpondomise are genealogically connected to the amaMpondo, amaXesibe, amaBomvana and other 'Mbo' tribes, they

constitute a distinct cluster of two chiefdoms, and they reside since historical times in several administrative units ('locations') in the districts of Tsolo and Qumbu in the Eastern Cape Province. As noted by Hammond-Tooke, Xhosa and Thembu influences are apparent in the ochred clothing and distinctive turbans worn by amaMpondomise women, and in the observance of male initiation but without the spectacular **umtshilo** dances after circumcision, which occupied much of the post-initiation period. The traditional dance styles also demonstrate some Thembu and Mpondo traits. The amaMpondomise formerly practice **ukungena** (the levirate), a custom totally alien to amaXhosa and abaThembu. The Mpondomise connection is also referenced in the genealogies of Mpondomise chiefs, among whom was a very early chief Njanya who had twin sons, Mpondo and Mpondomise, who quarrelled over their respective claims to tribal seniority. According to John Henderson Soga's account of this matter, (1930:334-5) "... Mpondo refused to hand over the head and claws of a lion he had killed, and which rightly belonged to the senior chief".

The Mpondomise account claims that Mpondo left the scene rather than settle the matter in a fight, and from that time on there was the separation between the two men and their followers. Even earlier references mention one chief by the name of Sibiside (predecessor of Njanya) who lived in Swaziland ruling one tribe. After Njanya's death, this tribe split into two separate chiefdoms, which became amaMpondo and the amaMpondomise. At some stage in their remote history amaMpondomise moved south into what is now the Eastern Cape province, and a heroic and legendary figure, Malangana was said to have led them to this APromised Land".

The migration history is obscure, but when Ntose succeeded as the fourth chief on record, amaMpondomise had reached the area between the Intsizwa Mountains and the Umzimvubu River. Ntose's first born son was Cwerha, who was the legal heir but very unpopular, and another succession dispute led to the ruling line being handed over to his younger brother Ngcwina (Hammond-Tooke 1975:44). It was during Ngcwina's rule that the Mpondomise gradually moved southwards, with the capital homesteads being established at various places en route e.g. Umzimvubu, Tsitsa and Umthatha Rivers, and when Ngcwina died the Mpondomise were settled in their present localities (ibid). Disputes in the succession led to more moves southwards during which chief Ngcwina's heirs also disputed the succession - they being sons Dosini and Cira [*sic*], the latter being the younger son but more favoured by his father.

"What happened when the two sons approached adulthood resembles, as Hammond-Tooke (1975:45) pointed out: "...a story of Biblical times".

'When they came to receive the gifts from him (Ngcwina), he crossed his hands on giving them, thereby indicating that the chieftainship would go to Cira [*sick*]' (ibid).

This act was very bewildering to the Mpondomise people, and according to oral history, it impacted badly on Dosini, who began to behave irresponsibly and showed no interest at all in tribal matters. It is said that he began mixing with herders, painting himself with ochre and wearing animal skins, and inciting the herders to fight among themselves. This led to him

being beaten severely by a group of herders of the Nyandube clan, who did not know of his status. The whole clan was fined, and '.... emigrated en bloc to Pondoland' (ibid).

Although Dosini was the senior heir, he was overlooked and eventually he moved away to his mother's home at Lotana. Cira [*sic*] and his heirs ruled the Mpondomise for many years in their present area between the Thina and Mthatha Rivers. The next prominent figure - and with almost heroic dimensions - was Majola, a chief who also '...captured the imagination of the Mpondomise' (Hammond-Tooke 1975:45). It is said that at his birth a certain snake was seen in the back of the hut, and that it was seen as Majola's twin (and referred to as **umntshantshalaza**). According to Hammond-Tooke, his informants referred to the 'Majola snake' as INKWAKHWA, being the non-poisonous large mole-snake (cf. McLaren-Bennie 1936:84).

Even today, Mpondomise say that if one sees such a snake, it will bring good luck. It was Majola in his reign that began the Mpondomise custom of burying chiefs in rivers, so that witches could not get their bodies. (Majola was himself buried in a pool in the Umzimvubu River, as were at least five other Mpondomise chiefs). A brother named Ngwanya, who was followed by his son, and grandson Sontlo, succeeded Majola and when Sontlo died (still young) the Mpondomise split into two sections. Their history after that is one of intermittent raids between themselves and with the Bhaca, Thembu and Mpondo chiefdoms.

In 1877 after East Griqualand was annexed (by a colonial government), Mpondomise territory was divided into two magistracies - Tsolo and Qumbu, both established in 1876, with Mhlontlo as the Mpondomise Paramount Chief, and Mditshwa as chief of the Tsolo chiefdom. The Cape Colonial action on gun ownership led to the outbreak of the so-called Gun War, which created huge conflict in the annexed territory and also rebellion among the Mpondomise chiefdoms. The Qumbu magistrate (Mr Hope) was murdered and Tsolo village was attacked and held in siege until its relief by an Mpondo force led by a Missionary and six European Volunteers. Mditshwa surrendered the chieftainship and his tribe placed under a regent while he went into hiding for about 20 years. He was ultimately pardoned but never reinstated by the British government, which did not acknowledge the two chieftainships. Part of Mpondomise territory was confiscated and Mfengu groups were then settled in the area. This was a bleak period in the history of the Mpondomise, and one that has not been forgotten (Hammond-Tooke 1975: 45-46).

The Mpondomise are one of twelve mainly unrelated chieftain clusters that are known as the Southern Nguni in anthropological literature. The other clusters are the Xhosa, Thembu, Bomvana, Mpondo (all of whom have been long established in their territories) and the Bhaca, Hlubi, Bhele, Zizi, Mfengu, Xesibe and Ntlangwini. These seven last clusters found their ways into their present areas by successive migrations, particularly following the period of the Zulu King Shaka's wars of conquest.

Each cluster has its own history and differences of customs, and all of them speak variant dialects of the AmaXhosa language-**isiXhosa**. Some of them also practice distinctive tribal marking: e.g. the Bhaca, Xesibe and some Mfengu practice **inkcaza** (face cuts); like the AmaXhosa, **ingqithi** (finger amputation). Hunter has this to say on the subject: most Mpondo clans remove the top of the little finger of the eldest child and every alternate child after the eldest. Usually a girl's left hand top of the little finger is cut, and a boy's right hand top of the little finger, and there is no beer drinking or ceremonial to accompany this procedure (1961:264-265).

The known fact is that Mpondo and Mpondomise were twins from their father Njanya. At birth, Mpondomise came first in the early morning hours. **Ngentlazane**, (at milking period) the midwives discovered that the mother was again groaning in pains showing signs of yet another delivery. The grandmother immediately called for a sharp razor to amputate the top little finger of the first born to solve confusion on the identity of the twins. Mpondomise had then the top of the right little finger amputated. On the other hand some informants gave Hunter the following reasons for this custom: '...it prevents weakness' (in a child) and fretful behaviour. In all the Mpondomise, finger amputation is done by removing the tip of the left little finger to girls and the tip of the right little finger to the boys. Since this was done in the presence and under the instruction of the grandmother, it is still known to be **into kaMakhulu okanye lisiko likaMakhulu** (something of the grandparent or the grandparent's custom) and the neglect of the custom invites illness. (Hunter, M. *Reaction to Conquest*, (1936; 1961).

Since Mpahleni Dosini, father of Madosini, the subject of this musical ethnography, had a polygynous marriage, he had two wives, Manjuza and Mafani. According to Mpondomise custom he had to marry exogamously (outside his clan), taking his first wife from a homestead in eMnga 'location' in Tsolo district, the 'home' area of the second Mpondomise chiefdom. The lady was Manjuza Notshakazi Mdunyelwa, a daughter of Ngxikolo Mdunyelwa of the sixth 'house' of the Mpondomise chiefdom cluster, who went to live with her husband in Mqhekezweni, **isiphaluka** (a neighbourhood) in Tunxa >location= (locally known as kwaDlomo) after one of the principal lineages in that area. Manjuza, as the wife from kwaNdlunkulu ('the Great House') had three children, a boy and two girls, the first born in their seniority being Nompozolo, a boy, Latozi Madosini a girl, and the last-born Nongenangaye the girl. Madosini was born in Mqhekezweni on February 17th 1940. Mafani, being the second wife **ukunene** (the right hand house) had two children, Zakade a boy and Celiwe a girl. All the children were reared according to Mpondomise traditional customs. They lived in an **umzi** (a homestead) grouped around **ubuhlanti** (a cattle byre) with their **iqadi** (supporter house or 'rafter').

A significant difference between the five older chiefdoms and the seven later arrivals is their marked conservatism. As Hammond-Tooke puts it: '... these chiefdoms... resisted change to a degree unprecedented in Bantu Africa' (1975:19), while the other later arrivals seemed to show much greater aptitude for and readiness to assimilate western cultural elements' (ibid). One might also point out that this 'marked conservatism' is also reflected in

the extent to which the older clusters and the Mpondomise in particular have retained so much of their classical musical practices, and traditional dress through which tribal associations are expressed. This was described and discussed in some detail by Hansen (1981) and in relation to specific musical styles. She states that she was '... able to identify a cluster by the distinct dye it uses, the different shades of ochre obtained, the particular arrangement of turbans (worn by married women of the older clusters), and the elaborate hairstyles (worn by Mpondo, Xesibe and Bhaca women).

Hansen also states that within the clusters, the different age groups have their own particular styles of dress and favour certain colours and patterns in their beadwork. The patterning of skirts varies among the different clusters e.g. the Ngqoko women from Lady Frere in a Thembu area.... decorate their skirts with many rows of black braid, alternating with zigzagging lines, and pearl buttons sewn into the design. She goes on to say: 'One could regard Cape Nguni tribal dress as being an example of 'variations on a theme'; different chiefdom clusters use the same materials but produce different results with it. Xesibe women do not use red ochre, but instead they stain their everyday clothing (made from cotton sheeting) with fat and manure, which gives off a pungent smell, and is dark-green in colour. Mpondo men and women wear pale blue blankets obtained by dyeing white ones with a strong solution of Reckitt Blue. The Tshawe group (married men and unattached women) wears white clothing ornamented with black braid trimming'. (1981:14-15). Some of these distinctive fashions may be seen in colour Plates which appear at the end of Volume 2 of Hansen 1981, unpublished.

While choice of beadwork colour and braiding may have undergone a certain amount of change or variation, such colour and style preferences in traditional dress are still to be seen in use today, and among the older chiefdom clusters including the Mpondomise. Madosini herself has her own unique version of traditional dress, which clearly shows elements of Thembu and Mpondomise styles.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 Madosini=s Predecessors and her early years.

Bhokolo Dosini, grandfather of Madosini, was born in Tunxa 'location' near the town (and the district) of Mthatha. This area included a stretch of land on the right bank of the Mthatha River (after which the town of Umtata was named). The Thembu Paramount Chief, Ngangelizwe, gave this land to some European Settlers circa 1869 against payment of a yearly rental, and the area was also to be a buffer against Mpondo raids. The Mpondo chief Nkqwiliso made a similar arrangement on the left bank of the river.

This matter was described in some detail by an Anglican Missionary to the Mpondomise, Reverend Bransby Key, who wrote that it was 'a belt of unoccupied country some twenty miles across waving with grass, intersected by no roads ...' (Callaway 1911:28 and quoted in Hammond-Tooke 1975:39). This piece of land teemed with game, including lion, and separated Mpondo and Mpondomise, but it was also intended to be a protection from mutual raids from each side. But in this it was not very effective, because the boundaries of the two chiefdom territories were not clearly demarcated, so tribesmen from both sides often met and clashed. Madosini made mention of all this because it is a piece of history that is faithfully transmitted from one generation to the next, and it also provides an example of a strategy that does not always work as it was planned, especially when implemented by 'foreigners'.

Bhokolo Dosini observed the custom of polygamy, and from his first wife, Magidzana, who was of the Khuma clan, he had three sons, these being in order of seniority Dosho, Mpahleni and Blues. In due course these three sons grew to maturity and established their own families, and extended the Dosini clan and lineage. Of the three, Mpahleni Dosini is important for his cultural biography, since he was the father of Madosini Manqineni.

2.2 Childhood.

Life in Tunxa was rural and leisurely, with fowls - and possibly a pig or two - wandering the perimeters of the homesteads. By day one would have heard the creaking and groaning of ox-sleds, and the braying of donkeys as they swayed under their loads of produce they brought in from the maize and millet fields. However, the Dosini family did not remain in Tunxa because circumstances caused Mpahleni Dosini to move to a location in Libode district in eastern Mpondoland. This happened some time after one of Mpahleni's uncles (Mlonyeni of the Qwathi chiefdom of the Thembu cluster), moved to Mkhankatho neighbourhood in Libode district in search of fresh grazing for his herds. After settling there, he found life very lonely, being cut off from his kin, and so he persuaded Mpahleni and his family to join him in Mkhankatho.

Mpahleni gave the same reason for his move - the need for fresh pastureland. He and his family joined his uncle Mlonyeni, where he established his own homestead. However, some time after the move, Mpahleni's health deteriorated, to an extent that his brother, Dosho, persuaded him to return to Mqhekezweni (in Tunxa), where he could receive constant care and attention. He did so, but left his wife and children in Mkhankatho possibly because he realized that his illness was terminal. A short time after his return to Tunxa, he died, and was buried next to the graves of his parents. Manjuza and the children remained in Mkhankatho under the care of Mlonyeni, her uncle-in-law.

In 1948, in her eighth year, Madosini, who was called by her pet name - Latozi - by her family and friends - enrolled as a pupil in Ntlaza Primary School. She regularly attended classes and took an interest in what she was taught, but at this early age, she was already showing exceptional abilities in traditional musical practices, which were an integral part of daily social life in Mkhankatho. Like all Mpondomise children in those days, Madosini was expected to participate in various kinds of music making that were shaped by social and cultural events, and which involved interaction with other children. Music was a means of socialization, and children were encouraged to participate in it. They were never forbidden to observe the musical practices of adults although they stuck to the music of their own age set when it came to performance.

The realities of daily life brought together people of different age sets and social status, to make music and to remember their cultural heritage in the observance of customs, and in this very stimulating and unrestricting environment, children gradually acquired musical competence.

As a small girl Madosini and her peers were free to run about the homestead, and boys and girls could play together. But from about the age of six, boys and girls would be separated during the day, the boys beginning to learn herding (first with small livestock like calves) while girls began to spend more time with their mothers. They would be expected to help with domestic chores, and also act as nurses to their younger siblings, carrying them on their backs, and soothing babies. Later on - at about eight years of

age - girls would be expected to go and fetch water with small buckets, and later with full size buckets. Some three years later girls would learn to grind maize and become efficient cooks in their homes. Girls were also sent on messages, and on quests for wild spinach and the like, and by the time, they were fifteen years of age, they would be helping in the fields.

2.3 Adolescence and social adulthood.

Both formal and informal social activities were contexts for encouraging singing and dancing, fundamental to Mpondomise (Southern Nguni) music, and this began from the time children could walk (and even before that when they were babies, on their mothers'/minders' backs), and they learned largely through imitation. **lintsomi** (traditional stories) were regularly told at night on sleeping mats, the narrators commonly being grandmothers or elderly men, while **amabali** (narratives) were told around a fire and the time did not matter, be it at night or during the day. Such stories had their own real items of song, which were essential to the stories' dramatization and effect, and in this informal environment, the stories had a huge impact on Madosini. Like music generally, these 'narratives' had a strong educational function, in that they 'inducted' young children into acceptable social behaviour, and at the same time exposed them to different kinds of aural experience, thereby developing critical listening ability from a very early age.

In fact, the vital rôle that music making played throughout the life cycle - as and ongoing process of socialization' - laid the foundation for Madosini's expertise and the choice of a life heavily involved with traditional music. At the same time, all the social events, which shaped the music, taught Madosini the Mpondomise traditional world-view, and strengthened her understanding of cultural notions about her status and rôle in her community and wider society. Such events would include **izitshongo** (wood or cakes of dried cow dung gathering parties) whereby one girl is asked by her aunt or relative to gather wood or even cakes of dried cow

dung for her house. The girl would immediately invite her friends to assist her with the gathering, and on a chosen day and venue, all the girls got together and started the given task.

Before this, they made music to exhilarate the work, and then scattered around in search of dried cow dung, as well as firewood, which would also be used for fires. They would search in the open fields and in the forests for these. For those who were quick, when they finished gathering the fuel, they did not stop singing but would also begin to clap and dance, to stimulate the other girls. Madosini has vivid memories of collecting firewood, and during one of our conversations, she recalled her experiences when she visited a particular beautiful forest, and how its atmosphere always deeply affected her. The forest was located a short distance from her home in Libode. "When you are in a forest, apart from the wood you are aiming to collect, you are also impressed by the profound silence and exquisite fragrance of the air, which was always scented by wild grape, lilies, jasmine and the like. A listener nearby would be amazed to hear even the slightest sounds from mouse-birds which live in small groups, and by distant lowing of beasts joining in the music making, all this in contrast to the high-pitched singing of the other girls as they fetched wood."

When everyone was ready (with their collected matter), the leader of the group would call everyone to meet at a certain place. They would prepare to do so, and arrange their bundles while singing a song; and then, just like soldiers, they would follow their leader, who directed them along the way. While singing, the girls would form a line (i.e. 'follow my leader' formation)

similar to that which learners make when they return to their classrooms after a school assembly to the classroom.

In the meantime, the aunt/relative would cook **umngqusho** (stamp mealies) and even prepare tea or coffee with some cookies for the party, so that when they arrive everything is ready. This is meant to thank the party for the help rendered. When they neared the house, they would start another song, thereby alerting the aunt/relative that they had arrived. When the singing was heard, some **halala** (hurrah) sounds would be heard in response from neighbourhood mothers, praising and encouraging the young girls for what they had done. They would unload the bundles behind the house, each girl seating herself next to her bundle in the same line formation in which they had all arrived.

A messenger from the house was then sent to them to show them where to place their bundles, and when this was done, they were invited into the house. There, they were served with cooked **umngqusho** (stamp mealies) followed by tea and biscuits. An elderly person would then enter the room and make a short pleasant speech, thanking the girls and telling them to do the same for anyone who asked for help. After this speech, more song and dance would follow; each girl would have the opportunity to start a new, or a known song, and compete with a new dancing style. When everyone has had enough (of a good time), they all left for their homes performing in **umjeko** (song performed with the follow my leader dancing style) as they went along the streets, and filling the atmosphere with the dust stirred up by their dancing. In this way, each girl was delivered to her home.

Since people in Tunxa lived rural traditional lifestyle, they practiced pastoralism and hoe-culture. They had flocks of cattle, some sheep and goats, and some poultry, and raised various crops to feed their families. Traditionally, the sowing period (subject to climatic conditions) usually extends from mid-September until the first week in December. By early February or mid-March, the crops (especially grain) would be ready for consumption. When the crops reach the required height, there is an **ukuhlakula** (hoeing) period whereby weeds are hoed out. This is a laborious period where simple instruments like **amakhuba** (iron hoes with long wooden handles) are used. In the meantime, 'crop inspectors' were appointed to inspect the crops, and to look for the presence of any larvae or grubs of maize-stalk borers or caterpillars, which are so destructive to crops.

A western system of spraying or watering the fields with chemicals was unknown to the Nguni peoples, and even now, they still hold on to the old system of doctoring their crops. This means therefore that their only hope for doctoring and protecting their crops rests with **iSanuse** (a Specialist Traditional Doctor). 'Their practice or method of work is the same in general as that of the others, but they are specialists, supreme in their profession. They are employed in cases which baffle the ordinary **gqirha**'. (J.H.Soga, 1930:160) As a Specialist Traditional Doctor, **iSanuse** excels in preparing various medicinal substances for preventing or destroying **isihlava** (larvae or grubs of maize-stalk borer, even caterpillars). One famous Specialist Traditional Doctor in Tunxa location was Sanuse Kama. Should these creatures be detected, a report is sent to the Chief of the area who will

consult with his advisers and a decision is taken on what to do next. The Traditional Doctor is immediately informed of the find and a day is set-aside for the young girls to collect maize-stalks from the ploughed fields. The young girls would pick one maize-stalk from each contour in the ploughed field. On the chosen day, girls would put on **iinkciyo** (aprons) around their waists. They assembled in a selected venue and they moved into the fields, and began singing a song:

Sizintombi zakwaKama! Sizintombi zakwaKama!
Siziintombi zakwaKama! Sizintombi zakwaKama!
Siqoke'elindiza siqokelel'ingqokoqho!
Siqoke'elindiza siqokelel'ingqokoqho!

We are girls from Kama's village!

We are girls from Kama's village!

We collect maize-stalks for maize-stalk borers!

We collect maize-stalks for maize-stalk borers!

Led by the song, the girls entered the ploughed fields from contour to contour picking up one maize-stalk from each contour. This act would take at least one week depending on the size of the ploughed fields. A selected space in the field was allocated for the assembling of these maize-stalks. When all this was done, men on horseback would come and collect the maize-stalks, and would then return with them to Kama's Place in single file, with the girls behind them on foot.

On their arrival there, the girls had to sit at one side of the courtyard, while the men stacked the stalks in another part of it, thereafter lining up in front

develop musical abilities far beyond those of her age-mates, and other individuals in her immediate community.

Madosini underwent the customary rituals which all Mpondomise children should undergo e.g. the ritual of **imbeleko** (goat slaughtered for a newborn), which is usually performed within the first year of a baby's birth. This ritual involves the sacrifice of a goat - known as the **imbeleko**. It is from this goat that a skin is prepared and used to wrap up the baby when carried on its mother's back. Sometimes a wristband is prepared from a strip of the skin and worn by the baby, as a visible sign that it has undergone the ritual. The ritual is crucial in that through it the baby's 'social parenthood' is publicly announced. The baby is placed under the protection of a certain range of ancestors, and is identified as a 'real person'. It gives the baby a place as a member of a particular lineage. Should this ritual not be done (and if the baby dies before that, then the baby has not been introduced to the ancestors, who will then not know it, and it will not have ancestral protection. This means that - after death - it cannot be integrated with the ancestors through the customary **ukubuyisa** (bring back) ritual usually performed a year after death, because the ancestors will not know it.

When speaking about her earlier life and its musical experiences, Madosini had to travel down a long pathway of memories of so many different events and incidents, but what stands out in all of them is MUSIC. Many African musicians are ordinary people who then become extraordinary, and professional artists because of their exceptional musical abilities, which place them above their peers. They have also usually been more active in music making.

However, the road to professionalism starts at an early age, through the informal and formal musical activities in which they are expected to take part – activities like song and dance, and storytelling, which were not just for entertainment but also for socialization and education. In this way, African children acquired the basic techniques of their cultural music and related aspects, and they did so in an encouraging and stimulating way. On the recreational side, music of the **umtshotsho** (youth groups dance gathering) was also greatly enjoyed by Madosini, who recalls their social events vividly and pleasurably. 'In our times we were expected to play instruments and sing and dance, because there were no radios to listen to, or movie theatres such as you have nowadays. In their place were **imitshotsho** (pre-initiation social dance parties), which were held at selected venues. (This was usually a deserted hut at an appointed homestead)'.

She continued: 'this happened at weekends when boys and girls got together. Some of the boys also played **iifleyiti** (harmonicas) while girls played **umrhubhe** pl. **imirhubhe** (unbraced friction-sound resonated mouth bows). 'There was a dress code for these events - **iintente** (cotton blankets) worn by the boys, and **imibhaco** (cotton wrap-around skirts) worn by the girls. Today these garments have been replaced by thick woollen blankets and fashioned skirts respectively. At **umtshotsho** events the girls provided the singing and clapping, and sang songs which were topical, being about the various issues of the youth groups, the expected social conduct and norms of the members, and warnings against a breach of these through undesirable behaviour. As she spoke about these times, Madosini sang an example of a typical **umtshotsho** song:

Soze ndimetshe kwaMaga
Yhuu-yhuu soze ndimetshe kwaMaga
Ndiyeke! Ndiyeke! Ndiyeke!
Ebelelephi uyise kaNtemekana
Ebeyengaphi na uyise kaNtemekana

I will never get involved with someone from Maga family
I will never get involved with someone from Maga family
Leave me alone! Leave me alone! Leave me alone!
Where did Ntemekana's father sleep?
Where did Ntemekana's father go?

The story behind the song is about a young man who always goes out at night to conduct an illicit affair, leaving his wife at home. The text has an implicated meaning. It warns against this kind of behaviour, which is very unacceptable according to cultural norms. In these youth group dance gatherings, young men who were not involved with anyone would have time to propose love to the young girls. Some responses are good while some are bad. These responses would be explained through a song like the one above. The Maga families are famous for being Casanovas and when someone was seen with a Maga man, girls would be worried since the family root is known for being womanisers. When ultimately you got married to such a person, your entire life would be a shame, as the man would be taking turns. He would spend some nights in his own home and other nights in the home of some other woman. The story of such a couple is told

in the song.

The term **umtshotsho** requires cultural definition since it has two different meanings among the Southern Nguni according to its application in two different contexts: As stated above, in the context of Mpondomise, it denotes a social institution, and the name of the pre-initiation youth group of those Xhosa-speaking peoples practising initiation on a national/tribal scale. After initiation, **abafana** (the young men) were eligible for membership of the post-initiation, youth groups called **intlombe** (pl. **iintlombe**). In these gatherings, **umetsho** (intracultural intercourse) is possible where young men and girls are seriously involved in love matters. This act was exclusively for unmarried people although men could still be found continuing with **amadikazi** (unmarried women who have borne children. At **iintlombe** gatherings, both girls and men had a chance meet with their loved ones. Men would be competing on the number of girls falling under his wing. Girls on the other hand were worried as to who would be called first, among them.

The hut where the gathering was held, would in most cases, be so crowded that one would find people grouped outside and chatting with their friends or playing **imirhubhe** (unbraced friction-sound resonated mouth bows). Tunes from these instruments denoted the situation inside the house. Some tunes would go like this:

Ndizakukhe ndibone, kuzakubizwa bani!

Ubhut'ukhona, kuzakubizwa bani!

Heyi namhlanje, kuzakubizwa bani!

I shall see who would be called!

My brother is present who would be called!

Hey! Today who would be called!

This is an old and well-known Mpondomise song, which was usually performed as a choral dance song, but also instrumentalized on a musical bow. It is also in Madosini's current repertoire. These tunes were played by girls who were also anxious about being called (selected by men), and especially in the presence of their brothers' girlfriends (their rivals).

However, among the Mpondo, Bhaca and Xesibe, **umtshotsho** was the name of the dance party of male associations called **iindlavini** (Hansen 1981:297) comprising young men who did not undergo initiation, but instead did a stint of migrant labour before they were eligible to join these associations.

The **umtshotsho** youth groups comprised pre-adolescent and **amakhwenkwe** (adolescent boys) of the same age-sets: from 7-10 years of age, 11-14 years, and 15-20 years. They all came from the same neighbourhood units in their respective 'locations' and districts. Thus, the peer-groupings were distinguished by the average ages of the members. According to a very detailed study of such youth groups among the Mfengu of Peddie district in the eastern Cape Province, Nompumelelo Ncaca gives evidence of the general distribution of such youth groups, there being three

main groups within a district, each with its senior, and subsidiary group. The oldest and most senior first group was called **oobhonyongo okanye oophopho** (the great ones) also called **oonosala** (the excesses) and comprised boys and girls who would be eligible for initiation in a year or two. Subsidiary to this was the second group called **iidyongo** (Afrikaans *jonges* = young ones). This Main group held leadership over all the others.

The second main group was called **iqela lesithathu** (third group) with subsidiary or **iidyongo** called **iqela lesine** (fourth group); the third Main group comprised **iqela lesihlanu** (fifth group) with subsidiary and **iidyongo** called **iqela lesithandathu** (sixth group). Ncaca's study (unpublished Honours thesis 1989) is the first to provide such detailed evidence, and according to further information, including that provided by Madosini, such groupings and subsidiaries were the general pattern, although terminology may have differed from one chiefdom cluster to another.

Hansen has described and discussed such societal groupings and their music (with analyses) in great detail (1981:296-340) and according to emic evaluations. **lingoma zomtshotsho** (songs of **umtshotsho** dance parties) were a special category of Xhosa music, with 'slower' and 'faster' songs whose metrical patterns were always articulated in clapping by the girls, who provided most of the singing and participated from time to time in the dance, (in an individual way) while the boys performed the characteristic dance steps and movements (notably the muscle-rippling and shaking known as **ukutyityimba** and produced contrasting rhythm patterns using a voice-altering technique known as **ukutshotsha** and danced in a circle

tightly packed like sardines. Such a song goes like this:

Ube ungazilahlang'inkomo

Oh! Jawulisi!

Ufumen'umfazi ngazo

Oh! Jawulisi!

Mna ndalahlinkomo

EBhayi ngomkam

Andafumana mfazi ngazo

EBhayi ngomkam

You did not waste your cattle

Oh! Jawulisi!

You found a good wife for them

Oh! Jawulisi!

I lost my cattle

In Port Elizabeth with my wife

I did not get a good wife for them

In Port Elizabeth with my wife

The songs were designed for performance by a Lead singer and a Chorus and the vocal organization was often very complex, with individual singers introducing variant phrases that either doubled along with the two antiphonal phrases, but more commonly were rhythmically independent of them. The singers also continually changed their points of entry (phrase shifting), resulting in a weaving of many voices in an integrated poly-rhythm and polyphonic music that was far more complex than the music of

children's songs proper. (Hansen 1981:318). (As Hansen pointed out, although **umtshotsho** songs were sung by people who were strictly speaking children and so may be regarded as children's songs, they were never classified as such). Other pastimes of **umtshotsho** groups were stick fighting by boys, who met at an appointed place, singing their 'signature tunes' en route, and sometimes involving a harmonica. Stick-fights were serious affairs, and it was not uncommon for girls to play their friction mouth bows - even in pairs - while two boys were engaged in combat. It is to this kind of scenario that Madosini was alluding, in her descriptive account above.

Another custom observed by Mpondomise girls - and Madosini was no exception - is **ukuthombisa** (girls' fertility initiation ceremony), because theoretically it is after this that girls become socially marriageable. However, in practice some girls marry before they have undergone the ritual. This is an unsatisfactory state of affairs; there is the strong belief that without the observance of the custom a girl may attract an illness (ancestrally sent). There is some documentation on this (cfr. Hunter 1961) and Hansen (1981) has reported cases of illness and infertility in women being attributed to non-observance of the custom.

Sterility is something not common among amaMpondomise since they live close to nature and they take life as it comes. When it does happen, it causes concern to the elders and they might think of witchcraft. The girl is taken back home and sent to **iGqirha** (Traditional Doctor) and treated with traditional medicine. If this still persists, then she has to undergo **ukuthomba** (girls' initiation). **Ukuthombisa** extended over 4-6 weeks in

earlier times, and involved the seclusion of **intonjane** (the initiate) in a hut (behind a screen of mats or blankets stretched across the back of the hut); the observance of certain food taboos; the performance of ritual killings (the most important happening 3-4 days before the end of the seclusion period), and the obligatory performance of the ritual dance songs. In this final stage of the celebrations the girl 'goes to the mountain' for ritual washing.

At **kwantonjane**, which was customarily celebrated with the proper songs, including the essential performances of the ritual circle dance **umngqungqo**, there were also opportunities to perform occasional music (outside the category of **intonjane** songs), the girls using **imirhubhe**, **izitolotolo** and **iifleyiti** (harmonicas). This music was intended for pleasure and recreation, and often commenting on the affairs of sweet-hearting couples in the group. All the music performed at these celebrations was referred to as **ukutsholoza** (rejoicing songs) by the young girls, while **ukungqungqa** (dancing) was done by the older women. The ritual dance song is unusual in choreography, in the context of other styles of Xhosa music, being a circle dance with performers singing and dancing in concentric circles. The ritual dance was performed at least once daily, and was essential for the proper observance of the custom of girls' initiation. Because of her physical disability, which was already manifesting itself, Madosini was unable to participate in the dancing routines of her age mates, although she contributed to the vocal music and clapping. Instead, she took to playing the traditional instruments of **imirhubhe** and **izitolotolo** in particular. As noted by Hunter (1961:174), the custom '...brings a change in status, but actually the physical changes in the girl and not the ceremonial marking

of it, make the change.

Madosini explains with reference to the need and therefore the importance and significance of **ukuthombisa** as follows: >here in the city when a child is sick the doctors diagnose the child as having pneumonia. Back home, the elders would meet and discuss if there is something outstanding not done on behalf of the child. A father will convene an **iBhunga** (Council) with his brothers (and possibly other relatives) to discuss his daughter's ritual. After discussions, and if agreement is reached on the matter and the choice of guardians (a minimum of two), a date is set for the ritual to take place. Depending on the man's wealth, beer will be brewed and on a day when the beer is (socially) consumed an announcement is made to the whole family. The head of the family will present a number of beer buckets, and a dozen brandy bottles, and say to everyone: 'I am now sacking all the womenfolk of this house as I will be sending my daughter to the ritual school'.

In the meantime, the father's sisters, who are sitting on mats with legs outstretched before them, are preparing an **ubulunga** (charmed necklace), to be worn by every girl that goes to the initiation 'lodge'. The girls are also given new blankets and turbans (headdress materials). The mothers, who were 'expelled' from the house, return there, each with a bottle of brandy to present to the head of the household. These bottles symbolise the women's plea for 'pardon', and a request to be allowed back into the house. When they return there, they select a spokesperson among themselves, who will address the household in the following manner: 'we came back as wives of

the house, begging to be allowed back, as this is where we belong. We have these (-number of) brandy bottles) and asked for pardon.'

The head of the family then responds by allowing them back to his house, and gives them an ox for slaughtering, as a sign of welcome. Beer drinking festivities then begin and the girls' observance of the **ukuthombisa** customs commences as, and they are sent to the mountain (the seclusion place) where they had to remain for a time. When they arrive at the appointed place their appointed guardian will make them turn back and face the way they have come – from the homes they have left behind them. Symbolically they are also saying farewell to their social childhood. The duration of girls' initiation observances varies. Among some chiefdom, it lasted three weeks, but among the Mpondomise it was customary to run for a minimum of thirty days (or approximately four weeks). The first fifteen days were given to the initiates adjusting to their seclusion life, and their relationship with their community during this period.

Mr Mdlane Koni from Engcobo district, a Thembu tribesman, agrees with Madosini's description on the sequence of events on **ukuthombisa**. He noted the only Thembu omission would be the sending home of their wives. 'When you are prepared to send your daughter to initiation, as head of the family, you instruct your wife to brew **umqombothi** (traditional beer) for the ceremony. In the meantime, the father sent out a message to all his relatives inviting them in the planning of the event. On the actual day, men are all invited into the cattle byre where the senior council meet together and are told what are the thoughts from the head of the family. They brainstorm the

event, placing everything in its sequence and even choose the date for the event. When they agreed on the date, and how many girls will be involved, two messengers are sent to report in the main house to the women who are waiting for the outcome of the meeting.

Once the message is passed on to the women, goats are slaughtered for each girl, depending on the number of girls undergoing the **ukungena** (entering ritual). This is the start of the festivity followed by the slaughtering of the same number of oxen and goats a week later. The whole event will last for approximately three weeks. During the event of the ceremony there are some sounds of **ukungqungqa** from the women giving a unique atmosphere, which is totally different from boys initiation ceremonies. One example of **umngqungqo** song goes like this:

Oh ihombo he!

Ulel'uManyawuza he!

Oh ihombo he!

Ulel'uManyawuza he!

Oh the dressing code!

Manyawuza is asleep!

Oh the dressing code!

Manyawuza is asleep

This is a ritual dance song for girls' initiation and has been performed at such events by several generations of Mpondomise women. It is not a song that is instrumentalized on a musical bow. It is still performed at puberty celebrations today.

CHAPTER 3

Life after school.

Manjuza was a teacher to Madosini. Unfortunately, she could not write, and in the village, knowledge was imparted informally to young minds through songs and song-stories (**iintsomi**), and formally through the observance of initiation customs. Famine was not what they experienced as rain was always available and they could plough the fields and milked the cows. Whatever knowledge was given to children, they could capture it easily because they were always healthy and full of energy. Madosini recalls that her mind was always occupied by **uhadi** and **umrhubhe** even if she thought of playing other games.

“I remember vividly when the men of the village went to the mines in Johannesburg. Men used to hide from the villagers when they went to the mines; it was just known amongst the family members that they had gone to work on the mines. So they would not go during the day, but would leave in the early hours of the morning. The wives would prepare a food parcel of **amaqebengwana** (millet bread baked in ashes) for their journey. They would leave without the knowledge of the villagers who believed that the mineworkers were working for a lot of money, and it was feared by those who had relatives in the mines, that they might be bewitched. Perhaps the neighbour, for an example, would keep on asking: “... where is so and so’s father?” The response would be: “... no he has just gone to town”. In addition, the neighbour would pursue it and ask when that family man would come back,

because it had been some time since she had seen him. The response would still be: “no, he just went to town, he will come back”.

Recalling her earliest memories of music, Madosini spoke of her mother’s nightly music making. “Only the girls slept with their mothers, not the boys who used animal skins for warmth and who slept on the floor. They were not allowed to use a reed mat (traditionally a reed mat was given as a gift to a young woman who was getting married, the mat was imbued with a spiritual connection and she was given it in order to use it with her husband). My mother taught me how to play **uhadi**. She noticed that I was keen on learning the instrument. Since we were sharing the same blanket she would play the instrument to soothe the child (at night), thereafter the child would fall asleep. She noticed that I do not fall asleep easily instead I listened to her playing. Then she started showing me how to play **uhadi**.

“One of my favourites, from childhood, was playing the musical instruments. **Umrhubhe** was regarded as the most important instrument among girls at the time. We used to play **umrhubhe** when we went to fight on Fridays in what was known as **isihlanu** (number five – which is Friday). Someone holding a grudge against a girl because they had perhaps been insulted might cause a fight. Those insults would come when one girl told others that so-and-so had eaten an egg or chicken. It was immoral for a girl to eat such food. Girls were not allowed to eat eggs or chicken for traditional reasons. **Umrhubhe** was mainly used on such days. The girl who played **umrhubhe** would lead other girls, moving in a line, walking a distance of about five kilometres. They would move to the rhythm of **umrhubhe** This movement

was called **umjeko** (stamping and moving forward and backwards to the rhythm in single file). The playing actually shortens the long distance and was giving strength to the fighter.

When someone reaches marriageable stage, then you are not supposed to be still playing **imirhubhe** but I, from the very beginning I could not help myself. There were even stages in my sleep when I would dream of playing these instruments. This was worrying me a lot. When ultimately my mother passed away in 1972, I had to break her most favoured instrument, **uhadi** as the sight of it reminded me of her. Since then, nothing persuaded me to play until my arrival in Cape Town and meeting with Dizu Plaatjies. Together with Mr Khathula Tolotolo Mbelana, we visited his house in Langa at Number 40 Washington Street. On our arrival, we immediately encountered a busy man, working with his many instruments.

While Dizu was talking with Khathula, I took one of his instruments, **uhadi**, kind of admiring it and I played a tune. Dizu immediately stopped talking to Khathula and concentrated on my tune. He joined in with a drum instrument and singing. He was very much taken by this 'jam' in so much that he asked me to visit him regularly so that we could add other tunes. That led to the recording of an album *Power to the Women*. After that, I could see that there was no turning back."

Long before Madosini went through the initiation process, and even earlier, before she became a member of the **imitshotsho** groups, and began attending formal school, she had learned some of the basic techniques of

musical bow playing from her mother Manjuza, herself a noted bow player who found an eager learner in her daughter. She also taught her daughter how to construct the bows, for which the appropriate wood had to be used, and the wire for the strings. Madosini recalls when she accompanied her mother to the forest to gather firewood '.... and she would point out the different woods for making **uhadi**, and **umrhubhe**.'

'When we got home again, she would also instruct me in how to cut the wood at both ends to get the required length (for the bow stave)'. (In talking about the **umrhubhe** (Chordophone Musical Bow), Madosini sometimes let slip the term **isitlotolo**, which is the AmaXhosa name for the jaw harp, a metal instrument that was available at the trading stores, having been brought by white colonizers into Africa for trading purposes. Possibly, she had in mind **umrhubhe**, the friction mouth bow that most bow players also play because it uses the same mouth/cheek resonance that is used in the mouth bow technique. She seemed to use the two terms interchangeably, but clearly she had the friction mouth bow in mind, since the jaw harp has a metal frame and is commercially available). Some time later the family moved house to Ntlaza location, which made access to water much easier, as it did to the wood that was needed to make the musical bows. This place remains their family home to this day.

Although Madosini enjoyed a relatively happy childhood, it was not carefree, and by the time, the family had moved to Libode district (this was before the death of Mpahleni) she had begun to show signs of a physical defect, which manifested as a limp. This was due to a lack of firmness and

strength in her left leg, which was also somewhat shorter than the other leg. As she grew older, the defect worsened and Madosini began to walk lamely, and with difficulty.

Amazingly, this could not block games and pleasures enjoyed by girls from her age. She could play most of the games and acts others made. Bad luck struck again, when she was nineteen years old; she fell pregnant and a bouncing baby boy, Thembinkosi, was born. This happened before she even undergone **ukuthomba** and because she was deformed, the parents could not give her a good hiding. She was asked to give the plain truth about who did the act. When the name of a person was given, the parents went for a settlement. That was the start of her adult life. She now had to fend for the new baby but luckily, the grant was meeting her halfway. Not long afterwards, the father of the child deserted her. Life went on as immediately after that sad happening another man promising a new life for her appeared. This loving and caring person was Mr Tolotolo Khathula Mbelana who also had his problems of a big family. Love has no boundaries as the two have continued to love each other even to this day. Unfortunately, for them, they could not raise their children as both children died in infancy and the doctors decided to prevent further pregnancies as they might affect Madosini's health.

Madosini's father took her to see several herbalists, but her condition continued to deteriorate. It also became very painful when a wound appeared at the back of the knee and began to fester, leading to sepsis. The distraught parents then began to suspect that their child was the victim of an

entrapment by a witch, and they took her to a spiritual healer, Spoldin, in Tsolo. After some ministrations, the wound started to heal, but the leg remained wasted and shrunken, and Madosini had to use a cane to walk and support herself. Whenever she recalls this period in her life she does so with regret and even despondency, because her condition never improved, despite what happened next. As she said, medical knowledge was not so advanced in those days and people just had to trust their doctors to do their best.

It was while attending the clinic at St Barnabas Hospital, Ntlaza, that her condition caught the attention of a European Doctor there - a certain Dr McConnick. After examining Madosini, and asking her questions about her problem (with the help of an interpreter, Matron M Pheko), the doctor recommended that she undergo an operation, which would not cure her condition, but would enable her to walk more easily. The Matron lived in the same area where Madosini live. Besides being a Matron at a government institution, she was also like a sister, friend and almost everything to Madosini. When a family was in need of help financially and socially, Matron Pheko was a person to talk to and she was always able to help. Looking back on it all, Madosini admitted that she was not very optimistic about the advice. She felt that her condition was irreversible, and that there was no guarantee of even partial success or improvement. Therefore, she stood to lose even the small government grant her mother was getting on her behalf, because of her disability.

However, after much persuasion from relatives and friends, Manjuza decided that Madosini should have the operation. The day after the decision was made, Madosini was admitted to the hospital and placed in a separate ward, where she remained for two whole weeks before surgery was attempted. Matron Pheko recalls how, when she saw the condition Madosini was in, she was forced to bring in the food she loves most, **imifino** (mixture of cooked edible wild plants with ground mealies) and **inkobe** (cooked mealies) to ease the stress and to make her feel like being at home.

Even when such needs were easily organised and made available the Matron would think of something else just to make life more bearable for the next person. In the afternoons, when the Matron went home, she would go to Madosini's mother and ask for everything she might need on her side. Among other things Manjuza gave to Matron Pheko was a bundle with **uhadi**, **isitolotolo** and a set of **imirhubhe**, and asked her to give them to her daughter. Feeling bewildered, very lonely and frightened, Madosini took to playing her musical bows, to ease her situation, and it did in fact provide her with some comfort. It was not long before her playing attracted people to her ward - patients, visitors and staff alike, and she recalls three European nurses who greatly admired her music-making. The three had been given Xhosa names by the patients - Nomlwatyu, Bhokhwe and Nomamazana - and they loved to hear her play.

In this way, Madosini says she was able to endure the two long and tedious weeks in the ward before the doctor came to prepare her for the operation. The doctor said that there were signs that the leg would never be pliable and

controllable, and able to bend at the knee, but there would eventually be no pain. As things turned out, this was being optimistic even though Madosini underwent successful surgery the following day.

When she woke up, she found herself lying on her back with her leg in traction. She was in great pain, but eventually came to terms with her situation, and the pain abated in time. This situation affected her participation in social dances, which are so integrated with singing, and she felt particularly awkward in social dances, which demanded coordination with other performers. For this reason she said that she was never able to participate fully in musical activities with her age-mates, and she turned more and more to individual music-making with sound instruments to compensate for this. Madosini is adamant that it was due largely to her physical disability that she concentrated on 'solo' music making and eventually became an internationally acclaimed exponent of Xhosa/Mpondomise musical bow traditions in particular.

CHAPTER 4

Private to Public, 1973-2003.

African musicians are extra-ordinary artists who cannot be rated because the playing of music is their daily life. Professionalism had started at a very early age. As Madosini explained, “in our times we were expected to play instruments, sing and dance because there were no radios to listen to or movie theatres like you have these days. These were substituted by **imitshotsho** in selected venues, the playing of **izitolotolo** (jaw harps) and **imirhubhe** at **kwantonjane** (girls initiation school). **Umtshotsho** especially happened on weekends when girls and boys got together. At such gatherings, boys would be playing harmonicas while girls played **imirhubhe**. The dress code for such events was **iintente** (cotton blankets) and **imibhaco** (cotton skirts) for girls. Both are garments which today would be in the place of proper blanket and skirts respectively.

At **kwantonjane** (girls’ initiation school) there will be intermittent playing of games and music making with **imirhubhe** and **izitolotolo**. Some tunes from such instruments are meant to soothe the ills and tiredness from the lovers. Other tunes were meant for playing games like **imfihlelo** (hiding for someone), where someone is chosen and let out of the room. An item is taken and hidden somewhere. After that, the person is let into the house and asked to find the item. While someone plays **umrhubhe** the person is “led” to the hidden item, the music becoming louder as the item is approached. The person reacts to the music by raising the outstretched

arms and pointing at various places in the room while being guided by the **umrhubhe**.

The audience listens to the musical dynamics that change, soft, very soft, loud and very loud and guide the seeker and her outstretched arms. When the arms point to the place where the item is hidden, the music becomes louder, and when the arms point off course the music becomes softer and virtually silent. This indicates that the seeker is moving far away from the hidden item. One is therefore able to detect it from the changing dynamics of the music.

On the subject of **uhadi** music, Madosini had this to say: "Our mothers would play **uhadi** (unbraced gourd-struck bow) when they were longing for and reminiscing about their husbands who were on the mines. Since **uhadi** was not played during the day, when an **uhadi** player went to **etywaleni** (the beer gathering), she would instruct children not to touch or play with her instrument. **Walinga waluphatha okanye wadlala ngolu hadi utata wakho uyakusishiya sonke apha ekhaya** (if you dare touch or play with **uhadi** your father will desert the whole family). Mothers would give this fable to their children when they left for beer gatherings. Sometimes **uhadi** would be played at night to soothe the child and thereafter the child would sleep".

Madosini, because of her disability, never participated fully in youth activities, be it for boys and girls or for young men and girls. In 1974, a film unit came to Mkhankatho to make a film entitled **Maxhosa**, which was

about one of the intermittent inter-chiefdom conflicts between the AmaXhosa and Mpondo chiefdoms. The film unit comprised several European men from Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town, and a group of African men, including Mr Victor Ntoni, the well-known jazz musician. Their period of stay was almost three months since they came early June and left late in August. They came with big trucks and cars and immediately on arrival built six marquees to accommodate their groups and belongings.

Madosini recalls: "I was among those employed as cooks for the film crew. We would cook about nine big pots of food per day. During the conversations people had among themselves, someone told these **abelungu** (Europeans) that I could play traditional instruments. As the days passed, one gentleman approached me and asked if I could bring as many musical instruments as I could get. When these people saw **uhadi**, **isitolotolo** and **umrhubhe**, they asked me to place them aside, ready for use at a later stage. A big rondavel (round house) was specially built for a scene showing a battle between AmaXhosa and Mpondo. Immediately after that, the scene started and it continued [as a set] for several weeks."

There were some stages when Madosini was asked to play music representing rural young social life using one of her instruments. Within six months of the film unit leaving Mkhankatho, having completed their filming, Madosini's reputation as a cultural musician must have spread to Johannesburg because a persuasive, smooth-talking European man, who asked her to sing a few songs into his microphone, visited her. She complied, probably because, being of a trusting nature, she thought that this

might be part of the film that had been made, and she was paid R1.00 for each of her songs, some of which she accompanied with the musical bows. Months later her nephew told her that he had heard her songs blaring out from the speakers of music stores all over Johannesburg. One of her pieces, Nozimanga, was used in a play called "Aa! Nosizwe!" by the then Radio Xhosa (now Umhlobo Wenene). Thus began both a national music career and a life-long suspicion of the music industry and their use of her songs and compositions, without her knowledge.

CHAPTER 5

The legend and the greats.

Madosini remembers vividly the time she arrived in Cape Town for the first time. “In the early eighties, I came to Cape Town to visit my uncle, Blues Manqineni, who took on the rôle of helping me start my musical career. One day when we were talking while playing with my instruments, he made mention of Dizu Plaatjies. He said that Plaatjies’ son was here in Cape Town and he would like me to meet with him because the Europeans, after the Maxhosa film shoot, had really cheated me. I did not know who Plaatjies’ son was, but Blues insisted that he wanted me to play **umrhubhe** for Dizu. My response to him was **nceda ungandidibanisi nootsotsi** – “please do not introduce me to the crooks. After which he said that Dizu belongs to the Dosini clan and that means we are related!”

“On the second day, the Plaatjies’ son issue cropped up again, and Blues Manqineni said that Dizu’s father, Shadrack Plaatjies, would be with us shortly, and that is what happened. On his arrival, Shadrack Plaatjies, asked me if I could still play the three Xhosa instruments, which are **isitloloto** (jaw harp), **umrhubhe** (friction mouth-bow) and **uhadi**. I told him that I had stopped playing the **umrhubhe**, as it was a girls’, and not a woman’s instrument. The other two, I could still play although I had left mine back home. Dizu’s father said that his son would like to see me playing, and that he could make ends meet by getting such instruments. The instrument playing issue became a haunting one during my entire stay in Cape Town, as

it was a daily issue. My uncle passed away before I met up with Dizu. Around the time of his death I was in Mpondoland but before he died, he managed to talk to Dizu about me.”

“After my uncle’s death I again came to Cape Town with Khathula Tolotolo Mbelana, my long time boyfriend, and stayed ‘illegally’ at Langa flats, which were delegated to migrant workers, and where only men were allowed to live. Dizu, Lungile and Mzwandile Qotoyi visited me there for the first time. He introduced himself as ‘son of Dosini’ whom Blues Manqineni regularly visited while he was still living in the flats, and he continued: **Ndize kucela ukuba uhambe nathi siye kudlala umrhubhe nohadi edolophini** (I came to request that you come with us and play your **umrhubhe** and **uhadi** in town). I refused and said that I was too old to play the instruments. He then urged me to go and play, and added that I would be paid for playing. My response was that I had never been paid for playing these instruments.”

“As the two men continued to persuade me, I began to get suspicious, as it seemed that they were not willing to listen to all my excuses. I said to myself: **Oh Thixo wam ootsotsi baseKapa ngenene bathunyelwe kum** - (Oh my God, the Cape Town tsotsis were really sent to me). I ultimately gave in on condition that Khathula also accompanies us, and I also expressed the hope that nothing would happen, as we all have the same clan name. We then got into the car with the instruments brought by Dizu and Mzwandile Qotoyi, as mine were in Mpondoland. All the time, I promised myself to keep close to Khathula as I did not really trust them, and also, I was not familiar with Cape Town.”

“When we arrived at the venue where the performance was to take place, I was introduced to **umlungu** (white person). He took me to the stage and I had to start playing my instruments, beginning with **uhadi**. **Uhadi** needs the flesh when you play it, against the breast; it is just like your loved one. One positions it in such a way that one can produce clear overtones. All the people, present watched me as I played my songs. After the performance, we drove back to the flats. During our conversation en route, Dizu asked me to spend some time in Cape Town as he and his friend had good intentions of incorporating me into the group Amampondo. Dizu added that he would come back to me later on, to discuss this matter.

Dizu and his friend Mzwandile returned at about 18h00 and requested me to join them in their car, and I asked Khathula to join us. They gave me a sealed envelope, the contents of which puzzled me. Rather surprised at this unexpected action, I gave the envelope to Khathula to open. After doing so, he discovered R500.00 notes inside it, as well as a written message that read: **Madosini, ngale malana siyakubulela ngokuvuma ukuyamba nathi uye kudlala izixhobo ozaziyo kakhulu** – (Madosini, with this money we say thank you for having responded positively to go with us and play the instruments you know so well). I was thankful but still very distrustful because I still did not really believe that the money was genuine; I thought that it was counterfeit! My thoughts were that I simply could not receive money for merely playing a few instruments.

After Dizu and Mzwandile took their leave, Khathula and I checked thoroughly to see if the notes were genuine. We then went to a shop to buy some goods, in order to check whether the money was legal. When we received change after purchasing a few items, I was very relieved and said to myself, this is genuine money, not fake! Our fears dissipated, and I knew that I could trust the two men.”

“Some months later we returned to Mpondoland: and I made a decision never to set foot in Cape Town again. Then, in the middle of October 1996, some years after the aforementioned meeting with Plaatjies’ father and son, Lungile, Dizu’s brother, came to my homestead. He told me that Dizu had called from London and said that he wanted him to come and fetch me, since a certain Mr. Robert Trunz of MELT2000, a recording company based in England, would be in Cape Town in December, and he would like to meet with me. I declined [the invitation] with the excuse that I was unable as I was limping badly and my left leg was troubling me greatly. In addition to these excuses, I told Lungile that I did not have the money to travel to Cape Town.

In reacting like this, I was trying to discourage Lungile from pressurizing me; indeed, I was trying to get rid of him. After Lungile’s departure I thought to myself: Dizu brought me a piece of good fortune. Given my circumstances and state of mind, I felt that the possibility of anything good coming from an unexpected and rather expensive trip to Cape Town was remote. But just before Lungile returned to the Mother City, he gave me money and provisions for the bus journey. He also said, in a stern but kindly manner,

that should I ignore the invitation to Cape Town, I would come regret it, so I could not let him down. And so, late in November 1996, I took the bus to Cape Town, and in the first week of December I met with Mr. Robert Trunz of MELT2000. At our meeting we sealed the proposed plan for working together for a good cause, and sharing my knowledge of traditional Xhosa songs, which I learnt from my mother Manjuza, with people in South Africa and indeed all over the world. One of my main concerns was that, here in Cape Town, there was no one who could sing and do the same as people back home, that is to say, provide vocal-choral backup to my songs, which is traditional to Xhosa performance.”

Dizu took on the rôle of being the producer of a ‘solo’ instrumental music album, while MELT2000 became the recording company to which Madosini was contracted, and from which she would receive royalties. Madosini went on: “To my surprise, Dizu came to the rehearsal with people who sang the same tunes, and who could follow me musically, just as it was done back home. These were people coming from Mpondoland: Fanele Gijana, Mawethu, Sigulana Ximbi Mangaliso Maxanjana, Nomvuyo Ximbi, Lungiswa Plaatjies, Nomfundo Mayekiso, Nkululeko Ludonga, Mzwandile Qotoyi, Simpiwe Matole, Dizu Plaatjies, Mfuneko Magadala, and one outstanding character from Tsolo, a Mpondomise region. She was Mantombi Matotiyane, who knows almost every song in the repertoire and also the playing techniques of the traditional instruments. Shadrack Plaatjies was largely instrumental in arranging some pieces in the appropriate setting so that he himself could also sing them”. From that time onwards, these people started rehearsing with Madosini and assisting in compiling the songs

for an album, the list of which goes like this:

- **Itileni** - *lit.* The train. This is a song with **umrhubhe** and drumming. Train travel has a long history among African people. It is a place where one comes into contact with many people, most of whom are total strangers. But even so, they still greet one and ask about one's health and family at home, and why one is on the train. And if one needs help or advice, one is bound to find it on the train. There is the kindness of strangers on a train.
- **Uthando luphelile** - *lit.* The love is over, is a vocal (multipart) song with **uhadi**. The story behind the song is about the dilemma of a girl called Nozimanga, who had arranged a tryst with her boyfriend, and is prevented from keeping it by her parents. She cries because her boyfriend will turn up at the appointed place, and her absence will mean that she no longer loves him.
- **Wen'usegoli** - *lit.* The one in the mines is a vocal song (multipart) with **umrhubhe** and clapping. This song is like an open letter to a migrant worker in Johannesburg on the mines, who left his wife at home. However, in the city, many migrant workers make new lives there, and if a man opts to do this, then it is his tough luck. His wife will find ways and means to satisfy her. And when he eventually comes home, he will find that the love she once had for him is over.
- **Nontwayiyo** - The name of my niece's brother's daughter, is a song with vocals, clapping and **isitlolotolo** (jaw harp). This song says that true love is grounded in esteem, and self-respect. When young men are courting girls, it is taboo for girls to meet their boyfriends without their parents' knowing about it. Some girls, knowing that parental consent was not forthcoming,

would slip out and meet their boyfriends illicitly, and then sneak home before sunrise, as if nothing had happened. If the girls were unable to meet their boyfriends, the latter would wait in vain at the appointed meeting. In such a situation they would play **ifleyiti** (the harmonica) to keep up their hopes and esteem. They would sing songs: **Ndilinde kwade kwasa intombi ayifiki** (I waited until dawn, but the girl did not come).

- **Bafazi** - *lit.* The women, is a song with vocals, **ifleyiti** and clapping. Adolescence is a stage when one has the opportunity to decide to find employment in order to have money to support a family. For example, boys might discover that there is an opportunity for employment in a firm or a business, and so they go out and seek employment. While waiting to be interviewed by the manager/owner, they would make quite a noise, playing a tune on their harmonicas, and standing in a row, stamping their feet in unison, slapping their hips and generally performing in a disciplined, soldierly fashion.
- **NomaTshawe** – *lit.* ‘Ms Tshawe, i.e. the name of a girl from the royal house of Tshawe of the Xhosa/Gcaleka chiefdom. Song with vocals (multipart), and **uhadi**. The song says: When you have done something that was required of you, and then someone keeps on pestering you to do it, you become very impatient and annoyed. You point out: this (job) is finished, so why do you pester me? The refrain is **Ndandikwenzeni** – (What have I done to you that you should do this?)
- **Yaka-yaka ndemka nehlungulwana** - *lit.* Disorderly man, the ring-necked raven is taking me. This is a song with **uhadi** and **umrhubhe**. In this song **yaka-yaka** (the disorder) relates to people who are very slow thinkers, who just cannot get their thoughts together, and are poor judges of character,

being unable to see when a couple in love are well-matched. The message here is from a girl who criticizes those who do not approve of her lover, the one with the good eyes of **ihlungulu** (the ring-necked raven), who is the one who is going to have her. This is an old traditional song taught by Manjuza while her daughter, Madosini was still young. It is one of Madosini's first songs she learned to be played on **uhadi**. Hugh Tracey's recordings *The Nguni Sound 1955 57 58* refers to the song as...'an interpretation from the ancient custom among some Nguni groups of not burying, but exposing their dead to be dealt with by wild animals and birds.those in the hut who are listening must listen in silence, perhaps lie down and close their eyes and "they must think of places far away, where they have never been, or of places where their sons or husbands are working." When Tracey recorded this song, it possibly had another implicated meaning. This has undergone re-interpretation in order to fit the modern lifestyle, and it underscores feelings of criticism and separation which young lovers often experience.

- **Mfana ndini** - *lit.* Young man. A song with vocals (multipart) and **uhadi** and clapping. This song is about a girl who, after a long wait for a marriage proposal from her lover, bursts into tears and cries: Oh! **linto zamashwa mntwanam** (Oh! Things of shame my love!) **Mfana ndini khawude uthethe! Uzakunditshata nini?** (Young man! Do talk! When are you marrying me?) A girl who wants a good husband must attract and keep him with modesty, chastity, meekness, trust and generosity. She must show this to all and she will be loved all her life.
- **Xhego leKula** - *lit.* An Indian old man. A song with **isitlolotolo** and vocals

(multipart). Her elders groom a girl for womanhood. During her initiation she is given all the advice and knowledge she needs for this status. On the other hand boys, after reaching physical maturity, sometimes go to the mines as migrant workers, to prepare themselves for adulthood. Looking at what these young men have accumulated in experience and material, fathers will seek only the girls from the best families as wives for their sons. Girls, however, tend to compete for such selection, since it is not desirable socially to marry when you are well past maturity. Should a girl do so and even remain unmarried, this is a great shame, and she is said to be have **ududelwe ngujambase** (been danced for by the baboon), meaning she is no longer marriageable. Marriage and the birth of a child confer full adult social status on women, so an unmarried woman never has this. This song is about a woman who married very late in life to an old dark complexioned man of short stature. Because of his appearance he was called **ixhego leKula** (an old Indian man). In the song the woman tells us: **Ndaphants'ukwaliwa ndenda ndimdala** (I was nearly rejected [as seen] by marrying when I was old).

- **Uxam ulilela abantwana bakhe** - *lit.* the leguan is crying for its babies. A traveling song played on **isitolotolo** by girls on their way to fetch water from the river. This is where they will be meeting with their boyfriends. In the olden days you would not see a young girl and a young boy walk hand in hand or kissing each other in public. Should a young man want to see his love, a girl would wait until her mother went to **etywaleni** (beer drink (loc.) place of beer). She would take **ingqayi** (a clay pot) and pretend to be fetching water from the river so that there would be no point for her to rush home. When the boyfriend saw her approach the riverbank, he would

shout and call the girl over to him. The girl would disregard him pretending as if she did not hear him. All along it was not that she meant to ignore him, she just wanted him to keep on pursuing her. He would hold the girl's arm and she would jerk it loose and run away. This would be a chasing game until they both tired. They would ultimately walk together into the cave for their secret meeting. While relaxing in their secret place the boy would ask the girl to play a tune on **isitolotolo**. It is then that she would get praises from the boy saying she is an excellent player. He never knew that she was so good and he would ask her to come closer and give her a beautiful kiss. Dignity was the most important thing that a girl should have and even a boyfriend would respect a girl who has dignity and self-confidence. Girls would also pretend that they did not want to be kissed, by just scolding boys. The intention is of course, to encourage the boys!

- **Intab'ezikude ngamasithela** - *lit.* the faraway mountains are hiding me from my love. Song with vocals (multipart) and **uhadi**. The woman singing this song is deep in thought, yearning for her lover, who is away far beyond a high mountain range. She longs for him, and feels like getting a bulldozer to demolish the high mountains, so that she can see her lover.
- **Modokali** - *lit.* Motorcar. Song with vocals (multipart) and **uhadi**. This song is referring to the joy of a girl who sees her lover returning from a spell in the mines as a migrant worker. When she sees a car approaching and delivering the lover, she bursts into a song:
Wathakath'ungendanga nje uzakubekaph'emzinakho? (Being a witch while unmarried, how much more when you are married?)
Yavel'imodokali! (Here comes the motorcar!)
Wavel'umdak'omnyama (there comes out the dark handsome one.)

In late December 1996, Madosini performed for the first time in public at the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront's year-end shows after the recording of her first album 'Power to the Women'. To calm down stage fright and audience fears, the Amampondo group featured her in their lineup. Most of the Amampondo members were not aware that there was another person who could play traditional instruments like **imirhubhe**, **uhadi** and **isitlotolo**. The only person they knew of who could do so was Mantombi Matotiyane, who was then in the Transkei (Eastern Cape Province) for the festive season. During the show, there was a comment from Michael Ludonga, an Amampondo member, who asked: 'who is this woman and where does she come from'? He went on to say: 'Mantombi must come back, otherwise her place will be easily filled by this woman'. This he said, when he saw an energetic artistic figure taking centre stage and creating musical wonders, and astounding the audience with her musicality. After the show Amampondo members introduced themselves to Madosini because this was the first time they performed with her.

In October 1997, Amampondo, including Madosini and Mantombi were having a series of shows in Scandinavian countries, in this sequence: Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark, all the concerts organized by Rikskonsertene, a body funded by the Norwegian government organizing musicians from all over Africa to present traditional music. Veteran musician, Mantombi had already traveled with the group extensively, while Madosini was traveling by aeroplane for the very first time. Accustomed to touring, Mantombi could easily go to the change rooms on her own and even eat when she felt like it, but for Madosini

it was all a totally new experience. Dizu had explained everything to Madosini before departing for the airport, what she should do and what not to do. He even advised her that any metal items should be placed in the freight luggage, and not in her cabin luggage as they might trigger the alarm at the terminal checkpoints. Traveling overseas was a daunting experience for Madosini, and no matter how much advice one is given, one really learns one's way about through the 'doing' of travel.

While waiting for the departure flight, Madosini was busy preparing the friction stick for her **umrhubhe** with a piece of glass, when she and other musicians were called to the checkpoints. On her turn at the checkpoint the alarm immediately went off, detecting the glass piece she was holding in her hand. She could not believe what was wrong and, totally shocked whispered, **bendingafuni ukuhamba ngeflematshini!** (I didn't want to travel with a flying machine). When everything was explained to the authorities, (Madosini speaks only the Xhosa language) she was allowed to pass through the checkpoint. That was her first learning experience at the airport, and, today she can now tell you what is allowed and not allowed in the aeroplane passengers' section.

Madosini, being greatly intimidated by the 'airbus', was reluctant to go to the change room, or even eat anything, until the intervention of Dizu Platjies put her at ease. Seeing her apparent unease, he told her straight away that should anything happen in relation to her health, and it was found that she was undernourished, and then someone other than her would be responsible. But Madosini, nervous and overwrought, sat there with her eyes closed until the

airbus arrived at the place where she had to change flight. Because Scandinavia is famous for its ice and snow, some of the group members, with Madosini no exception went walking on the ice for the first time. The only ice they were familiar with was the ice from the refrigerator. When they disembarked from the airbus, and stepped into the icy atmosphere, the puffs of 'fog' they emitted from their mouths was a novel and comic sight. It was as if all of them were smoking cigarettes. Mr. Christian Syren of Making Music was managing Amampondo at that time. His offices were at Chapel Street in Woodstock, Cape Town, and he himself was Swedish by birth. Rikskonsertene hire various artists from all over the world to go, teach and give musical performances in different schools, in collaboration with the students.

When holding workshops at these schools, members of Amampondo and two female bow players had to take on specific duties. Madosini, Dizu and Mantombi offered the classical African music, and not neo-traditional music. Mabi Thobejane and others taught drums, some styles showing a degree of non-African influence, and also using marimbas, while the girls taught dance and percussion. At the end of a session we gave performances in which the students demonstrated the expertise they had acquired in various dance and instrumental styles and techniques. The sessions of Madosini, Dizu and Mantombi were always well attended and many students who were allocated sessions in other learning areas would leave them and join the Madosini group which focused on classical African music (that does not owe its origins to any western influence).

It was one of the girls of Amampondo who first noticed that the classical musical sessions were attracting students from the other sessions. Madosini's group was particularly exciting, and demonstrated great musical expertise as well as knowledge and insight into the creative context of the music genres, and instrument types. From the music they were making, with their students, they could easily convey an understanding of the story being told, and even teach the singing of the songs with the correct intonation (vocal and melodic). In all the aforementioned countries, the group was offering the same sessions and in one month they presented approximately 65 shows, including demonstrations and performances at the same time.

There was one school in Sweden where Madosini was playing **uhadi**, and, with all the excitement and tension a session usually evolved, she collapsed. The reason for the collapse was the proficiency of the students! They outdid themselves in their performances of the arranged songs. The musical resultant was so good, and altogether unexpected, in that Madosini had not expected the Swedish girls to master the Xhosa vocal style in all its aspects, and with the proper rhythm and articulation of the words. Madosini collapsed from this achievement! In these sessions Madosini presented **uhadi**, while Mantombi presented **umrhubhe**, but they both gave instructions on the **isitlolotolo** tradition.

In 1999, Amampondo were invited to perform in:

Canada: Ontario: Quebec: Winnipeg: Calgary: and Vancouver:

In England: London: Brighton: Reading:

In the Netherlands: Amsterdam.

In France: Nantes at the Nantes Concertina Festival.

– The people of Nantes were particularly interested in older traditional music. In this classical music the artists involved were Mangaliso Maxanjana, who specializes in the playing of the Concertina, Mantombi Matotiyana, Madosini Manqineni and Dizu Plaatjies. The stage they performed on was set only for the traditional instruments, like the Concertina and the Accordion. The programme was designed so that Mangaliso Maxanjana opened the first performance. As you well know, Concertina players usually hold the instrument in front of them when they play it, but Mangaliso Maxanjana did it in another way. He held his Concertina behind him, not looking at the keys as other players do. This manner of playing was the first of its kind in all the musical performances given so far.

Maxanjana brought the house down with his first song because all the Concertina players were amazed at his playing style and technique. In the second song we mixed Madosini's **umrhubhe** and the Concertina, that is to say, the song was arranged for the two instruments whose sound qualities and volume are so very different. This was also something highly unusual, and a new experience from the European community, **umrhubhe** mixed with the Concertina, and with a vocal mixing as well. The third item on the programme was a song for **uhadi** and concertina. The idea of mixing concertina with the Xhosa traditional instruments was deliberate since the Nantes festival itself was essentially a Concertina festival, but the musicians combined the Xhosa instruments in a very subtle and effective way –as audience responses demonstrated.



Indeed, the audience did not want the African musicians to stop playing. The time slot for the entire performance was thirty minutes but ended up by running for sixty minutes. The moment an item ended the audience would shout for more, and in this way the programme extended to an hour – double the amount of time allotted to the performers. Obviously, the audience was carried away by their music. All the Concertina players present flocked to see and touch Mangaliso's Concertina, but unfortunately they were unable to play it, because the keys layout had been changed to suit his music and playing technique. Conversely, Maxanjana could not play their Concertinas because they were tuned to the western major scale.

In Italy, the line up for the Spoleto performance was very tight because it included Aerto Moreira from Brazil, Changuito José Luis Quintana from Cuba, and Brice Wassy from Cameroon. This occasion was the first time for Madosini to play with internationally acclaimed artists, especially Changuito, who also participated in her album 'Power to the Women', playing Congas and Timbales. 1999 was a good year for Madosini because she had the opportunity to play with exceptional international artists, and it also brought her own expertise to a wider, international audience, who applauded her musicianship.

In 2000, MELT2000 organized a tour to the USA for Madosini and Amampondo. They were invited to a World Music Festival in Detroit, and two more performances in Washington DC, at the JF Kennedy Theatre, and in New York at the Lincoln Centre, respectively all these were "sold out" concerts.

In 2001, Madosini toured greater South Africa on her own, (without Amampondo), performing in KwaZulu Natal, Gauteng and the Eastern Cape (East London, and at the Grahamstown National Arts Festival).

In the year 2002, Madosini again traveled abroad and gave performances in New Zealand and England in the then WOMAD Festival. She was invited to appear with Hans Huysen, a narrator, and clarinet and strings player based in Stellenbosch, Western Cape, in a Gala Concert commissioned by International Classical Music Festival held in Vienna, Austria and Munich, Germany. Back in South Africa she was a solo artist, performing in Johannesburg at the UHAMBO Show, one of the shows that was sponsored and hosted by the South African government for President Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance project.

In 2003, Madosini became more involved in Arts and Culture Festivals in the Eastern Cape and Bloemfontein, and in 2004 she was invited to perform in Nigeria in one of the shows organized by the South African government Embassy in Nigeria.



CHAPTER 6

Madosini's approach to the lintsomi (song story tradition).

A full appreciation of **iintsomi** (the Xhosa traditional stories) requires a knowledge and understanding of its socio-cultural functions and performance contexts, which may include situations of communication and interaction between the people (audiences) and the message the stories carry and impart. **lintsomi** performances are connected to the historical past. It is a custom for children everywhere in Africa to be told traditional stories by parents or elders. These could cover magic, mysteries and/or folklore dealing with nature and the environment.

In writing about Madosini's unique contributions to this archaic Xhosa tradition, I found myself faced with the problem of finding an appropriate English translation for the Xhosa term. I consulted the published literature available on the subject, and, as a Xhosa-speaker, I am very uneasy about the translations I find in it. The most common one is 'folk-tale', and it appears in earlier 20th century publications and also in more recent ones, including media reports and information notes accompanying CD releases. As far as the Xhosa term itself is concerned, I was intrigued to find no dictionary entry for this term in the Xhosa-English Dictionary of J. McLaren and W.G. Bennie (1915; 1936), although there are entries for it in later dictionaries (to which I will refer). The description 'folk-tale' occurs in anthropologist Monica Hunter's detailed study of the Mpondo (1936; 1961),

in which she reports that the grandmother was the 'recounter' par excellence of folk-tales (p.28), and that this activity occurred at night around a fire. A translated version of such a folk-tale appears in the same publication (pp.534-535).

Other dictionary entries and translations of this genre appear in the Xhosa-English-Afrikaans Dictionary of Nabe, Dreyer and Kekana (1976), with the translation 'fable' (Afrik. sprokie, p,28), and in Arnold Fischer's Xhosa-English Dictionary (1985) in which the term **intsomi** appears under 'story' (p.627). Here the author distinguishes between **ibali (ama-)** = 'account of past events', and **intsomi (ii-)** = 'account of imaginary events', while the 'story-teller' is translated as **umbalisi-intsomi**. This noun is a contradiction in itself because it implies a written aspect to **intsomi**, which is historically an oral tradition. Ethnomusicologists, social anthropologists and linguists have also opted for 'folk-tale' as an English translation for this genre of 'prose narrative', which has a wide distribution in Africa, and is found in virtually every human society.

Following the appearance of Ruth Finnegan's seminal work on Oral Literature in Africa (1970), many cultural researchers tended to drop the 'folk-tale' label, and rightly so because it is misleading and inadequate, and overlooks most of the essential traits of this kind of oral literature, and particularly the African forms of it. As Finnegan has argued, the description 'folk-tale' and others like it stems from the 'evolutionistic thinking' of earlier scholars who were widely published, and who were largely responsible for subjecting this '...particular field of prose narrative to the vicissitudes of

anthropological theories....', and which '...has reflected only too faithfully the rise and fall of fashions in interpretations of Africa (and 'primitive') cultures' (Finnegan 1970:317). In short, Finnegan is extremely critical of the label 'folk-tale' because it comes from earlier scholars who had 'misconceptions and misunderstandings' of African prose, and persistent use of the label condones this. Finnegan has given a whole chapter to a very detailed account and argument of the origins of the 'misconceptions' and the misleading statements they (earlier scholars) originated, a chapter which she herself sees as '.... rather destructive, but...a necessary prelude to any direct discussion of African narrative' (1970:334).

'Folk-tale', as a component of 'folk-lore', was a term applied by certain scholars who put forward evolutionist interpretations about 'primitive' man, and his social and religious institutions. 'Folk-tales' were seen as 'remnants' (leftovers) from the distant past, with hidden meanings of 'animal', and 'fairy' stories and other categories of 'folk-tales'. Furthermore, they were seen as products of 'the collective ethnic mind' and not as products of individuals, even though the latter are largely anonymous.

This view completely overlooks the contemporary relevance of the 'tales', and their performance contexts, which are always in the present, their variability (because oral tradition precludes exact preservation), and the teller, who is an individual, from whose contemporary performance the true, real æsthetic comes – and not from the distant past. These 'tales' happen now, so how can they be

seen as historical leftovers? Diffusion scholars also compounded these misconceptions.

They wanted to trace the origins of individual stories, and compare them cross-culturally, and they provided classificatory indexes and a list of labels for 'folk-literature' types, such as 'folk-tales', myths, fables, ballads, and so on. While we know that classification is useful, it can also be dangerous if the labels are not emic (that is, based on the peoples' cultural concepts) and evaluations (the labels just quoted come from western European categorization). As cultural studies –and particularly ethnomusicology- have shown, too much classification can lead to a neglect of local attitudes among a people, and to a distortion and misunderstanding of the very nature of a genre itself. (I may mention a current example which has persisted for more than a century: the western perception of Xhosa and Zulu Praises (Izibongo) as a form of 'singing' (hence the common description of "Praise singer" for the specialist who delivers the Praises, although among these people praises are perceived as a highly stylized form of speaking).

Although **intsomi** is classified as 'prose narrative', its presentation is not simply narration. For the Xhosa, it is something that is performed, much like a song is performed with all its necessary aspects. **Intsomi** comes to life in actual performance, in a special way in which the performer brings together the known material, -main theme, counter theme(s), episodes, and the essential **intsomi** song. But she does so according to her own whims and preferences, and while she does this she manipulates her audiences, she skillfully manages and

controls their participation and responses to a degree while she is also entertaining them. The successful **intsomi** performer is a true artist, as is a good singer and dancer who can lead off and control the performing group. If one looks at the collections of 'folk-tales', one finds massive data on their functionality, - what they are for, the purpose they serve, but there is not much information about the artistic and verbal aspects of the performer, who approaches **intsomi** as a living creative art.

Since 1970 cultural researchers have generally been more sensitive toward emic (intra-cultural) perceptions and attitudes. In this regard one should mention Gerhard Kubik, who has published in the **Nthano** (chantefables) tradition of Chichewa speakers in Malawi. He tells us the word appears in variant forms and pronunciations in several languages throughout eastern and southeastern Africa, e.g. **Ndano** (Chiyao language); **Ngano** (Kisukuma areas of Tanzania). In his study of **Nthano** which he also translates it as **Chante fables** (Fr.= 'song-fable) here and in other publications, Kubik has kept the Chichewa term and translated it in English as 'story telling', but he points out that this is rendered in a process of 'singing' and not 'telling', (1987:57), according to the peoples' performance perceptions. In so many of his writings Kubik has stressed the importance of researching emically i.e. intraculturally, and he has demonstrated this in his own extensive cultural research work. He provides irrefutable evidence that some African terms just cannot be adequately translated into English language (or other non-African

language) and that it is therefore appropriate to keep the original vernacular term for easy and accurate classification and reference.

This is what Harold Scheub did in his extraordinary and detailed study of the Xhosa **ntsomi** (*sic*) (1975) in which he provides an in-depth analysis of the genre with references to its literary and social significance. He uses the label as **ntsomi** (without prefix), and bases his analyses on variant versions of a particular story, even from the same locale, and shows, among other things, how variability occurs according to the performer, and the occasion (context). Scheub rightly describes the genre as a performance tradition, which is what it is according to Xhosa perceptions. For Madosini, as for Xhosa-speakers generally, **intsomi** is a true creative art of several dimensions, just as is **ingoma** or song – although the term means more and implies more than the English term.

In this cultural biography, I will retain the Xhosa term **intsomi** at all times, and will approach its performance traits through the mind and perception of Madosini herself, who is acclaimed as a skilled performer, who treats a particular **intsomi** in her own idiosyncratic way, and who demonstrates the vivid imagination and inventiveness that always impacts powerfully on her audience, and is a hallmark of her style.

There are types of **iintsomi** (traditional stories) parents liked to tell children when they are around a fire at night waiting for supper. Sometimes a mother would cook the food quite late and then she found that there was no way it could be ready in time for eating. She would then start an **intsomi** just to put the children to sleep, or relate incidents that happened during the day. This, for example, happens when a child misbehaves, or does something against the norms of behavior of the community, and has to be reprimanded/disciplined. She or he does not know the nature of the 'punishment', or the precise reason for it. All this will be conveyed in a story told in a manner appropriate for the age and understanding of the child. These 'discipline' stories were very effective in dealing with the misdemeanors of children. **lintsomi** were told much later in the evening, when children were on their sleeping mats.

Madosini has performed **iintsomi** in the contexts radically different from the traditional home and its central fire. In October 2003 she was invited by the FishHoek Library to entertain school children from the Masiphumelele schools in FishHoek. The initiative was part of the City of Cape Town plan to extend literacy through storytelling in schools. Armed with her musical instruments, grandmothers' attire and a vast knowledge of storytelling, Madosini arrived at 10h30 a.m. for the 11h00 a.m. event. This was Madosini's first experience of story telling in a Library environment, and she found it rather intimidating. As she put it: 'I had to arrive in time to familiarize myself with the place, [there was] space to get used to and to get to know

exactly what was needed of me first hand from the co-ordinators of the event.’

The staff of Masiphumelele Library had arranged the seats the same as in a classroom in rows. Madosini, on arrival asked them to change the setting, to remove the chairs and place rugs on the floor for children to sit on; they should sit just like a horseshoe in a semi-circle. The staff did this without hassles. One could see from the children’s eyes that they were there to listen willingly and take whatever they got from this lady to their parents and friends. Madosini came out from the dressing room dressed in Xhosa cultural dress and carrying her instruments in both hands.

After greeting the children and introducing herself to them, she immediately started with her storytelling.

Bazukulwana bam! Intsomi ibaliswa ebusuku hayi emini kodwa kuba abanye benu abanabo oomakhulu bokubalisa iintsomi ndizakunibalisela ninonke. My grandchildren! The story is told at night, not during the day, but because some of you do not have grandmothers to tell you stories, I will tell you all. **Iqala ngolu hlobo ke bazukulwana: Kwahlala kwahlala kwayintsomi!** It starts like this my grandchildren: There was a story! **Ize nithi ke nina baphulaphuleyo: Chosi! Chebelele ngcu! Mpondo phum’apha ungaphum’apha!** You, my grandchildren as listeners must say:

‘Chosi! Chebelele ngcu! Mpondo phum’apha! Ungaphum’apha!
Hush! Chip and Squat upon! Horns grow here! You must not grow here!

So saying, Madosini pointed on the ground, where horns must grow, but not on the head. The belief among amaXhosa is that by telling stories during the day, the storyteller is inviting the growth of horns on the head. But, by pointing to the place where horns would grow before you start with your story, you are removing that perception, and therefore horns will not grow.

“Kwilizwe elikude kwakukho inkosi yamaZim egama linguMangangezulu. “In a faraway country, there was a King of Cannibals named Mangangezulu. **Le nkosi yaye ineentombi eziliqela,**

phakathi kwazo kukho endala esele ifikelele kwithuba lokuba ingenda. This king had daughters and the elder daughter was of marriageable age. **Bekuthi kwakufika amasoka afuna intombi uMangangezulu avuzelwe zizinkcwe kuba efuna ukubatya.** When ambassadors arrived from other places to propose marriage between their son and the cannibal's daughter, Mangangezulu would be seen drooling at the mouth to devour the guests. **Rhoqo uMangangezulu efikelwa ngamasoka afuna intombi yakhe ebelindela ukuba alale ebusuku ukuze achwechwe awanqunqe ngezembe lakhe kanye xa akobude ubuthongo ebusuku awatye.** It was usual for Mangangezulu to wait until the visitors were asleep so that he could come when they were in their deep sleep, and he could chop off their heads with his axe, and eat them.

(When Madosini narrated this part of **intsomi**, she would act as if she were a Cannibal, making a chopping movement to her neck, like the stroke of an axe, and then fall to the ground like the victim dying after the act).

Kuphinde kwakhona kufike amanye amasoka afune intombi, nawo afumane isehlo esenzeke kwamanye. He would do the same to all visiting ambassadors. **Kuthe kwisihlandlo sesine apho kwafika amasoka intombi ethe yawathanda.** It was only on a fourth visit that something drastic happened. The daughter loved these ambassadors. **Emveni kokuba ewuggibile umcimbi eze ngawo aye alungiselelwa indawo yokulala ukuze agoduke kusuku olulandelayo kuba aye esuka kwindawo ekude.**

After they had finished the business they came for, and since they came from a faraway place, a sleeping place was prepared for them.

UMangangezulu waye evuza zizinkcwe efuna ukutya indwendwe, ngokuqinisekileyo zazingasindanga ngobo busuku.

Mangangezulu was again to be seen drooling at the mouth [eager] to devour the guests. No doubt, they were in for the father's same deed, like [guests].

Intombi kuba ibathanda aba bantu, ichwechwe ngobusuku ingabonwa ngutata wayo ukuya kuwacebisa ngecebo awamabalenze. The girl loved these

ambassadors and she didn't want them to fall to her father's axe. She walked softly into the room where they were sleeping and told them what was going to happen.

Iwaxelele ukuba kufuneka axhwithe iinwele, olunye unwele alufake apha endlwini entla olunye kumacala omabini endlu, olunye emva kwecango ukuze olunye alufake ecaleni kwesibaya. She advised them to pluck out

their hair, and put one hair in the kitchen area, one on the left, and one on the right side of the house, one behind the door, and another

right in the center of the cattle byre. **Ibaxelele ukuba ezinwele zizakuthetha xa utata wakhe ebachwechwela kuba akafuni ende ufuna ukubatya. Ngenene amasoka enze njengoko eyalelwe.**

The idea was that these hairs would talk immediately when Mangangezulu began to move from his room to theirs. **Iyonke lemigudu ebisenzelwa ukuba uMangangezulu alibaziseke ngokujekela umzi wakhe kude kube semini ukuze iindwendwe zigoduke zingenzakalanga.** The whole intention was to delay him

moving around so that the next day the ambassadors could go home unharmed.

Iindwendwe zingalibazisanga zenza njengoko

ziyalelwe. Without hesitation the ambassadors did as they were told.
Ethubeni uMangangezulu wavukwa likakade lakhe lokuchwechwa xa eqikelela ukuba balele. Mangangezulu did his usual act by moving from his room to the ambassadors' room.
Ngelishwa kanye xa echwechwayo kwavakala ingoma: By luck strange singing sounds were heard, ignited by his movements:

Khawubuye Mangangezulu Khawubuye!

Khawubuye Mangangezulu Khawubuye!

Come back Mangangezulu come back!

Come back Mangangezulu come back!

UMangangezulu ngokucotha, 'Eyish! Ezi zinto azikalali'.
Mangangezulu said softly, 'Eyish! Eyish! These people are not asleep yet'.

(While telling this part of the story Madosini stood up and imitated the movements and actions of the King of the Cannibals. Certain words were interpreted by the sounds made by her instrument, **uhadi** interspersed with the singing. The way she held her listeners' attention was most noticeable. Their eyes were riveted on her, and they were obviously enjoying her performance).

Madosini continued:

Aphinde uMangangezulu aye kulala ukuze achwechwe xa amasoka elele. Mangangezulu returned to his room with the intention to sneak out again when the ambassadors were fast asleep.
Kodwa rhoqo echwechwa uMangangezulu kutsho ingoma: But

whenever Mangangezulu began sneaking out, again the same singing [sounds were to be heard]:

Khawubuye Mangangezulu Khawubuye!

Khawubuye Mangangezulu Khawubuye!

Come back Mangangezulu come back!

Come back Mangangezulu come back!

He would then return to his room after muttering, 'Eyish! Eyish! These people are not asleep yet.'

Kanye ekuzeni kokusa intombi ichwechwe kancinnane ukuya kuxelela amasoka ayo ukuba mabachwechwe bemke naye njengoko kuzakushiyeke iinwele zimana ukucula rhoqo izim uMangangezulu lichwechwa de lilibaziseke. Yenzeke le nto kwade kwasa. The time was approaching dawn, and the daughter walked softly to the ambassadors' room and told them to sneak out with her, as the hairs would continue their work of singing whenever Mangangezulu was trying to move into their room, until daybreak. **Kuthe xa kusayo uMangangezulu waphuma ukuya kuqonda ukuba ingaba abakhwenyana balele kakuhle na. Xa efika intombi ayikho kunye namasoka ayo.** Just before sunrise, Mangangezulu woke up to see how the visitors were sleeping. When he entered the room, the doors were wide open and no one was inside the room. He quickly went to his daughters to find out what had happened, but discovered that his elder daughter had gone with the visitors.

(At this stage of the story, Madosini addressed her audience asking them whether they could guess what had happened. This tactic was also to test the listeners' attention and understanding of the events so far. Some of them looked at each other with enquiring grins while others immediately raised their hands to answer.

Madosini continued with the story:

Emveni kweentsuku ezimbalwa amasoka emkile nentombi baye bacebisana ukuba baye kuxela intombi ingafunwa kuba yendile kodwa kufuneka bangayi kufika nayo kowayo koko bayishiye emlanjeni. A couple of days after having left Mangangezulu's homestead, the ambassadors advised one another to report the daughter's whereabouts to her father so that he would not be roaming around looking for her. **Intombi iye yacebisa ukuba izakubakhapha kodwa izakukhwela emthini ngelithuba baye kumxela kutata wakhe kodwa maze bangabulisi bakufika kuba bayakumlibala njengoko eyintombi kaMangangezulu.** The 'wife-to-be' begged to accompany them, but nearer the homestead, she was left behind at the riverside, while they [the ambassadors] entered the homestead. The daughter told them that she would climb a tree and wait for them, but one thing they should not do on arrival is to greet the people by shaking their hands. This would make them forget about her (wife-to-be) because she is the daughter of Mangangezulu.

Ukufika kwabo ekhayeni lentombi bamkelwe ngobubele balibala ukubulisa babulisa loo nto yabangela ukuba bahlale ithuba elide bade balala. On arrival [at the homestead], they were welcomed with great joy, and they even forgot not to shake hands with the people as told, which made them remain a much longer period in the house. This caused them to be delayed for another day, and to forget that they had left someone near the river.

Kusuku olulandelayo iintombi zalapha kwaMangangezulu zethabatha iimele zazo ukuya kukha amanzi.

Early the following day Mangangezulu's daughters took their buckets to fetch water from the river. **Zithe ezinye iintombi zakufika emlanjeni xa eyokuqala isikha amanzi yabona ubuso obufana nayo emanzini yafumanisa kuba intle kakhulu ingaqondi ukuba ubuso ebubona emanzini ayibobayo. Kuba intombi eyendileyo kaMangangezulu yaye intle kakhulu kwaye ubuhle bayo babubonakala kakuhle emanzini njengoko isemthini.** When the girls arrived at the river, and the first one was drawing water, she saw a beautiful girl's face in the water, which was the reflection of the girl hiding at the top of the tree. **Yazincoma ukuba intle kakhulu, yakha amanzi yagoduka. Ukufika kwayo ekhaya yabuza abakowayo ukuba kutheni bengayixeleli ukuba intle kangangaka ide iyekuzibona emanzini ukuba intle kangaka.** The poor girl, looking at the beauty shown in water, thought it was her [own] face that was so beautiful, and when she arrived back home she enquired

of the others as to why they had never told her that she was so beautiful. **Impendulo ibe yeyokuba soloko umhle futhi uyaziwa kwalapha elalini ukuba umhle.** Their answer was that she is always beautiful, so much so that there is no need to tell her about her beauty. **Abakhwenyana ngokukhawuleza batsho bakhumbula ukuba bashiye umntu emthini emlanjeni.** When the ambassadors heard of the enquiry, they immediately remembered that they had left someone at the river. **Loo nto yabangela ukuba kwangoko baye kwinkosikazi yabo abayishiye emthini emlanjeni. Bafike sele ikhalaza ukuba kutheni behleli ithuba elide kangaka ihlale ubusuku bonke kude kube ngenye imini.** They rushed off to the river and found their 'wife' still waiting there, but she was asking them why it had taken them so long to return. **Baqondile ukuba impazamo ikubo ngokuthi babulise ngesandla batsho bacela uxolo kwinkosikazi yabo.**

They knew that it was their fault for greeting with handshakes, so they had forgotten to return on time. **Kwangoko uMangangezulu uthabathe izikhali zakhe ukulungiselela ukuya kuthabatha intombi yakhe kuba uyivile ukuba isemlanjeni. Endleleni uhlangene nabantu abaqhuba igquba lenkomo ukuza kulobola intombi.** On the other hand, Mangangezulu heard the girls talking about beauty when they went to draw water. There was no doubt; the only beauty was his daughter for whom the ambassadors came to pay **lobola** (payment for the bride). He took his axe and rushed off after them, but on his way encountered a couple of people with a large number of cattle. These cattle were the **lobola** (payment for the bride) for his daughter. **Ukuva kwakhe umlomo wokuba ezinkomo**

yilobola yentombi yakhe wafutha ngumsindo watsho walahlela kude izembe lakhe awaye elilungiselele ukuxabela abantu babantu ngalo watsho wazixolisa ngokonwaba nentombi yakhe yonwaba emzini wayo. When he heard the news about the cattle, he became furious, so much so that he threw away his axe, which he thought to use for cutting off the ambassadors' heads, and he rescued the daughter. The daughter was happy that her father did not manage to kill representatives of her house, and she lived happily with her husband. **Phela-phela ngantsomi ke bazukulwana bam!** That was the end of **intsomi**, my grandchildren!"

Wenjenjalo ke ubani kodwa ke nina bantwana nincede ningalinganisi yena. That is how so and so did her bit my children, I just hope you will never do as she did.

As a unique oral tradition that is still active today this story is part of a vast, living archives that is stored in the collective memories and souls of people, and not in modern retrievable communication systems. As an inherited tradition of immense cultural value, **iintsomi** are still freely available to the wider communities. In this regard it is a great shame that nowadays one often has to make some form of payment to listen to or see a performance.

Whenever one considers the standard of story telling that is now being purveyed by the broadcasting media, one has to be more concerned about the intentions of some individuals who are associated with this. It seems that they are more concerned about

promoting and glorifying themselves through their notions and perceptions about tradition. The writer recalled a series on SABC1 watched some three years ago, in which a story was told by a well known African personality, in the English language, with much miming and grimacing and shouting, and with no singing, and virtually no participating from the small audience- which is hardly surprising. What people like these days are doing is a far cry from our inherited cultural traditions of **iintsomi** and the songs belonging to it, and which were an important medium of socialization, i.e. 'transmission of norms of acceptable behavior' (Kubik 1987:57), and also gave informal instruction on the basic techniques of music-making.

Modernity has overtaken us, (or perhaps we have greedily snatched at it); we have so deeply swallowed consumerism that we have forgotten that this tradition that we now pay for, and which is foisted on us by a careless media, was once freely given in its earlier history, at night time in the firelight being an appropriate time for it. Yes, **iintsomi** are connected to our historical past, but in the hands and mouth of artists like Madosini, there is always something new. In them, the reality and tensions of the natural world are juxtaposed with a supernatural world in which animals and fabulous creatures behave just like humans and show their emotions, their faults and aspirations. Audience participation is vital in these performances, and audiences are part of the **iintsomi** performer's material.

Because of the countless numbers of people who have helped to conserve the tradition, the local **intsomi** treasury today contains also items of diverse ethnic origin. Cross-cultural borrowing has brought this about, greatly facilitated by technological interconnections. There are examples of such borrowing in Madosini's stock of **iintsomi**, e.g. her version of the well-known tale of Cinderella. Madosini's story and pleasure in performing **iintsomi** is virtually tireless. From her early childhood onward she experienced many **iintsomi** performers in her community, and her own performances are to some extent distilled from these earlier experiences. But she has also broadened and enriched the experiences by bringing her own idiosyncratic vocal and bow songs into it (a practice which, to my knowledge, has not been previously written about). What one hears from Madosini is a tradition, and an artistic experience that has professionalism, inspiration and substance from the past. But, with Madosini it is always something new and 'in tune' with the changing structures of her society and local culture.



DIZU
PLAATJIES

TEACHING AND LEARNING

...through the...
...myself, just progress with time and I find...
...background, another, but player with an instrumental...
...I came to know her through concert work, and was able to...
...will be at home about home in Kapa's Book. This was when she gave...
...some great inspiration on traditional techniques in particular, this...
...was a very difficult subject to master. Although I believe, for...

South Africa

world music

photo: Patrick [unreadable]

CHAPTER 7

TEACHING AND LEARNING

7.1 My experiences of Madosini's Musical Expertise

Both Madosini and I grew up in the same “cultural landscape” and we were very fortunate to have had much time and space in our early lives for music. As a boy growing up in Xhosa/Mpondo culture, I watched and participated in many kinds of music. But since mainly girls and women played musical bows, and especially the **umrhubhe**, I never took to playing such instruments as a natural part of my growing up.

My active involvement with **umrhubhe** began in the 1980's, when I watched informal performance by Magxarha Nomnganga, an Mpondomise lady from Tsolo district (Eastern Cape). She was living at Zone 1 number 15 Langa, and was publicly recognized as an expert bow player. I went to hear her and was so impressed that I made mental notes on what she did when playing – her mouth movements and her manner of using the **umcinga** (friction stick). But there is more to playing the **umrhubhe** than this, and the brief experience just gave me a taste of the basic actions. Although I took to making and practising this instrument myself, little progress was made until I met with Mantombi Matotiyana, another bow player with an international reputation. I came to know her through concert tours, and was able to visit her at her small home in Nyanga East. This was when she gave me some more information on **umrhubhe** techniques, in particular, the whistling was a very difficult aspect to master. Although I persevered for

a time, and was successful on a few occasions, I could not go beyond this, and I became discouraged and eventually stopped bow practise. The clarity and smoothness of Mantombi's whistled phrases seemed far beyond my reach.

The turning point came when Madosini Manqineni arrived at my home in Langa. From the moment she stepped through the doorway, she seemed to bring with her the promise of success. Madosini is that type of person, she has an inspiring presence. She carries herself with a quiet confidence and even humble bearing, and the manner in which she performs her music with such authority the inspiration, has a huge impact on her audiences, and those who are privileged to learn from her.

She has a method of 'exercises', which she imparts by degrees, and one has to master all of them in order to, play the **umrhubhe** effectively. When she introduced her first 'exercise', I knew that I was going to improve and become a good bow player. I found her method of teaching exciting, interesting and easy to understand and learnt very fast. The following account of my experiences as an adult student of Madosini reflects MY understanding of HER experiences. My knowledge came from an unusual and gifted person who taught me through her experiences of knowing and producing the music she knows and loves so well. My account reflects my understanding only.

Historically and culturally African music is learnt through the experiences of observing and understanding what others do musically, and then doing it

oneself. In the process, informed and keen listening is important and encouraged. In African culture, we do not have a vocabulary to talk about music making in a structured way, because for us it is doing, and not explaining that teaches us. This situation presented me with a problem in writing up my research material. How do I go about describing my 'music lessons' with Madosini? It is as if I am expected to use words and write about processes of doing that involve actions rather than words! To meet the needs of this study I have chosen to give an account of my (subjective) experiences AND include comparative musical data, which is relevant to Madosini's knowledge and actions. In this way, I can provide both 'emic' and 'etic' perspective on her musical bow technique and performance practice.

The **umrhubhe** is unique among mouth bows in Southern Africa, which are sounded mostly by plucking or striking, and also by blowing – as in the case of the Khoi **gora** and cognates (Rycroft 1966:87). The average measurements of an **umrhubhe** constructed by Madosini are:

- Length of **umthi** (tree) bow stave – 57cm.
- Length of **ucingo** (wire) – 62cm.
- Length of **umcinga** (friction grass stalk) – 52cm.

Umrhubhe makers choose wood for the bow stave from one of three indigenous trees locally known as:

- **Intlolokotshane** (botanical name unavailable to me) – a very hard wood.
- **Umbangadlala** (*heteromorpha arborescens* [Kirby 1965:201])- a very soft wood.
- **Ihlolo** (*chrysoophyllum sesrattum* [Doke & Vilakazi 1972:332]) – a wood between the extremes of hard and soft.

Umbangandlala has always been the favoured wood because it enables the production of clear and 'floating' partials from the activated string. Elderly women play **umrhubhe** made of this wood for this reason.

To hold **umrhubhe** one supports the lower end of the bow stave in the left hand, leaving the thumb free to **vala** (close) the string, thereby changing its length and fundamental tone. Some players like to **vala** the string by pinching it between the thumb and index finger. There is a correct playing position for this bow, and the player has to rest the other end of **umthi** against the lips, at a distance from the end of it, and this varies from player to player. **Umthi** must rest horizontally against the lips, which are slightly stretched, as the mouth has to be partly open, and the stave must not come into contact with the teeth. The instrument lies more or less vertically to the front, and to the left of the player.

To sound **umrhubhe**, the player takes **umcinga** and applies it underneath the string so that it passes between the string and the bow stave. Basic to any **umrhubhe** song is a rhythmic pattern of two tones obtained from the 'open and the 'closed' string, the tuning being 200 cents. It is from these two string tones that the player has to resonate the harmonic partials and make a melody with them. When a player is in action, one is drawn to the mouth movements, which she makes, but there are also movements inside the mouth, which are not visible to the observer. These are tongue movements, which are basic to the production of partials.



David Rycroft has described the technicalities of partials resonating as being done '.... by parting the lips slightly at one side [to the left] and varying the volume of the mouth cavity by means of the tongue. Although no breath necessarily passes in or out of the mouth – the normal breathing being continued – the series of tongue positions used for normal vowel sound production appears to operate. Progressively higher resonance frequencies are obtained by proceeding gradually through the phonetic cardinal vowel positions, from U ('oo') through A ('ah') toward I ('ee'), and a suggestion of the quality of these vowels is detectable in the tone colour of the different notes.' (Rycroft 1966:88).

Of course Madosini did not give such a wordy explanation, but she conveyed the mouth movements by doing them, without the bow, and mouthing them in an exaggerated way silently, and then with sound. When one makes the movements the tongue automatically moves its position, and this causes changes in the volume (the space occupied by air) in the mouth and cheek cavity. Thereafter, when making the mouth movements with the bow in position in the mouth, one has to listen keenly and practice by 'trial and ear' to get the partials from the string tones via the tongue movement.

The tuning of the bow is very important (as of course is the proper type of string, and its tension), and it is why an **umrhubhe** player always takes care to test the tuning, in order to achieve 'optimum mouth-resonated pitch range' (1966:93). But the mouth movements have to be carefully practiced and measured, because if one lets the lips become too far closed, and the

mouth cavity becomes too small, the partials will not come through, especially the lower ones (3rd partials). In this regard players with a bigger mouth cavity are more successful. (Rycroft also noted this with experiments he himself made with a mouth bow [1966:94]).

Whistling has long been a part of **umrhubhe** playing, but not all players employ it because it is difficult to exercise effectively and melodically. Although the mouth movements for partials 'voicing' are similar to what one does in whistling, (1966:88), it needs much practise. Hansen (1981) did not report any Xhosa bow players who used whistling, but Hugh Tracey made recordings of this in the 1950's, among the Xhosa/Gcaleka near Idutywa in the Eastern Cape. The player was a girl aged fourteen and her bow music, '...though very soft, served as an accompaniment to a young people's dance song and a drinking song.' The bow is described as **inkinki** which is incorrect. The name probably referred to **inkinge**, a Xhosa mouth bow sounded by plucking, which is now long obsolete – but the instrument in the recording is clearly **umrhubhe** (ILAM disc TR 62 [side A, Band 5] and TR 63 [side A, Band 2]). In her performance, the Gcaleka girl 'whistled out the side of her mouth and did what **umrhubhe** players still do when they use whistling they alternate partial melodies with interlinking whistled phrases, the latter being heard as sounding in a higher octave than the mouth-resonated partials, although they are actually the same as the mouth-resonated partials. The whistled phrases commonly descend. (cf' also Rycroft 1966:90-91).

To master whistling with **umrhubhe**, Madosini gave me an exercise during the first few lessons with her. She asked me to place my index finger across my open mouth, and thereafter, to bring the lips a little closer ('making the mouth smaller'). I then had to practise breathing IN through the mouth, in a series of moderately fast intakes of breath, but to exhale normally through the nose. In demonstrating this, Madosini made references to a frog when it croaks or breathes and its gullet goes in and out, inflating and deflating, and she asked me to emulate this with my own breathing. In using this 'puffing' technique with mouth inspiration, Madosini stands apart from so many other **umrhubhe** players. While she plays, she takes in air through the mouth, and whistles on the in-breath, which enhances the voicing of the partials. The position of the finger across the open mouth is a substitute for the bow stave, and one uses this finger position to practise whistling. One has to master the whistling first without the instrument, and it is something one has to work at, because it never comes easily. It is more difficult than amplifying partials.

In order to teach me how to resonate partials, Madosini asked me to stand behind her as she sat and played, and to touch different areas on her throat and her cheeks while she played, so that I could feel and understand the nature and effects of the mouth-(tongue position) movements, and also hear the results. Thereafter, I had to be the bow player, while Madosini checked the mouth movements by touch as I had been asked to do for her.

7.2 Umcinga and voice partials

In order to activate the string, it is necessary to use the friction stalk **umcinga** at a point never less than 5-10 cm above the place where one is holding and supporting the instrument in the left hand. This makes the contact point of **umcinga** nearer to the centre of the string and this allows the string to vibrate more freely. The weight of **umcinga** on the string has to be carefully measured and if it is too heavy it will produce rasping and scraping noises, and no partials. As a rule, one aims for a controlled, almost gentle approach to **umcinga** use. At all times one's ears have to be sharp, listening to the sounds, which come from one's efforts.

When learning to resonate the partials, one plays a sequence of strokes on the string, at a hurrying tempo, and at the same time one makes the mouth movements. At this stage one amplifies one partial per string stroke, and then one goes on moving rapidly from one tongue position to another, on one stroke, which creates a *wa-wa* effect as one resonates a glide of partials from the string tone. The next step is to incorporate a sequence of 'open' and 'close' string tones, which provides one with a stock of six tones (partials), which one can use for creating melody.

Having mastered the basics of 'scraping' and 'voicing' the partials, I was asked to reduce the speed of **umcinga** strokes so that I could amplify more than one partial melodically from a single bow stroke. When this is incorporated with the whistling phrases, one can achieve a sonorous and

effective polyphony, comprising a 'harmonic' and rhythmic sequence of roots on the bowstring, and interlinking melodic phrases of partials and whistling above it, the tones of the latter having a wider compass.

Both Madosini and Mantombi employ whistling, but Madosini uses it more in a song. This is because she is always breathing in through the mouth, and can introduce whistling phrases whenever she wishes, and she does so in continuous descending and ascending phrases. Most players do in-breath whistling but not so effectively.

By resonating several partials over one fundamental in the music, one is able to represent a song melody more fully. In performance, the partials' phrases undergo variation, as do the whistled phrases (and Madosini sometimes uses a motif from it as an ostinato, as well), and in the hands of a good player, an **umrhubhe** song can sound as if many people are involved in the music. I have compared Madosini's bow songs with J.S. Bach for this reason – one hears many musical parts, as if three to four people are playing at the same time, in a single piece. Madosini's repertoire of **umrhubhe** song is extensive – and this is not surprising, since she does what all African musicians have done since time immemorial – drawn on a rich stock of cultural music as a source material for their own compositions.

Madosini selects mainly from the vast repertoire of Xhosa beer songs, and she then uses the melodies as the basis for her own songs. Much of the vocal music she has experienced herself, but she also draws on different kinds of Xhosa song she has learnt from her mother Manjuza, so she

has what could be regarded as an almost inexhaustible well of musical material at her disposal as a composer. She creates in her **umrhubhe** and other bow songs the small versions of larger communal choral dance songs and their polyphonic and polyrhythmic features, as well as other structural elements they have, such as cyclic form, antiphonal structure (emulated in varying melodic/partial vocal phrases, in relation to a 'simulated' chorus part in the bow accompaniment (Rycroft 1976/6), and she also uses 'phrase' shifting a melodic phrase that changes its point of entry in the songs cyclic pattern). In an analysis of some of Madosini's songs, my supervisor has shown that Madosini's compositional techniques use virtually all the known resources of Xhosa musical composition. But her special – I might say ingenious – use of the sound-producing properties of the instrument she exploits so effectively, have earned her rightful reputation as 'Veteran Musician' and 'The Queen of Xhosa Music'.

Madosini has taught me much regarding bow technique, and I also use melodies from traditional song repertoires in my own compositions and arrangements, in which I also involve other participants e.g. vocalists, instrumentalists and dancers. When Madosini herself is the central (bow) player in such compositions, I never rework her musical contribution and I never request overdubs, because what she provides needs no further enhancing or adjusting, and the other participants have to accommodate her particular parts. In selecting a traditional melody as a basis for a new composition, it is not a random process, because one makes a deliberate and informed choice.

Furthermore, one must find one's own musical ideas for its setting, so that the result is a music that is undoubtedly **ingom'entsha** (a new song) even though it may be based on an old theme. Sometimes other experienced musicians like Madosini, Mantombi and others will recognize the original theme of one's composition or arrangement, and they will make very valuable and useful suggestions when one is at work. The sounds of the bows can be amplified, thanks to modern technology, but nevertheless one has to take care in balancing the individual parts when one is composing for an ensemble, so that they blend and balance, and speak through the music.

7.3 Madosini and *isitolotolo* (jaw harp) practice

In her immediate communities Madosini is referred to as 'Veteran' a name that acknowledges her long practice and experience of cultural music and her special position in Xhosa music generally. This includes her extraordinary skills in playing **isitolotolo** a lamellaphone, which Rycroft rightly called 'ubiquitous' because of its widespread use among Africans in this country. It came to this country as part of colonial trading goods, and became available in trading stores everywhere. It was mentioned by Kirby (1934 p.243) gave an analysis of a melody played by a Venda girl. Rycroft found the instrument in use among **umrhubhe** players of Cedarville district (1966:92).

As ethnomusicological research has shown, most **umrhubhe** players also play the mouth-resonated **isitolotolo**, probably because similar mouth positions are used for both instruments. When **isitolotolo** is **khalisa** (made to cry), the music consists of harmonic partials, which are resonated from a single fundamental. A comparison of the range of partials from **umrhubhe** and **sisitolotolo** has shown that in the latter, the partials (6-12) are used, allowing a hexatonic scale that is given by Xhosa bow tuning, and in which the vocal music is set (200 cents tuning). But the **isitolotolo** has of course a 'numerically higher series of partials' compared with the **umrhubhe**. The **isitolotolo** fundamental is an octave lower than **umrhubhe** fundamental sounded from the open string (1966:92).

What is interesting is the presence of an oblique tritone (augmented 4th) interval in the hexa scale, which also occurs as a melodic (descending) interval in Xhosa vocal music (Hansen 1981:682; 699, Fig. MH. 17). This interval is very prominent in many of Madosini's **isitolotolo** songs, where it is heard as a repeating motif near the ends of phrases. It is possible that the instrument's structural layout and sound properties favour this interval, but since I do not play the **isitolotolo** (due to sensitive teeth, which makes playing very unpleasant) I cannot be conclusive on this aspect.

In my travels abroad, I have had many opportunities to hear jaw harp players of international renown. More recently I attended a jaw harp festival in France, which attracted performances from many parts of Europe, from India, Iraq, and also Africa (West and South). Having listened to all musicians, I was left convinced that Madosini would have outshone all of them had she been present.

Most **isitolotolo** players use forced mouth-exhalation ('out-breathing') to create rhythmic interest in their music, but Madosini goes beyond this. She plucks the lamella (tongue) with her fourth finger and with one foot she provides a rhythmic-metric framework in her song by stamping the ground. For more rhythmic interest and contrast, she uses her thumb and index finger (of the hand plucking the instrument) to produce rhythmic click patterns. The sum total of her song is a complex of 'crossing' rhythms of clicks, stamps and musical sounds, all the basic musical ingredients of the bigger Xhosa communal music.

7.4 Learning *uhadi* techniques.

My experience with the Xhosa unbraced, gourd-resonated bow, **uhadi**, go back to my boyhood, when my grandmother's bow songs were a constant aspect of my home life. Although she did not play the **umrhubhe** bow, my grandmother played **uhadi** on a regular basis; it was almost a daily occurrence. My mother was a schoolteacher, and also a performer of **iintsomi** song stories, and when she told these she also brought her **uhadi** music into them. This was during the 1960's and I still remember one **intsomi**, which had its special song that had the words:

Ndibangathi dade ndikhaphe wathi jingeletshobeni

Even when I said my sister escort me, she said get to the back.

Mna ndingokaNkosazana Hlalemeveni

I am the daughter of the Princess-who-lives-among-thorns.

My grandmother was responsible for introducing me to **uhadi** performance, in that I tried to imitate her actions on my own homemade musical bow- but I never actually played along with her. Because of this early experience, I began to play **uhadi** long before I met Madosini and have never had formal or informal instruction or 'lessons' from Madosini herself. Yet, looking back, I must say that I learnt so much from her. For instance, I learnt that if you want to play an **uhadi** song, you must first have a melody fixed in your head, and you sing it repeatedly until you know it by heart and can sing it spontaneously. Only then can you put the song into an **uhadi** setting.

Any uncertainty about the song will cause you to fumble and hesitate and unable to instrumentalize the song. The partials, which can be resonated from the gourd resonator, I find especially fascinating, and Madosini's use of them is masterly. One is able to recognize any song melody she plays from her harmonic partials version of it, even though the actual pitches in the song escort and partials melody are not identical. They have to be **izihlobo** (friends) that is, 'harmonically equivalent' so that if one plays the melody with such tones, they are the same, even though they do not have identical pitches. They are variants of the same theme. I never really understood this aspect of Xhosa musical composition as a boy, but as a composer I realize that this variation process is a creative one, and not something one can do automatically. This has been described and explained in technical terms by Hansen (1981) as 'a melodic process of sequential repetition', and '...the most common form of melodic structure in Xhosa music (p.695). This process consists of '...the repetition of two similar phrases on different degrees of a hexatonic mode' (the mode in which classical Xhosa music is set, 1981:738) and which is present in much contemporary Xhosa music. Hansen points out that the process (formula) is not 'a mechanical one....' were this the case, one would be confronted with the same melody with each occurrence of the melodic process' (1981:696).

Madosini constructs her own **uhadi** bows, and chooses the calabash of relative size. It is always fixed at a certain distance from the lower end of the bow stave (this is measured off with a ruler, the distance being a third of the length of the bow stave). The gourd is attached with a washer or insulating pad to stop the gourd from rattling against the bow

stave, but the original method of making such an object from plaited or twisted grass has been replaced by the use of a commercial bath sponge, which is very effective. The **uhadi** player holds the instrument vertically in one hand, and supports the stave with the other, leaving two fingers – index finger and thumb – free to ‘close’ (pinch = stop) the string and therefore alter its length and pitch. To amplify the partials, the player has to move the gourd resonator closer or further away from the body, which opens or closes ‘...the orifice in the calabash in varying degrees and thus altering its resonance frequency’ (Rycroft 1975/6:61). As the same scholar points out, this is ‘...analogous to varying the resonance frequency of the mouth cavity when playing the mouth-bow’ (ibid.).

To test the importance of this precise positioning of the gourd resonator, I tried attaching it to different places on the bow stave and then attempted to amplify partials selectively, via gourd movement. The results were poor, and convinced me that Madosini’s gourd positioning, a tried and tested one, is the correct one.

Learning to play **uhadi** led me to experiment with other gourd-bows. A braced instrument called **xitende** (Tsonga) and **dende** (Venda) which was owned by a Venda friend and traditional healer, has the resonator fixed near the centre of the bow stave, and a rattle device attached near its upper end. I tried playing this instrument, but the sounds produced were unpleasant and disturbing, because of the rattles, activated by striking the string, blocked out the partials. Since voicing the partials is the special feature of bow songs, without them the song is unfinished and even meaningless. But it is on record that Venda and Tsonga



braced bow players like to move and dance when they play, and are not concerned with creating partials melodies of this kind.

When holding **uhadi**, the gourd's opening lies against the player's bared chest (clothing reduces the voicing power of partials). When girls and young women play this instrument, the gourd is played over the breast, but in the case of older women, the gourd is placed immediately above the breast. The size of the gourd resonator depends on the individual bow player. Madosini likes a relatively small gourd as this gives off clearer partials. By moving the gourd further away from the body, and exposing the opening in the opening, the partials may be selectively voiced (partials 3-5, and possibly 6 on some bows). By reverse movement, the gourd is returned to the 'closed' position against the player's body and the partials are reduced accordingly. The average length of **uhadi** as made by Madosini is from 1m.30cm to 1m.45cm.

Ucingo (the string) was formerly made from thin lengths of twisted sinew taken from the stomach of a goat and allowed to dry out. But for many years it has been made from the wire taken from a woman's copper bracelet. The article is made from copper wire being tightly coiled around a circular wire base. When the wire is unravelled it falls into **amaza** (waves or crinkles). **Amaza** on **uhadi** string is beneficial and favours partial production – this fact has been tried and tested by many bow players and also by Madosini herself. (The same kind of string is used for **umrhubhe**). If this unravelled wire is not available, then a length of ordinary (galvanized) wire is

bought in the shop, and placed in a fire (hot coals) for two hours, after which it is removed and left to cool. It is then coiled tightly around a wooden stick, so that when it is undone, it also has **amaza**.

Careful string adjustment and critical listening for partials do tuning the string. The string tension has to be just right, since a slack wire is useless. To adjust an established tuning is simple, one just pulls on the wide coils of wire wound around the top line of the bow stave. One also has to check that the gourd is firmly in place with its washer (a sponge as a rule), so that it does not rattle when the instrument is played. When learning to play **uhadi** one uses what I call the **vula-vala** (open-close) method. It is a concept basic to African music and it underlies many kinds of action and movements. It applies to drumming whereby one strikes the drum head with an open hand and then a closed hand to produce strokes with different timbres, and also in handclapping, whereby open hand clapping is contrasted with clapping with hollowed or cupped hands, the latter giving a rather 'hollow' and echoing effect. It applies to the action of the fingers that have to touch the string to release it, (to obtain a second fundamental from the string; the thumb and index finger have to pinch the string (close it) for this, and then release (open) to return to open string tone.

Vula-vala is also applied to gourd movement, by which the partials are resonated. The player moves the gourd away from the body and thereby 'opens' up partials gradually and then returns the gourd to the former position by 'closing' off partials. Gourd movement must be done in a controlled and rhythmic way, and to gain practise in achieving this almost

automatically, and amplifying the partials exactly I devised a simple method involving numbers and counting in a flexible exercise using **vula-vala** combinations. The basis is a sequence of six counts, which have to be made at a moderate to slower speed (at the beginning):

1 2 3 4 5 6

Starting with the gourd in 'closed' position, on count 1 the player moves the gourd away from the body, to regular counted rhythm of 1 to 4 (where the gourd is in maximum open position); on count 5 the gourd is returned to the start position against the player's body. Count 6 is a silent beat which then ushers in the repeated sequence. The player strikes the string on each count, and as the gourd 'opens' it also opens up the partials, as they climb from 3 to 5 partials. One can then vary the number of counts, with the gourd returning to its 'close' position on different counts. One may also speed up the tempo and practise partials and voicing at different and faster speeds.

The aim is to know exactly when and where they occur in relation to the gourd movement with some fluency, so that the partials voicing is done effortlessly and flowingly, and above all accurately. The handling of the **umcinga** (beater) also needs practice. One must hold it like a drummer holds drumsticks as noted by Kirby (1934:198) and the string must be struck in a specific area on the string that favours the effective voicing of partials.

The voicing of two or more partials from one fundamental is also achieved by practice and applying the **vula-vala** method. This involves 'opening' the

gourd immediately after one has struck the string, so that two or more partials come out as a gliding sound. This gives a WA-WA effect when the gourd movement is done rapidly, and it is very effective when introducing a song and ending it. This sound effect (similar to muted trumpet sounds) always draws the audience's attention to the unique sound of this bow. The **uhadi** resonator **iselwa** is not very rich in partials, and crucial to the music is the representation of song melody by means of partials. For this reason, certain vocal-choral dance songs are not used in **uhadi** settings because the melodies just do not lend themselves to partial voicing. Seasoned players like Madosini avoid these songs.

My experience with **uhadi** construction and performance practice in the company of Madosini has made me more appreciative of the subtlety and complexity of the instrument and its musical use together with the voice. This kind of music demands great skill and expertise. The aligning of the vocal phrases to the bow phrases is one of the aspects, which has drawn the attention of European scholars, who have commented on the subtle sense of timing this demands for the player. But she/he must also be equally skilful in the effective use of partials in representing the song melody and varying it.

To perform an **uhadi** song, one must first know that song very well – its basic phrases (usually antiphonal with overlap), and text, and generally how this song is put together by a larger group of people who sing it. To instrumentalize it, one begins by playing the basic string tone pattern of two roots (which are the harmonic roots of the song). With the melody in one's head one experiments with the voicing of the partials to

represent the melody. One usually plays oneself into this, and once one has established it one then begins to sing (vocalize) so that other people present will take their cue from you (the **uhadi** player) and join in. as one continues to repeat the bow pattern, other variations come to mind, and individual singers usually introduce these along with one or other of the basic vocal phrases. For the **uhadi** player it is not too difficult to hear the partials, even when singers are present, because the gourd resonator is outside on, near the ear, and not inside the mouth (as **umrhubhe** practice). When learning to play **uhadi**, one learns to sing and play together, because two activities are integrated, as they are also with the movement patterns that underlie the sounds. From my experience as a teacher of European students, this makes our songs very difficult to learn, because in Western European music these aspects are not integrated.

It is well documented (and the general rule in bow playing in Southern Africa) that bow songs ordinarily start with an instrumental 'introduction'. Personally, I like to proceed in this classical manner because it sets the mood and the tonality of the song and melody on which I will improvise. But this procedure is no longer a rule today and Madosini and other bow players occasionally depart from the older practice. Madosini explains that she does this because her mother Manjuza had always advised her not to 'play before you sing...' meaning that the song should be presented vocally, before the instrument enters. I also know of a particular song in which Madosini does something else unusual. This is the song in Madosini's Compact Disc publication **Power to the women** with the text: **Mvimbeni, uyavimba naye kowabo**

Do not give him food because he is also of the stingy type in his house.

In performing this song, Madosini plays a rhythmic bow accompaniment that does not seem to belong with the song she actually sings, and also forms and sounds out a partials melody that is not related to that song (i.e. the song she sings and the song she plays are not one and the same). It is as if she deliberately set out to perform two different songs at the same time.

Although this practice is not unique it is infrequently encountered, which makes the recording something of a rarity. The end result is not discordant and can be explained logically according to the 'rules' of Xhosa music, for the two song melodies may be different, but they are nevertheless tonally and harmonically compatible because both are based on the fundamental principle of 'harmonic equivalence, and the 'melodic formulæ' embedded in the Xhosa mode. The melodies are therefore 'contrasting on the surface but identical in substance' (Hansen 1981: 673; 739). In this context Madosini's particular combination of two different songs is unusual and ingenious, and demonstrates the kind of creativity, which sets her apart from other, recognized bow players.

In Xhosa and African culture generally, composition has always been a process of inspiration, borrowing, re-inspiration and innovation. The original composer of a song is usually unknown since his/her inspiration ultimately becomes the property of the community, and hence the national repertoire. When Madosini told me she 'never composed original songs' I

was stunned at first, but in due course I came to realize that Madosini, like other composers in oral tradition, draws on long-established songs as source material for her own compositions. Her compositions are in fact original for they show the traits of her highly individual style. Her expertise in putting songs together is exceptional and it is difficult, if not impossible, to for anyone to plagiarize her work. I am so fortunate to be a member of the Dosini clan, and to have learnt from a musical expert like my aunt Madosini, my mentor, who gave me five years of her teaching. I am deeply indebted to her for all she has taught me. For the concept of a truly 'original' song (meaning previously unknown) just does not really exist. African music continues and survives through oral transmission, and through observing, understanding and doing, and so the possibilities of theme and variation are almost infinite.

There is a compact disc of Madosini's collected songs called **Power to the women**, and the musical sources of some of these songs go far back in history, long before Madosini was born, to the days of her great-grandparents and even before that, in pre-colonial times. Historical songs like these, whose value cannot be estimated, come down to us in history, gathering even more new versions and songs down the years, and these songs are like signposts in our people's history. For an example, there is one **Wen'usegoli** (you in Johannesburg) song which is one of her best-known songs, which dates back from the late 19th century when African flocked to the mines as migrant workers and sang songs en-route to and from work, in the mine hostels and underground in order to '...make sense of the social discontinuity of their lives' (Speigel and McAllister 1991:4). Songs like this

one reflect changing social and economic conditions in South Africa as the migrant experience disrupted families and eroded family values. There are also other songs which recall events in our history, the advent of white colonizers; wars and scourges; national calamities. An example of such a song is a “work” song, sung when a supervisor of a firm or company wants to move a heavy stone or load from one end to the other. The men sing a song in call and response form, with the chorus phrases in unison. As the team leader the supervisor leads and they follow the action. It goes like this:

Leader: **Abelungu!**
Team: **Ngoodem!**
Leader: **Basinika!**
Team: **Hafasenti!**
Leader: Europeans!
Team: Are hopeless!
Leader: They give us!
Team: Half a cent!

When he says **abelungu!** They get ready for as full force to move the object as when they say **ngoodem!** They all do the movement as one. Step by step items are moved and the mission accomplished. The song spells out that while agreeing that the Europeans are good people to whom they could give service, they still maintained that they are not to be trusted as they do that for their own good. This is shown by the reward of giving their workers half of what is expected of them. The song is not confined only to factories and firms, even in the homestead when help is needed the same song is used.

On beer drinking gatherings songs varies depending on the cause. If for instance the beer is related to a new home there will be such songs as:

Uyawubang'umhlaba!

Amakoloni achophis'amadletyana esafika.

Uyawubang'umhlaba!

Demanding the land ownership!

Colonisers have cabbage-leaf-like ears when they arrive

Demanding the land ownership!

Such songs are meant to praise the men who acquired land and erected a structure for the homestead as brave enough in demanding land ownership from the chief and asking ancestors to protect them. The ladder of social system is created and a political mark is highlighted by such an act.

Music has always been a vital part of our cultural 'knowledge systems', and our chief means of social communication. We learnt our language, beliefs, and sets of customs and values with the help of music making. In the same way we learned about our ancestors and heroes, whose fame and deeds were enshrined in song. Music was not just for entertainment but also for education and knowledge. It was a powerful and effective means of social criticism and even ridicule. People who behaved disgracefully, like **abantu abavimbayo** (stingy people) who have no concerns for others, married women who are unfaithful; or who sleep with boys; powerful people who misuse authority and privilege; selfish family members who desert their families.

Songs have always been an effective means of persuading such people to change their ways. Songs also praise and celebrate, e.g. **Qamata** the God of the Xhosa is venerated in song; a hereditary King is praised in song, but he may also be censured, and even threatened with drastic measures, if he abuses his powers as the well-known **iNkosi yaMampondo sayibulala** (we have killed the King of the Mpondo). These are the songs that form the substance of Madosini's inspirations. I also draw on this national musical repertoire for material and inspiration, although I also turn to other African cultures beyond our borders for musical ideas, and given all this and our personal experiences as musicians in daily life, our potential supply of musical resources is virtually inexhaustible. But, among us today Madosini stands tall as a national treasure of Africa, a composer, performer, and teacher of African oral traditions –song, dance, stories and poems. From my experiences with her and through our interactive music making, I have grown, improved and matured in my musicianship, and I owe her a great debt of thanks for this.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion.

This study took as its main source Madosini Manqineni, who is the subject of this cultural biography. In her earlier years, and later on in her professional career, there has been a wide range of participants in her public performances, and they include musicians of African and other cultural origin who are nationally and internationally acclaimed, and who share her vision of contemporary life in which cultural music plays an important role. I am also a professional musician with a wide experience of Africa's music from all parts of this continent. To date, no research and documentation has been carried out on this Xhosa musician who has become a legend in her own lifetime, and traced the origins and development of her art. I had my own personal motivations for choosing this topic, and I have long admired her extraordinary musicianship. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to have had her co-operation in the preparation of this work, and it has also been a very rich learning experience for me.

For the first time, and exclusively to me, Madosini made certain aspects of her personal life available for documentation. In this work her music and story-songs and the circumstances of their origins and performance practice are unpacked, and insights into a wealth of Xhosa cultural traditions are exposed and recorded, and how they may influence an individual. What is more, certain technical aspects of Madosini' artistic creations are revealed. In the formation which she gave me (in extended recorded interviews in the

Xhosa language, and which is the basis of this ethnography) Madosini has tried to convey to us some experiences of her social, cultural and intellectual environment, and how these influenced the choices she made in her musical career, and continues to do so.

In some recent ethno-musicological publications authors have claimed that, in ethnomusicology, musical ethnographies are a neglected research area, and this is true. For South Africa, two such works come to mind and they are far apart in time: a cultural biography on the Xhosa composer Benjamin Tyamzashe (Hansen 1968), and another on a present-day Xhosa musician who is mentioned in this particular work, Mantombi Matotiyane (M Brown 1998). (Hansen's work was published in 1968 as an Occasional Paper). Both works were presented as MMus dissertations. More recently, a Zulu impresario and promoter of South African **umbhaqanga** music was the subject of a Research essay for the degree of BMus (Hon) (V Nzimande, by N Kheswa 2004). But as so many published authors have shown through their writings, 'it is individuals who make history', and the experiences of musicians who are specialists are valuable and should be addressed in research.

As John Blacking stated of music-making generally: '... it is a symbolic expression of social and cultural organisation which reflects the values of the past and present ways of life of the human beings that make it' (Blacking 1990:127). As this musical ethnography neared completion I gradually realized that there are large gaps in my material, because there were certain areas of my subject's recollections and experiences about which she chose not to speak.

I never pressed her about this, and I respect her decision and her reticence.

The customs and associations of clan, lineage and family, pertaining to the Mpondomise and Mpondo chiefdom clusters were significant in the shaping of Madosini's own worldview. From her earliest years until adulthood she was a member of the same 'soundscape' (i.e. a group of people having a common language and ideas about music' (cfr. Blacking 1990:232). She followed a strong traditional lifestyle, which was greatly enriched by a unified body of traditions and in which active music making and story telling were an accepted part of family and community life. In this environment Madosini's distinctly individual but integrated views about cultural music, and the techniques of its creation and performance, were based on years of learnership, in which she absorbed songs and stories put together and maintained by countless hands, under the guidance of her mother, her elders, and her age-mates.

Growing up with a physical disability which hampered full participation in dancing and other active pursuits, she turned more and more to individual music making, in the form of 'solo' songs with an instrumental accompaniment, the classical forms of which are musical bow songs, and also songs for the jaw harp, an instrument for which basic bow technique (the amplification of harmonic partials for melodic purposes) is applied. So from the earliest years, and even more so when her disability began to cause her severe distress, Madosini's commitment to cultural music was in the real sense 'inward-turning', and it was sited strongly in the more personal, intimate performance styles of bow

songs. I use the term 'solo' in the African sense; it means individual music-making but does not exclude participation from other people, even from an audience. After all, listeners are as important as the music-makers in that they '...recreate and make sense of the sounds they hear' (Blacking 1990:228,231). So any song is really a communal experience, in which onlookers may join voluntarily. But the forms, structures and styles of Madosini's songs are characterized by certain core features which show that a certain continuity with the wider Xhosa cultural tradition is maintained: the cyclic form, antiphonal structure, harmonic movement (hexatonic), and basic bow techniques.

In this regard, Madosini is not a modernizing artist, because the songs originate from a long established system of learning, making and feeling music. The same may be said of her particular handling of **iintsomi**. They also contain core features, which have been handed down from generation to generation by oral transmission. Nevertheless, no professional musician can escape the influences of his/her surrounding technological soundscape. For Madosini, technology has greatly enhanced the sounds of her bow music, particularly her highly innovative whistling that she uses in her mouth-bow songs, and also in jaw harp songs.

Her interlinking of whistle and partials-derived melodic phrases and even motifs is quite extraordinary, and her range of partials is also very wide, and all these are enhanced by modern technology and enables her sounds to be heard clearly in venues filled with crowds of people. She demonstrates a similar interlinking of instrumental and vocal phrases in her jaw harp songs,

in which she punctuates her partials- melodic phrases (derived from one fundamental) with vocal sounds, and structured phrases, often coming from deep within the throat, and this creates the most astonishing effects. Whistling in 'counterpoint' has long been a device used by mouth-bow players, but in my opinion they are not as brilliantly successful as Madosini. She also employs the Xhosa vocal style of **ukungqokola** in some of her bow songs, and this adds to the emotional impact and beauty of her music on her audiences, who marvel at her artistry. Whenever one hears a Madosini song, one is haunted by it for a long time; it makes an indelible imprint on the mind, and it has a quality and an evocative sound that is the hallmark of her style. Because this kind of music is essentially orally transmitted, which is how Madosini learned it, it relies on memory, on habit as well as oral teaching. All this means that this music will always show a degree of variation in performance, and individual musicians can use their particular experiences and their expertise in highly individual ways and always creates something that is refreshingly new, and idiosyncratic.

When Madosini began to perform to a wider public, her former musical community was expanded, and brought her musicianship to public, national and international attention. What happened to her (and here the **MaXhosa** incident is particularly pertinent) helps one to understand and appreciate how problematic life can be for professional African traditionalist musicians in this country. They are constantly exposed to multimedia exploitation and they are all too often the victims of the ignorance, even apathy, and condescension that is behind the so-called 'cultural programmes' on television and radio, and even published recordings, not to mention the

appalling ignorance that is purveyed as so-called 'cultural knowledge' in high profile magazines. (In an article in FEMINA magazine, September 2004, Madosini was applauded as a musical legend and a repository of cultural knowledge, and other choice words were used to acclaim her, but a photograph of her playing the unbraced gourd bow had the caption informing the reader that she was playing the umrhubhe mouth bow). Media mistreatment, misunderstanding and exploitation continue to bug cultural musicians; this is a major issue with which Madosini has had to grapple from thirty years ago, and she has never overcome her distrust of the media and the music industry with good reason.

Madosini has a strong vision of musical conservation and there are many musicians (including myself who share her view). But so many of them never have an opportunity to demonstrate their exceptional individual talents. I picked up many insights into Madosini's concerns about the state of cultural music in this country, which is not being catered for in our present cultural and educational policies. It was author Ayn Rand who said: 'If you work for nothing you are a slave'. But it seems that musicians of cultural music are not rated as high as jazz and 'pop' musicians when it comes to remuneration. All musical professionals have to earn money, that is their right, but Madosini is not economically driven. She wants African cultural music to be kept alive not only for 'cultural heritage' needs, but because of its immense value.

Her professional career and her performances in different parts of the world and here in South Africa all demonstrate the large scope of vision she has for

the role of cultural music today. What she does as a professional musician is not just planning cultural programmes, or for promoting a 'national art', which is what so many South African policy makers want to do with their perception of 'African music'. She was certainly approached to do all these things, but what she aims at is the conservation of cultural music so that successive generations will have acquisition to it – its skills, the knowledge and the social and moral values it carries, and all this it can be a powerful force in helping young people to make sense of the present cultural decay that seems to be going on, and to come to restore and appreciate their musical heritage, and it can be a powerful force in helping them to meet their contemporary artistic aspirations. Knowledge is critically important, and music making is a pleasurable and wonderfully effective form of discipline, and because neither of these ever stand still, --they are always changing –they actually promote tradition and innovation –which is what musical conservation is all about.

Madosini does not always put her vision into words, but she acts on it in very compelling performances and workshops. Many academics, researchers and critics of African music and culture have been refereed to her, and countless others here and abroad have participated in her concerts and workshops.

In her life and career in cultural music, Madosini has put together an artistically rich and educational social-musical history for a comparatively young democratic nation, a social history that is viewed from her own informed, experienced and balanced perspectives.

Her involvement in school projects and in matters of national and international significance has enabled her to contribute to, and to enliven the educational and moral values, which were traditionally inculcated through oral traditions –the songs and song-stories –so that they continue to be living traditions today. The traditional instruments such as the musical bows –which had all but disappeared from the forefront of daily life –have through her efforts and intervention been rescued from virtual oblivion and restored as major cultural emblems. As instruments of classical African music these instruments have been resuscitated, and presented to modern audiences for pleasure and enjoyment. Madosini has also re-established the proper technology of the instruments, and expanded their technical musical possibilities using modern available materials and technology. Because of her, so many people have to come to appreciate and value the oral traditions of the Southern African region.

The globalisation of music has brought about an aggressive individualism in musical production, to the extent that diversity seems the goal, to be achieved by any means, and here techno-culture plays a crucial role. One does not have to be essentially musical to produce music that is novel, but rather one needs only to be able to supply a degree of digital technology to achieve some really ‘new sounds’. In their publication *Music and Technoculture* (2003, Wesleyan University Press, p.2), editors Lysloff and Gay point out that the term ‘technoculture’ in ethnomusicology is concerned with ‘how technology implicates cultural practices involving music’. This publication contains several studies by different authors who write on ways in which technology has been incorporated into local (cultural musical) practices.

One of the results of this is the production of music appropriated from various sources, and including that with a traditional/rural base. In South Africa there are already individuals who are processing this kind of 'hybrid' music which comes from so many different traditional sources, and in which the overlay and mix of appropriated music is so dense that it is virtually impossible to identify the music culturally. But, as asserted by an author in the aforementioned publication, this form of composing is not intended to produce a fragmentation of the musical sources, but rather the composer '...uses technologically sophisticated means to assert the value of memory of place' (represented by the musical sources (Review, 2004:159).

Madosini is aware that certain composers are using cultural music in this way, but she does not take it seriously since most of the techno composers are cultural outsiders. Nor does she view 'culture' –or the manifestations of it, evident in instruments and music genres etc. as being isolated, since all cultures are a 'mix' through centuries of intercultural contact. But she does appreciate the inheritance of culture, it is immense, and it comes from the historical past. As such, it offers certainty and positivism in today's uncertain, troublesome and confused social climate.

Madosini is a woman of great determination and she knows the worth of her aims and efforts, some of which have been cited in the published media by music journalists and critics. She is also charitable by nature, but she is not willing to compromise on issues about which she feels strongly. Because of this, some people see her as formidable and inflexible until they get to know her better, and understand her absolutes

from which she will not depart. Most people have come to know her as a musical professional with a vast knowledge and repertory of African music, her abiding love for it her musical expertise, her lively and creative mind, and her extraordinary generosity toward other musicians. Her achievements in the **iintsomi** tradition are notably significant from the early 1970s and it is regrettable that her numerous performances were not film-recorded in those days. She has always generously shared her know-how with show business freelancers and with musicians and music lovers who are, as she put it, 'really eager to hear the right notes and not the wrong ones' (that is to say, to come to have an accurate understanding of the musical traditions of Africa, their distinctive rhythms, harmonies and forms of æsthetic expression).

In collaborating with me to produce this cultural biography, Madosini and I found that we hold compatible views about it. We did not do it just for academic purposes. I have always felt that this kind of study –involving dialogue and the documentation of contemporary African musical practice through the experiences and observations of musical professionals –has relevance not just for scholarship, but also for the understanding of contemporary African problems and issues. Like Madosini, I have also devoted myself to trying to change what we both see as the ignorance –and even deliberate disdain for African cultural music, which is evident at all, levels of our society, even in the tertiary institutions.

Many school learners today know little if anything about their musical heritage, and they are being literally consumed by a 'consumer-orientated'

music industry that promotes what is called African music that is often gimmicky and contrived and not genuine at all. It is up to knowledgeable African music specialists to make the correct information available to all the communities. Through collaboration with artists, research and documentation backed up by actual living performance, we can put together a body of human musical knowledge, which is available for those who need it the most –those involved in arts and educational programmes, and for the curricular teaching of African music in schools and in higher educational institutions. This is sorely needed in South Africa, but while curricular teaching is discussed and planned, it always lacks content, and the informed people to impart that content accurately and effectively. Conserving African cultural traditions will ensure that the special kind of knowledge and the materials and techniques that underscore it, will be accessible to the very people who gave it.

For Madosini, cultural music has been a major constant in her life but for the majority of South Africans this is not the case. She is not literate in English, and communicates entirely in her language, isiXhosa. She has given much of herself to generating a love and appreciation of cultural music, and has encouraged and assisted many other musicians, including myself, to promote cultural activities in the communities. She has always maintained that African music must continue to be practiced, and transmitted accurately and in a culturally sensitive way. Being essentially oral in transmission, there has always been some redefinition in the continuity process, and this is what is so evident in the art of Madosini and other dedicated musicians. Their music is not imitation, it is redefinition (implying also variability and innovation).

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It is through continuity and redefinition that the immense African musical heritage is ensured continuity with the past, and continuity into the future.

It is a truism that 'music is something that is done by human beings only' –even though the patronizing attitudes of music literati and the media would have it otherwise. We should take due care of our cultural musicians, their musical creations, and the notions they hold about music and the related arts. Past studies in ethnomusicology and early record collections are witness to the innumerable musicians who have contributed to our knowledge of African music but most of them remain anonymous. The time has come for us to give due attention to specialist musicians, and for addressing their valuable experiences and observations. Musical ethnographies offer insights into the history and state of music at a given period in time. We already have an impressive stock of musical knowledge, which has withstood the test of time. But in the reality of our present world, our cultural music owes its continuity to the intentions of people like Madosini, recognized nationally as the 'Queen of Xhosa music' who has surely left her fingerprints for all time in the pages of African music history.

EPILOGUE

The world of Xhosa music in which Madosini grew up has expanded considerably during her lifetime, and today the musical 'soundscape' of our country is very wide and varied. Madosini, along with persons like myself and other members of both the younger and older generation, continue to promote and practice cultural traditions that are infrequently performed or seriously maintained. Madosini continues to have a deep love and concern for the telling of African social and musical history through her songs and, in this biographical account of her achievements, I hope to have thrown some light on her reasons for doing so.

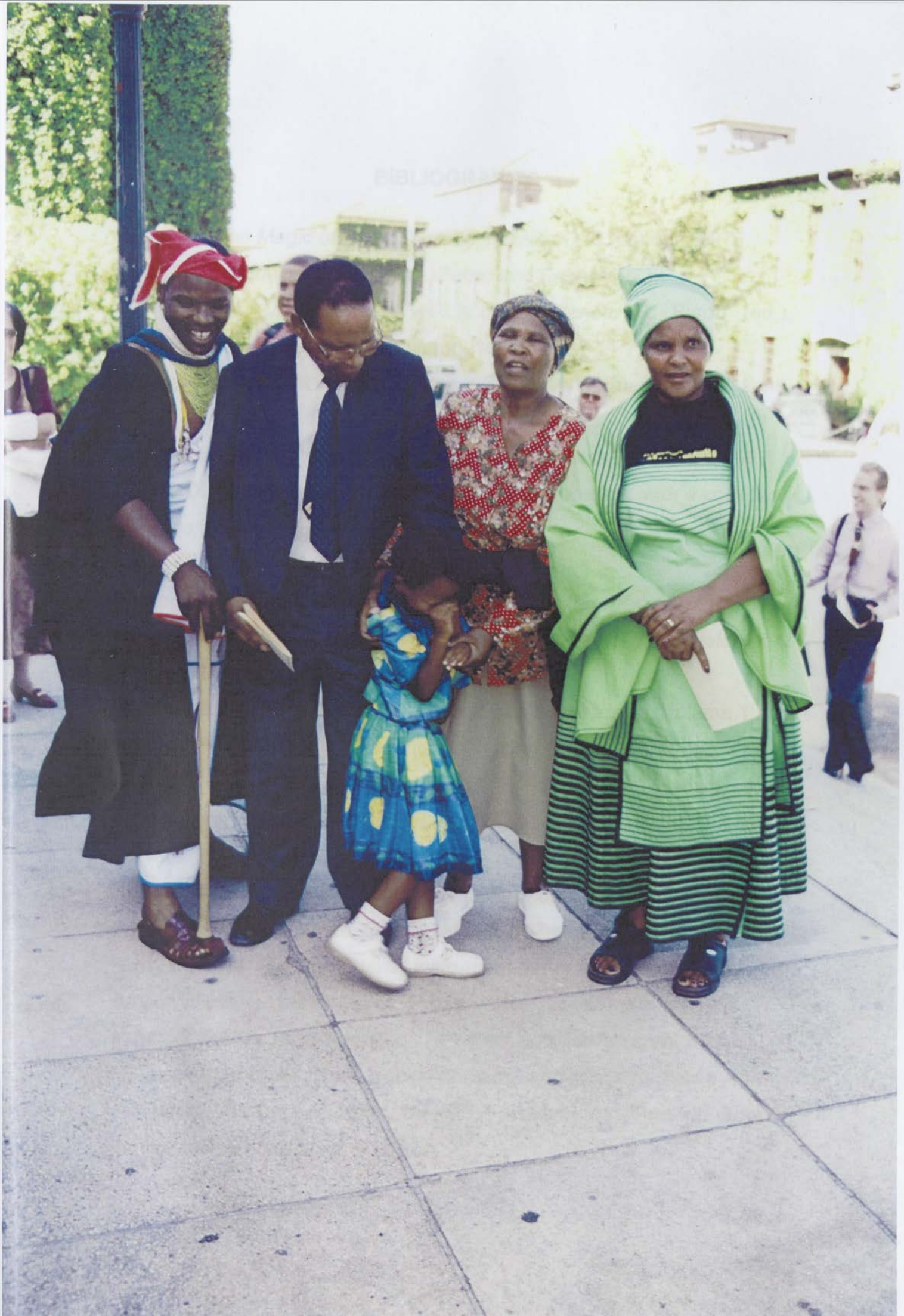
We 'recall tradition' (Spiegel and McAllister 1991:2) and turn to our immense oral sources of music, because, as tradition, it gives us a frame of reference through which we can respond to the social issues that are important to us in modern times. 'Tradition ...serves as a constantly invented and reinvented to accommodate changes in the social system' (1991:5). Thanks to the commitment and generosity of creative individuals like Madosini Manqineni, younger people are also drawn into greater prominence in Africa's cultural history. In fact, it is people like Madosini who are making this history by helping us to forge new directions for our African musics. Nowhere is this more vividly demonstrated than in the contributions of Madosini Manqineni to Xhosa cultural music, and to the younger generation of musicians who have been privileged to know and work with her.



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