THE *MAKHWEYANE* BOW OF SWAZILAND: MUSIC, POETICS AND PLACE

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Declaration

I, Cara Stacey, hereby declare that the work on which this dissertation is based is my original work (except where acknowledgements indicate otherwise) and that neither the whole work nor any part of it has been, is being, or is to be submitted for another degree in this or any other university. I authorise the University to reproduce for the purpose of research either the whole or any portion of the contents in any manner whatsoever.

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For my parents and brother, my dear friend, Vusi Sibandze, and all of the musicians in Swaziland who so graciously gave of their time and music.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

This dissertation investigates how the contemporary performers of the Swazi gourd-resonated bow, the *makhweyane*, create music. Since David Rycroft's study of Swazi bow music in the 1960s and 1970s, little study has been devoted to this musical instrument. The *makhweyane* is played by a handful of people, each appearing to consider him or herself the last bearer of this tradition. Despite this, however, musical bows have been co-opted as icons of Swazi national identity, and, along with the *Incwala* (the "first fruits" festival) and *Umhlanga* ("reed dance") ceremonies, are used as public affirmation of Swazi cultural homogeneity to rally support for the monarchy.

The research investigates how musicians create new music for this single-stringed instrument. It also explores, through oral testimony, musical analysis, and practice-based methodologies, the discourse surrounding composition and musical innovation on this rare instrument. Players learn and create through both solitary and participatory exploration and music-making. This research explores how current *makhweyane* music can be read as oral testimony with regards to the lives of musicians, but also how diverse current praxis serves many functions: as "radio" for lone travelers, as comfort for broken hearts, and as individual acts of citizenry within a broader national environment.

This dissertation explores the musical, technical, and social parameters engaged when creating new repertory – the myriad invisible spectres to whom players play and for whom players compose - and the shape that new, resilient *makhweyane* sounds are taking. It extends David Rycroft's musicological analysis of the 1960s and 1970s to include an investigation into current dialectics between individual notions of creative innovation and musical memory, and the national cultural imaginary. My findings suggest a reframing of 'traditional' musicians from elderly 'culture-bearers' to responsive, innovators and active contemporary musicians, along with their urban-based, younger counterparts. Opening with the King's call for new compositions to be created, this dissertation reads the *makhweyane* as a prism for Swaziness, for learning and storytelling, for the imagination and remembering, and for creation.

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List of acronyms

INM: Imbokodvo National Movement

IGCSE: International General Certificate of Secondary Education

GCSE: General Certificate of Secondary Education

NNLC: Ngwane National Liberation Congress

PUDEMO: The People's United Democratic Movement or *Insika Yenkhululeko YemaSwati*

SADC: Southern African Development Community

SBIS: Swaziland Broadcasting and Information Services

SDI: Swaziland Development Index

SNCAC: Swaziland National Council of Arts and Culture

STMA: Swaziland Traditional Musicians' Association

SWAMA: Swaziland Music Association

UKZN: University of KwaZulu-Natal

UNISWA: University of Swaziland

Glossary

Babe – This term translates as 'father' but is also used as a term of respect for an older man.

Balozi – This term translates as 'spirits'.

Berimbau – A braced, gourd-resonated musical bow found in Brazil and used as an accompanying instrument in the martial arts form *Capoeira.*

Emadloti – A term for the spirit world in Swaziland.

Emahiya – Traditional red cotton cloth worn by women and men in Swaziland.

Emajaha – The siSwati term for young men. The singular form is: *lijaha*.

Emakhandzambili – Independent chiefdoms in the region of contemporary Swaziland in the 18th century

Emakhaya – Style of land division in the rural areas of Swaziland into small holdings.

Ekhaya – 'Home', also the name of one stage at the annual MTN Bushfire International Arts Festival

Gogo – 'Grandmother' or a term of respect for an older woman.

Imbali – A term of the young women (maidens) who partake in the *Umhlanga* ceremony.

Imbokodvo – 'Grindstone' in English, INM, *Imbokodvo* National Movement, political party started by Sobhuza II

Imigubho – This term refers to traditional songs or regimental songs.

Imitsimba – This term refers to a Swazi wedding.

Incwala – The annual, multi-part kingship renewal ceremony in Swaziland.

Imfengwane – The whistles played by dancing young women at the *Umhlanga* ceremony

Imfiliji – The siSwati term for a harmonica

Inkhositina – The siSwati term for a concertina

Joyina – Short-term mine contract

Kucamba – This translates as 'to compose something new'.

Libandla – The *Libandla* consists of chiefs and members of the royal family.

Lidladla – An eating house in a traditional home.

Ligubhu – A Swazi unbraced struck bow with a calabash resonator attached to its lower half, similar to the isiXhosa *uhadi* and the isiZulu *ugubhu* bows.

Liqoqo – The council of the king of Swaziland.

Lugagane – The tree which is used to make the *makhweyane* bow (*Acacia ataxacantha*).

Lutsango – Female regiment made up of mostly married women.

Mbulumbumba – An Angolan musical bow believed to be related to the *berimbau* bow in Brazil.

Make – 'Mother'

Makhweyane (or *makhoyane*)– A braced musical bow instrument with calabash resonator found in Swaziland.

Malunga – A braced, gourd-resonated musical bow played within the Siddi/Sidi community in India.

Mbhilibhi – The name of a notorious bus active between the towns Mbabane and Piggs Peak.

Mfecane – A period of political turmoil and migration across central and eastern southern Africa between 1815 and 1840.

Mkhulu – This term translates as 'grandfather' but is also used as a term of respect for an older man.

Sibhaca – A popular style of dancing in Swaziland derived from dances of Bhaca mineworkers on the South African mines.

Sibaya – A mass meeting called periodically where Swazi subjects can communicate issues with the king and his council.

Sikelekehle – A friction, monochord musical bow bowed by a small horse-hair bow with an oil-can resonator that sits on the player's shoulder.

Sitontolo – A braced mouth-resonated musical bow found in Swaziland.

Sitolotolo (or *sitweletwele*)– The siSwati term for a mouth harp or jews harp.

Tibongo – The siSwati term for praise-singing. In *makhweyane* songs, this takes the form of fast, spoken text within the body of a song.

Tinkhundla – Swaziland is divided into 55 *tinkhundla* (traditional local council) subdivisions.

Ugubhu – An isiZulu unbraced, gourd-resonated musical bow similar to the Swazi *ligubhu*.

Uhadi – An isiXhosa unbraced, gourd-resonated musical bow.

Umakhweyana – An isiZulu braced, gourd-resonated musical bow similar to the Swazi *makhweyane* bow.

Umbholoho – A popular, unaccompanied vocal music from Swaziland similar to the South African musical tradition *isicathamiya*.

Umhlanga – A seven-day, mass-participatory, annual ceremony, also known as the "reed dance".

Ummiso – A term for any dance song with young female singers.

Umrhubhe – A small isiXhosa mouth-resonated musical bow.

Umtshingosi – Swazi flute made of bark or plastic pipe.

Xitende – A Mozambican braced, gourd-resonated musical bow similar to the Swazi *makhweyane* bow.

Author's Note

Throughout my field research, musicians, participants and friends used numerous siSwati spellings and pronunciations. The *makhweyane* instrument, for instance, has two different spellings: *makhoyane* and *makhweyane*. David Rycroft, in his siSwati dictionary (1981) uses the *makhweyane* spelling (with *bomakhweyane* in its plural form). This is much closer to the isiZulu spelling (*umakhweyana*) than the current official spelling of the term, *makhoyane.* As far as I can deduce, musicians based in the rural areas of Swaziland (especially the central and northern Lowveld) favoured this spelling but elsewhere *makhoyane* was used. The same predicament applies to the siSwati term for mouth harp: *sitweletwele*. This spelling is the same as the isiZulu spelling (*isitweletwele*) and again, is seen in Rycroft's siSwati orthography. Both *sitweletwele* and *sitolotolo* are used in Swaziland today. For the sake of consistency, I have chosen to use both *makhweyane* and *sitolotolo*, drawn from the majority of my field consultants, but acknowledge that there are many spelling and pronunciation variants in use. From my position, it appears that some siSwati spellings, over time, may be moving away from their historic isiZulu roots towards a more distinct siSwati orthography and this could be grounds for further research.

Interview citations and song lyrics have been translated into English as directly as possible. Due to the highly figurative nature of siSwati as a language, when further explanation is required or where alternate translations exist, I have used footnotes to elaborate. Where slang or colloquial terms have been used by musicians and other research participants, I have used common siSwati spellings, accepting that there are probably variations in spelling for these as well. In siSwati, the terms *mkhulu* (grandfather), *gogo* (grandmother), *make* (mother), *babe* (father) are terms of respect used to refer to older people. As a young woman working largely in the rural areas of Swaziland, this is how I (along with other people my age) addressed the musicians in this study. In my writing I continue this practice out of respect for the participants and field consultants.

All song translations were done by Vusi Sibandze. Musical examples have been supplied in staff notation, with spectrograms and representative graphics where necessary. Due to the complex nature of the sound of the *makhweyane* bow, numerous representational tools have been used to show the rhythmic, spectral, and performative nature of this music. All the photographs included in this dissertation were taken by myself unless otherwise stated.

Lastly, in Swaziland musicians who play instruments like the *makhweyane* and *sitolotolo* are referred to most commonly as '*ema-traditional artists*'. Musicians themselves use the terms 'tradition' and 'traditional' frequently and so do policy makers, the press, and audience members when referring to the music investigated in this dissertation.

Acknowledging the complex 'tradition/modernity' dichotomy within an African context, I tentatively use the term 'traditional artist' due to its currency within my specific field of research. An examination of this term, and its associated connotations forms the basis of this dissertation and is addressed in most of the forthcoming chapters.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

On the 6th of May 2014, I visited the home of Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula, an elderly musician and bow player, in the sprawling rural hills known as eNyakatfo, near eBuhleni in central northern Swaziland. My friend and fellow musician, Vusi Sibandze, had accompanied me on this trip. He was with me when I first met Mkhulu Bhemani a few years before in February 2011. On this day in 2014, we had driven out of Manzini, the main industrial town of Swaziland, and turned north, crossing the mighty Mbuluzi river, past the grilled mielie *(maize) stands and stray dogs of Madlangamphisi, finally reaching Mkhulu's home down a gravel road in the steamy haze of the Lowveld. When I had met Mkhulu before, he had been living with his wife and grandchildren and there had been a bustle and liveliness to his home but on this day, I arrived to find his circumstances much changed. Past the rusted corrugated iron gate, Mkhulu appeared shorter, and frail, with grey hair and fewer teeth. He muttered "Ameni" (Amen) repeatedly to himself as he came to greet us and let us into the swept, denuded yard. He was alone except for a tiny, feral kitten, tiptoe-ing around his feet. Since my last visit, his wife had passed away and his relatives had moved to the urban areas around Manzini and Mbabane (the capital of this small kingdom) and beyond. After greeting each other, Mkhulu sat on a wooden stool outside his* lidladla *or 'eating house'. He told of how the King of Swaziland, Mswati III, had called for new compositions to be made and how he had felt inspired to create new songs on his* makhweyane *musical bow because of this announcement. With swollen, humid clouds above, he played his new* kaMkhweli *song, a song about the importance of using condoms* (emakhondomu), *and other compositions, both old and new. The small Swazi flag attached to the top of his tall* makhweyane *musical bow blew in the sticky breeze as he sang and played to us and to the surrounding bare fields.*[1]

In May 2013 King Mswati III of Swaziland (a landlocked southern African country) made a statement at the Engabezweni Royal Residence encouraging the *emajaha*, the national male regiments, to compose new 'traditional' songs or *imigubho*. Most Swazi men in this small country belong to an age-regiment and through this, are patriotically bound to the King in

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[1] Extract from field note entitled "Trip to eBuhleni: Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula" (eNyakatfo, Hhohho province, 6 May 2014).

times of war and in tribute labour.[2] As part of the King's national address, this "royal command" was directed at approximately five hundred regiments, after they had finished harvesting the royal fields. One of the two national newspapers, the *Swazi Times* quoted the King as saying: "*Kufuneka imigubho leyitawuhambisana nalamakhosi lakhona, majaha*" (It is incumbent upon you to compose new songs for the present king) (Dlamini 2013). The King encouraged all the young men present and the nation at large to create new songs but without rearranging older compositions written for former kings (his father, the late Sobhuza II, in particular). It was feared that writing new words to set to existing melodies could lead to heritage being lost, as older versions of songs could be forgotten. The King was requesting the construction of entirely new songs in order to maintain the older repertory. In this eighteen-minute speech, he went on to tell the male regiments present that they should not "be seen as failures". Through an appointed speaker, he stated: "I expect some of you to use your talent by composing such songs and the manner in which they should be danced" (ibid.).

Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula, mentioned in the opening fieldwork vignette, is an elderly musician who plays this *makhweyane* musical bow, a gourd-resonated single string musical bow characteristically performed by men and women as a solo instrument. The *makhweyane* serves as an accompanying instrument whilst the solo player sings poetic songs about life, love, and loss. Described by ethnomusicologist David Rycroft as one of the "classical" musical instruments of Swaziland (1979:169), the *makhweyane* is rarely heard today, with fewer than twenty remaining active performers.[3]

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[2] Tribute labour would have historically involved going into battle for the Swazi king, but in contemporary times, this refers to labouring in the royal fields.
[3] It is hard to say exactly what Rycroft meant by this but in using the term "classical", it seems that he was attempting to reframe musical bows as complex and worthy of scholarly research during a time when western classical and other classical musics dominated research circles and thought.

Figure 1 Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula playing his makhweyane at eNyakatfo (7 May 2014)

The research that informs this dissertation began shortly after King Mswati III's statement. It investigates the processes of playing and composing music for one of the musical bows found in Swaziland, the *makhweyane.* I explore how the *makhweyane* interacts with the active nationalist cultural imaginary engaged in Swaziland and through a close reading of interview material, lyrics and musical composition, I ask how musicians learn to play, what they choose to play, and how they compose for the *makhweyane*. I examine the *makhweyane* as a conduit for remembering and storytelling. Through my analysis, I propose a reframing of these predominantly rural-based musicians in Swaziland as innovative composers in their own right, avoiding indurating terms such as 'culture-bearer' and rejecting the connotations of the unresponsive "frozen state" the term "traditional" often denotes (Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2012:200).

My initial encounter with Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula framed this research inquiry and exposed the complex links between larger forms of cultural expression and an individual musician's contributions to it. In a country where a homogenous national culture is reinforced through large mass-participatory events, such as the *Umhlanga* ("reed dance") and *Incwala* ("first fruits" festival), the state in Swaziland has a complex and mercurial appreciation of songs and so-called 'traditional' music in the country. There is no evidence to show that any king of Swaziland has ever before felt the need to direct musicians to compose more "original" music. Bhemani Magagula's response to this call for new compositions framed the subtleties in this dichotomous moment. King Mswati III's words raise themes such as hegemony versus heterogony, codified cultural models versus the singular experience, and creative expression and power within nationalist contemporary Swaziland. The complex

political past and present of this southern African state and its effect on music is discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

Angela Impey, in her article on the music of the southern African borderlands, describes how music can be perceived as "an archive of experiences: a site of collective memory or a primary symbolic landscape of a people" (Impey 2008:35). This sentiment is echoed in the works of Carol Muller (2002), Liz Gunner (2009), and Marie Jorritsma (2011). Muller states how composition, more specifically, is mobilised in this way serving as a space for the "deposit and retrieval of historical styles and practice in both literate and pre-literate contexts" (Muller 2002:410). In line with these ideas, this dissertation explores how current *makhweyane* music can be read as oral testimony with regards to the lives of musicians but also how current praxis serves many functions: as "radio" for lone travellers, as comfort for broken hearts, and as individual acts of citizenry within a broader national environment. The communicative nature of the compositions created by contemporary players means that a close reading of these works opens up numerous themes such as tradition, gender, spirituality, and power in Swaziland today. It suggests that the *makhweyane* bow is actively employed in the day-to-day constructions of individual and collective histories and identities.

After the King's speech was reported on Swazi Radio and in the print media, numerous musicians not present on the day came to know about the King's request for new *imigubho* or regimental songs through radio and newspaper reports. Some instrumentalists took heed of the King's call and began to compose new songs. In the siSwati language, *kucamba* is the verb that is translated as to compose something new, to innovate, or to come up with a new solution. This dissertation analyses the way in which the few musicians who play the *makhweyane* bow learned, make and speak about music in contemporary Swaziland.

As is the case with other southern African musical bows, *makhweyane* players are largely based in the rural areas and in all but four cases, are elderly and economically marginalised. Despite this, this dissertation proposes a reframing of elderly 'traditional' musicians from disenfranchised (though valuable), elderly "culture-bearers" to responsive innovators and active contemporary musicians, along with their urban-based younger counterparts.

The making of contemporary Swaziland

In Swaziland, culture and politics are closely aligned and the nature of this dyadic relationship is discussed in detail in Chapter Two. As a small state with a much-publicized homogenous cultural construct, an investigation into Swazi music (and specifically the music

of the *makhweyane* bow) requires an understanding of the creation of this small kingdom and how it functions today.

Contemporary Swaziland is a small state nestled between the eastern borders of South Africa and the south-western borders of Mozambique. The city of Mbabane is the capital of Swaziland and is in the Hhohho district. Though Mbabane is the city with the largest population (94 874 in 2010), the two neighbouring towns of Manzini and Matsapha form the industrial heartland of Swaziland. Matsapha is the major industrial site for local and South African businesses, whereas the city of Manzini is home to approximately 80 000 residents. It is situated in the centre of the country and is a transport hub for travellers to and from Maputo, Johannesburg, Durban, and beyond.

The population of Swaziland is 1.3 million (UN Data: Swaziland 2016). According to the UN, approximately 63% of the population lives below the poverty line (2011) including 37% of the population who are unable to feed themselves (UNDP: Swaziland 2016). Swaziland had the highest HIV/AIDS infection rate in the world in 2009 with a prevalence rate of 42% (Masuku et al. 2009:3). It is now estimated that approximately 30% of Swazi adults between the ages of fifteen and 49 live with HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS: Swaziland 2016). Life expectancy has levelled to its current rate of 48 (women) and 49 (men) (between 2010-2015) (UN Data: Swaziland 2016). Wealth distribution is extremely uneven with 10% of the population in control of 50% of the national income and the greatest concentration of wealth is in urban areas. This skewed distribution of wealth means that for people in the rural areas (approximately 78% of the population), there are few facilities to alleviate the bleakness of their socio-economic environment (UN Data: Swaziland 2016). UNESCO (2013) research shows that amongst the target years of 18 to 22, the average years of schooling held per Swazi citizen is only eight years (under the advised ten years). Recent data shows that nine percent of this target population group has had fewer than four years of education.[4] Despite these alarming statistics, civic gains have been made over recent years. Formulated between 2008 and 2013, the Government Programme of Action articulates the right of all Swazi citizens to have access to free basic education. As of 2010 (despite tentative rollout) free primary school education has been available across the country.

In 2013, King Mswati III announced the National Development Strategy, commonly referred to as 'Vision 2022'. This document stipulates that by 2022 Swaziland should be considered a 'First World' country using the Swaziland Development Index (SDI) – a set of indicators to monitor economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, education, health, and governance as a gauge of its status. These development pronouncements have framed

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[4] School leavers write either the IGCSE board examinations (International General Certificate of Secondary Education – private schools), or the localised Swaziland General Certificate of Secondary Education (government schools).

much of the political and policy changes in recent years, as ministries and councils aim to align their goals with this broader framework. Arts education has never been a high priority for a country grappling with a chronic lack of educational resources but the National Development Strategy calls for the incorporation of cultural education into the national curriculum. At the time of writing, a performing and fine arts curriculum was in development. Despite consultation with local practitioners and artists, no changes to the national curriculum had yet been made.

The UN statistics indicate a complex prognosis for Swaziland. This small country faces many socio-economic challenges. These challenges are often concentrated amongst the population based in the rural areas, where most *makhweyane* players live. Contemporary Swaziland provides a complex cultural setting in which these musicians play and make music. It is from this landscape of hardship, regional networking and negotiation, political shenanigans, and glorious natural beauty that individual creative experience and artistic practice emerge.

Modern Swaziland has a chequered and complicated geographic and political past. The country was founded in the 18th century when numerous independent chiefdoms and kingdoms (*emakhandzambili*) were conquered and incorporated into the Ngwane kingdom after pressure from both the Ndwandwe people to the south and the Tembe people to the east (Bonner 1983:10-11; Crush 1987). Ngwane II (originally from the northern Embo region and of the Dlamini clan) is the first Swazi king commemorated in modern ritual, though leaders can be traced back by oral historians until the sixteenth-century (Kuper 1963:7).[5] It is believed that under Ngwane's leadership, the Swazis moved inland from the south-eastern coast over the Lebombo mountains (ibid.). A small but central country, the history of Swaziland is one of contact with and influence from numerous important historical events in the southern African region:

> The *Mfecane*,[6] the Great Trek[7], the establishment of the British colony in Natal [1843], the formation of the South African Republic, the civil conflicts in the Transvaal, the slave trade, the expansion of the Shangane and Pedi states, the Sekhukhune wars, the Zulu War, the British annexation of the Transvaal and the discovery of minerals on the Rand all affected Swazi history and were reciprocally influenced in turn. (Bonner 1983:4-5)

By the 1890s, Swaziland had made the transition from a relatively self-sufficient society to one heavily dependent on wage labour and imports (Crush 1987:5). Along with

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[5] It is assumed that these leaders referred to by oral historians were the earlier kings and chiefs of the Ngwane clan (before its expansion).
[6] The *Mfecane* was a period of political turmoil and migration across central and eastern southern Africa between 1815 and 1840.
[7] The Great Trek occurred between the mid 1830s and mid 1840s.

Botswana and Lesotho, Swaziland became a British Protectorate in 1902 after the South African War (1899 - 1902). Through much of the twentieth-century it was perceived as a labour reservoir for South African industry (Davies, et al. 1985:1/2). Under British Protectoriateship, Swaziland endured gradually increasing administrative control and taxation.

Swaziland gained independence from Britain in 1968. In preparation for this, the then paramount chief Sobhuza II formed the *Imbokodvo* ('grindstone') National Movement in order to compete with the Ngwane National Liberation Congress (NNLC), the Swaziland Democratic Party and the Swaziland People's Party in pre-independence elections (Davies et al. 1985:6). *Imbokodvo* won this election and Swaziland became a constitutional monarchy with a prime minister and parliament (ibid.:9). In 1973, due to disruptions involving the King's refusal to accept NNLC parliamentarians, Sobhuza II called a state of emergency and dissolved all political parties. The "King's Coup", as this event became known, meant that all legislative, executive and administrative powers were now held by the King and the Westminster-style parliament of the previous years was proclaimed "un-Swazi" (Davies et al. 1985:46). King Sobhuza II ruled by decree from 1973 until 1978 and from then onwards, political parties have been banned in Swaziland. In 1978, Sobhuza II introduced a new constitution reliant on the King's favoured *Tinkhundla* system and in which the *Liqoqo* (the King's advisory council) functioned as the executive of the Swazi National Council (or *Libandla*) (ibid.:47).[8]

Swaziland's political system was historically described as a 'dual monarchy' in which power is shared by the hereditary king or *Ingwenyama* (Lion) and the queen mother or *Indlovukati* (Lady Elephant). The past decade has seen further power and influence transferred to King Mswati III alone.[9] King Mswati III inherited the throne (at age fourteen) when his father Sobhuza II died in 1982.

In the last twenty years, Mswati III's position and the Swazi royal elite have been called into question on several occasions. Numerous political and civic events indicate the growing dissatisfaction with the *status quo*. Recent financial pressures have enlivened political debate. Beyond limited parliamentary elections, royal power remains in place but in a climate of sporadic civil unrest exacerbated by the King's overspending. It can be argued that during King Mswati's reign, the ruling elite of Swaziland have moved away from an earlier, more fluid understanding of a regional, connected cultural environment to a static

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[8] Swaziland is divided into 55 *tinkhundla* (traditional local council) subdivisions. Each *inkundla* ('community centre') sends a representative to the House of Assembly, in parliament, and so the *tinkhundla* have political weight within the national system. The *tinkhundla* system has been criticised for restricting political participation and true democratic representation within local constituencies. The *Libandla* consists of chiefs and members of the royal family.

[9] The Queen Mother is still alive. Kuper described how this "dual monarchy" system made Swaziland a special case in southern Africa (1963: 2).

and nostalgic image of rural Swazi life. Processes of territorialisation and the centralisation of power began in past centuries (discussed further in Chapter Two), but even today, the Swazi Nation and its homogenous cultural image are actively reinforced by those in power. This translates into a myriad of complex, reciprocal performances in the everyday lives of people (Anderson 2006:19). It is in these everyday enactments of the nation that the populace complicates this top-down formulation of culture. Ordinary people participate in the making and remaking of 'Swazi culture' and identity through the creative arts, through the performance of their politics, and even through their decisions regarding what clothing to wear – all resulting in a complex, intertwined relationship between individual and state.

The King's Engabezweni speech, calling for new songs to be composed, can be read as an intervention in the cultural life of Swaziland by those in power. His request was seen as a "call to arms" for many musicians in the country and in the quest to be innovative, some *makhweyane* players and other 'traditional' musicians have responded by composing new songs. Musicians like Bhemani Magagula took heed and created new songs that mediate local happenings, express feelings over personal and political situations, and serve as an oral archive of local stories and events. In the case of Magagula's *kaMkhweli* composition (discussed in detail in Chapter Two), a song can act as a reminder of past moments of resistance within the context of current dissatisfaction, by highlighting a controversial land removal event in northern Swaziland. The broader cultural imaginary determined and encouraged by the royal elite, in the face of the King's declining popularity, is complicated by these individual acts of cultural citizenship.

In order to understand how the *makhweyane* and its music feature in contemporary Swaziland, it is important to place indigenous instruments like it within the broader musical context in Swaziland. Considering the extensive challenges faced by most Swazi citizens, how does one become a musician? How does music feature in people's lives? With "Vision 22" and broader cultural valuation in mind, the following section will survey the musical environment in Swaziland. It will consider the current state of arts and music education, as well as the musical scene within which local performers and audiences engage.

Music in Swaziland

> Music, a constant aural backdrop to this incomplete and fragmentary process,
> also becomes an important site of (re)connection between the past and the
> more recent present. (Jorritsma 2011:12)

The following section provides an introduction to the musical life of Swaziland. It considers modes of formal and informal music education, amateur and professional musicking, and

policy considerations, in order to contextualise where the *makhweyane* and other so-called 'traditional' musical practices feature in contemporary Swaziland.

The National Development Strategy and the Education Sector Policy of 2011 acknowledge the importance of education in creating an appreciation for culture and the arts. The Swaziland National Council of Arts and Culture (SNCAC) Policy (2009) and National Arts and Culture Bill (2012) both state that schools are essential places for the promotion of the arts, and that the national curriculum should include artistic and cultural subjects. The Ministry of Education and the National Curriculum Development Centre have included the need for creative vocational alternatives to be developed (such as visual arts, performing arts, culture, and entrepreneurship) as part of their short-term and long-term goals. Despite this and as mentioned before, there are no creative arts subjects taught in government schools at primary or secondary school levels. The National Curriculum Centre has started the process of developing a syllabus for the "expressive arts" at primary and secondary levels but due to financial constraints and inadequate teacher training this process has now come to a halt.

Private schools in Swaziland have offered individual and class music tuition for some years. At these institutions, there is an emphasis on students following the British ABRSM (Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music) syllabuses in their instrumental studies and music can be taken as a subject for the GSCE (General Secondary Certificate of Education), IGCSE (International General Certificate of Education) or International Baccalaureate examinations. Schools like the Setsembiso Sebunye Bahá'í School (a government-supported school) have recently taken the initiative to offer an optional fine arts course during school hours, with group music tuition (guitar and voice) as an extra-mural. Extra-curricular school choirs are commonly found across the nation. Often schools will have after-class choirs or dance ensembles and the level of musical proficiency in these ensembles is high. The University of Swaziland (UNISWA) is the only public university in the country. With a strong focus on agricultural studies and the sciences, UNISWA does not offer any creative arts courses. The Humanities faculty offers courses in African languages and literature, history, english and politics but has no current options for the creative arts. The Swaziland College of Technology, another important state tertiary institution, offers technical and vocational training in the fields of education, science and engineering, ICT, and business studies. At the time of writing, there are no creative arts taught at this institution either. Limkokwing, a private tertiary institution which opened in Swaziland recently, offers a creative multimedia stream which includes animation, interactive multimedia, and web design.

With no music taught within the current national curriculum, musical skills are transmitted in alternative and often intangible ways outside of formal frameworks. In this

space, numerous players and stakeholders are developing short- and long-term projects and strategies to share creative arts education around the country. Though these are largely focused on the visual arts, a healthy and self-sustaining culture of music-making can be observed. As with many other professional fields, young people in Swaziland often opt to continue their musical studies in South Africa. South African universities in Pretoria, Johannesburg, and Cape Town attract students from Swaziland interested in pursuing careers in the arts. Having grown up in Swaziland myself, this is the path I chose in order to continue my musical studies.

In Swaziland, public performances of music are relatively rare in comparison with neighbouring South Africa and the bustling metropolis of Maputo in Mozambique because of the lack of formal music education and performance venues in the country. Despite the difficulties of surviving as a musician, there are still various styles of music created and performed in informal venues and on different platforms throughout the country. With regards to house, pop or guitar-based music, the spectrum ranges from musical ensembles where musicians rehearse under banana palms in courtyards and share instruments in order to play; to prolific youngsters creating house beats with software such as Fruity Loops or Logic. The annual MTN Bushfire International Arts Festival brings many southern African and international musicians to the country and in a limited way, provides performance opportunities to local musicians on their designated "*Ekhaya*" ('home' in siSwati) and amphitheatre stages. The Bushfire Festival also hosts a week of creative workshops for local Swazi school children. Local and international artists are recruited to teach young learners about different aspects of theatre, music, and dance but this is limited.

Instruments are largely unaffordable for people and so the predominant mode of music-making is in a choral context. There are three main spaces within which vocal music is performed and enjoyed: in Gospel music; in the choral *umbholoho* tradition; and within so-called 'traditional' vocal repertories (wedding songs, regimental songs and the vocal music of the *Umhlanga* and *Incwala* ceremonies). Swaziland is a country of churches. From the early Methodist missionaries to touring evangelical Texan pastors, Christianity takes on many forms in the rural and urban areas. Many people sing in church choirs and other religious vocal ensembles. Local gospel music and South African gospel stars dominate the national radio airwaves, with ensembles such as the gospel choir "Joyous Celebration" enjoying particular popularity. Local choirs and artists, such as the *Ncandweni* Christ Ambassadors and Mduduzi Simelane, perform weekly in the numerous churches in and around Mbabane and Manzini and also feature at trade conventions and other public national celebrations. Beyond the churches, another popular style of vocal music is *umbholoho* or 'bombing'. Similar to the *isicathamiya* music of Ladysmith Black Mambazo in South Africa, *umbholoho* is a choral genre of *a capella* music with step dance movements performed by male

ensembles. These groups perform secular songs with coordinated gestures and dance movements, and compete against each other in regular regional competitions. In terms of what is considered 'traditional' vocal music, an important space for musical participation and learning in Swaziland is the *Incwala* and *Umhlanga* mass participatory cultural events held every year (discussed in detail in Chapter Two). These events involve polyphonic vocal music and accompanying dances, which young girls and boys learn through participation.

Another musical practice that is widely popular, especially within schools, is *sibhaca* dancing. *Sibhaca* dance originated on the mines of South Africa and was imported into Swaziland in the early twentieth-century by migrant workers. It is believed to be the dance style of the *Bhaca* isiXhosa men of the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa. In Swaziland, *sibhaca* dance is now considered a local art form and many groups of mostly male performers exist across all age ranges. These groups participate in regular competitions, with numerous *sibhaca* educational programmes existing around the country.

An important aspect when considering music education in Swaziland is the popularity of competitions. The Swaziland National Council of Arts and Culture (SNCAC) acts as an umbrella organ for numerous musical and other artistic associations. Examples of these are the Swaziland Arts and Music Association, the Swaziland Traditional Music Association, the Swaziland National *Umbholoho* Association, the Association of Christian Artists of Swaziland. Throughout the year, these associations host and encourage talent competitions. There are competitions held for choral music, *umbholoho* vocal ensembles, drum majorettes, *sibhaca* dance troupes and numerous other modes of expression. Outside of these contexts, there are independent projects in Swaziland that aim to educate people in the creative arts. Yebo! Art and Design is a contemporary art gallery and workspace that provides education and a platform for local artists. Through their "Artreach" work (a non-profit wing of the gallery) the Yebo facilitators provide visual arts skills training to different groups in Swaziland. Lucky Mlotsa, an independent artist and musician, runs his "Stick in Mud" gallery from his house in Lobamba and offers free art classes at his house. Aside from his work in the visual arts, Mlotsa also runs a musical and dance ensemble. With the support of the local Alliance Française in Mbabane, the dancer and musician Pelepele (Larry Mhlanga) has formed a performing arts company called the Pelepele Arts Academy. Mhlanga develops young performers, and the ensemble runs school workshops around Swaziland and the rest of southern Africa.

In the urban areas of Mbabane, Manzini, and Matsapha, there are a handful of live bands specialising in blues, reggae, jazz, and the songs of international musicians such as Eric Clapton, and Bob Dylan. These bands can be heard playing at restaurants in the evenings, in public shopping areas, and at hotels. Artists and groups such as the *Mbuluzi Blues Band* (formerly *The Rabbis of Rhythm*), Ralph Smit and Sibusiso Nkambule can be

heard on weekends at various venues around Mbabane. Bholoja, a singer-songwriter, emerged from this local scene and he is now considered the foremost proponent of the "Swazi Soul" genre. His distinctive crooning style has earned him gigs at festivals in South Africa and France, and at the local Swazi Bushfire Festival mentioned above. American-style country and blues music are becoming increasingly popular in Swaziland, and many local musicians learn and perform the repertory of artists such as Kenny Rodgers and Dolly Parton. One of the most popular bands in the country is the Buddy Masangu Blues band that performs American southern-style blues with English and siSwati lyrics.[10]

The early 2000s have seen a rise in the number of home studios and electronic music producers in Swaziland. These producers create house, hip-hop, and kwaito tracks that are then disseminated online, through the national radio services and via events at nightclubs. With the successes of Swazi house producers such as DJ Ziyawa and Swazi Pride, and hit songs like 'Mine Beng'dzakiwe' (DJ Simza) and 'Lobola' (the +268 remix of Nomzamo Dlamini's hit of the same name), the house music scene in Swaziland continues to grow. Swaziland has several nightclubs and venues where audiences can listen to DJs and live music, but for many years has lacked spaces where artists can play, improvise and network. Recent years have seen the growth of a rapping, freestyle and poetry jam session in a theatre venue in Mbabane. This has given life to aspiring rappers and poets, and out of this circle has grown a successful duo called Qibho and Sands, who perform a fusion of rap and live instrumental music. The "Ingcamu Jam Session" is held at the local Mbabane Theatre Club and at other venues around Mbabane and is coordinated by Sibusiso Nkambule, aims to provide a platform for local musicians, with a particular interest in 'traditional' Swazi instruments such as the sitolotolo (mouth harp), umtshingo overtone flute, and the makhweyane braced musical bow.

Across the African continent, radio serves to link rural and urban spaces, and in this way radio in Swaziland is no different. Gunner, Ligaga and Moyo state: "Radio can […] 'stage' the minutiae of cultural life and yet, when occasion demands, enact social memory and bind together a nation or region through such performed recall (see Connerton, 1989)" (2011:4). In this way, Swazi national radio is an important symbol of "the power of local", in its dissemination of news and music across this small nation (ibid.). The Swaziland Broadcasting and Information Service is based in the capital Mbabane and from it broadcasts two stations (a siSwati language channel, SBIS 1, and an English language channel, SBIS 2). These radio stations boast a variety of talk and call-in dedication shows, and music shows focused on ever-popular gospel music, Swazi 'traditional' music, house, R and B ('rhythm and blues'), and hip-hop.

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[10] When he is not playing music, Buddy Masangu is a local magistrate.

Radio is an especially important source of stimulation for people who live outside of the hubs of Mbabane, Manzini and Matsapha. Outside these towns, there are musicians in the rural areas who perform on local indigenous instruments, commonly referred to as "*ema-traditional artists*". These artists are spread out across the country and have few opportunities to perform together. There are fears amongst these and other performers (as well as policy-makers) that these local instruments will die out and so a handful of younger musicians have become interested in learning how to play and make local instruments. Key amongst these are the groups *Spirits Indigenous* and Thobile "Makhoyane", and Sibusiso Nkambule. *Sigubhu Sebalozi* (The drum of Balozi) is a group of older musicians based in the Lowveld of Swaziland who perform original and 'traditional' songs and recorded an album titled *Inhlonipho* ('respect' in siSwati) in 2009.[11]

Whilst it is difficult to make a living solely as a musician in Swaziland, there are increasing numbers of local players, singers and producers. With these growing numbers of performers, the Swazi music scene is changing and local entrepreneurs are creating further platforms for different musics. What results is a relatively diverse musical environment, with blues, country music, local dances and choral genres, and 'traditional' instruments, like the *makhweyane* bow, all vying for the same sonic space.

Musical bows around the globe

The *makhweyane* bow belongs to a geographically diverse family of structurally similar musical instruments: from the isiXhosa *uhadi* bow of South Africa to the Siddi *malunga* bow of India and beyond. A musical bow is an ancient musical instrument similar to a hunting bow that can be picked, struck or bowed to create sound. Bows are simple in construction but their acoustic principles are complex because the melodic material created by a bow is made out of overtones emitted from the string. One hears a note but at the same time, a series of quieter overtones emerge and a skillful player can manipulate these to create melodic material. Often these subtle sounds are amplified with a container of sorts – a calabash, metal tin, or sometimes the player's own mouth. It is an ephemeral music made from grasses, sticks, and animal gut that often disintegrate with time. Musical bows have traversed oceans – in the case of the Angolan *mbulumbumba* (which later became the *berimbau* in the Brazilian martial arts form *Capoeira*) and the east African musical bows (the Kenyan *uta* or *ota* bow) that travelled across the Indian ocean to find a home in India as the *malunga* bow of the Siddi community in Kerala. Bows claim other homes across the globe,

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[11] This album was funded by the US Embassy of Swaziland, Vusi Sibandze, and Technoserve. It was recorded in Johannesburg in 2009. The term *balozi* refers to spirits (not ancestors) in siSwati. It is believed that one can speak into a small calabash and hear voices back. The title of this album makes reference to this: "the drums of the spirits" (V. Sibandze, interview, Malkerns, 20 October 2016). It poetically invokes music: when they touch their instruments, what is emitted (sound) is unseen.

from the Appalachian Mountains (shown in Alan Lomax's 1991 film "Appalachian Journey"), to Rwanda, Nigeria, and New Zealand.

Southern Africa is home to a myriad of musical bow variations but in urban areas, one rarely sees or hears these instruments. The most commonly played bows in southern Africa are the isiXhosa *umrhubhe* mouthbow and *uhadi* struck bows of the Eastern Cape (and more recently heard in the city of Cape Town); the *umakhweyana* gourd-resonated bow of KwaZulu-Natal; the *makhweyane* of Swaziland (closely related to the isiZulu instrument); the *xitende* gourd-resonated bow of southern Mozambique; and the elusive mouth-resonated *lesiba* bow of Lesotho. There are numerous active virtuosic bow players from Latozi 'Madosini' Mpahleni, Dizu Plaatjies, and Mantombi Matotiyane (all based in Cape Town), to Bavikile Ngema (of KwaZulu-Natal); Nogcinile Yekani and the Ngqoko Cultural Group (Ngqoko, Eastern Cape); and Matchume Zango (Maputo, Mozambique).

Figure 2 Gogo Ncola Lukhele plays her makhweyane *bow at Shewula (18 August 2014) (Photo credit: Claudia Ramos).*

In Swaziland, the *makhweyane* musical bow and the *sitolotolo* mouth harp are the most common 'traditional' instruments (beyond the human voice) and yet most of the remaining players are elderly and have few performance opportunities to play their music to other people. The other Swazi bow, a short mouth-resonated plucked bow called *sitontolo*, is

found only rarely.[12] Whilst one can find *makhweyane* musical bow players in most regions of the country, during this research the *sitontolo* bow was found in the southern regions of Swaziland or along the eastern border with Mozambique. The *sitontolo* mouth bow is constructed from a curved wooden stave (approximately 80cm long) with a wire that is braced just off centre. This instrument produces two fundamental tones and is amplified by the player's mouth, in which the wooden stave is placed. The fundamental tones are created with a short stick, which is used to pluck the wire to create a tone. With the *sitontolo* and other 'traditional' instruments, it is difficult to find musicians who still perform, but increasingly there are young musicians who choose to learn the *makhweyane* or *sitolotolo* both as a mode of engagement with their national or regional heritage and in order to integrate these sounds into their own existent musical practice (discussed in Chapters Four and Five).

Figure 3 Elijah Magagula plays sitontolo *mouthbow at Shewula (18 August 2014) (Photo Credit: Claudia Ramos).*

When considering the historic writing about the musical bows of Swaziland, there is little to work with. Percival Kirby's *Musical Instruments of the Indigenous People of South Africa* ([1934, 1968] 2013) is a useful, though sometimes contentious place to start. As with

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[12] Only two players of the *sitontolo* were found during this research period. Kirby describes a friction mouthbow called *utiyane* and this was not encountered at all during my field research (Kirby [1934, 1965] 2013:319-321).

many early and mid-twentieth century colonial and apartheid-era texts, Kirby's writing (like Hugh Tracey's) often betrays the cultural biases of his time. One does not have to look far in the work of the greatly influential Tracey to find statements such as: "The Bantu bends to every wind that whistles and, lacking that sense of proportion which creates a civilisation, his whole culture was exposed and vulnerable to attack by proselytisers, both progressists and priests" (Tracey 1954b:34).

Although there is little information on the *makhweyane* in Kirby's tome, his text is important for Swazi bow music because (during his nine research trips collecting and playing instruments from 1931 onwards) he came into contact with many *ligubhu* players in Swaziland.[13] The *ligubhu* musical bow, sister to the isiZulu *ugubhu*, is a large unbraced struck bow with a calabash resonator attached to its lower half. My research led me to believe that there are no longer any *ligubhu* players in Swaziland and that this instrument no longer exists. Considering this, Kirby's early writing on the *ligubhu* is particularly illuminating. He states:

> The Swazi *ligubhu* is made and played by men, and is made of wood with a string made from twisted horse-hair. I heard the *ligubhu* played at the royal kraal of Chief Sobhuza II of Swaziland, as the accompaniment to a choral song which is played at the *Incwala* ceremony. After observing and hearing the performance I was shown how to play the instrumental accompaniment, which I afterwards played while the men sang the song. The song with the accompaniment was as follows: [musical example] The tone which I produced did not satisfy the singers, owing partly to the cramped position in which the string has to be stopped, and partly because I had not bared my chest. The harmonic scheme of the whole, is, however, apparent from the transcription, the influence of the instrument upon the voice part being obvious. The *ligubhu* is regarded as the 'classic' stringed instrument of the Swazi. ([1934, 1965] 2013:268-9)

Kirby describes the *ligubhu* as the Swaziland's "'classic' stringed instrument" which implies it was highly valued and possibly commonly-played, though now, nearing a century since his first trip, this instrument cannot be found. When asked about the *ligubhu*, none of the older *makhweyane* players in this study had heard of it, implying that either Kirby's observation about the prominence of this instrument was incorrect or that the decline of the *ligubhu* bow was particularly swift. Kirby's seminal book provides useful description of other Swazi instruments such as the *isikehlekehle* [sic] (friction bow), *umqangala* [sic] and *utiyane* (mouth

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[13] In Swaziland, an alternative spelling of the *ligubhu* is *lugubhu*.

bows) and *isitontolo* [sic] (mouth harp) ([1934, 1965] 2013:214, 217, 225, 239).[14] Also of interest is Kirby's summary of historic texts that make mention of musical bows across southern Africa. Some of these earlier colonial accounts help us to understand the possible genesis of the musical bow from the hunting bow by the nomadic people of the region, but the evidence to contextualise and flesh out these assertions is slim.

After Kirby's research was published, David Rycroft, a linguist and early ethnomusicologist, travelled through Swaziland documenting the music of 'traditional' musicians whilst preparing his respected siSwati dictionary (1981). Rycroft's published writing on Swazi music includes the 1976 article 'Nguni Vocal Polyphony', the LP and accompanying booklet entitled *Swazimuziek* (1968), his 1966 article on friction chordophones (though this focuses more on isiXhosa and Mpondo instruments), his famed article on the bow music of the Zulu Princess Magogo kaDinuzulu, and some song transcriptions accompanying his siSwati language teaching materials.

Rycroft describes numerous instruments that were seldom heard during his research: "the *impalampala*, a koodoo [sic] horn blown by herdsmen; the *licilongo*, an oxhorn trumpet; three types of flute, *umntjingozi*, *livenge*, and *sintilo* (or *sidolandi*); whistles, *impembe* and *luveve*; drums, *sigubhu*, *inumbulu*, *luvungu* and *lokhonyela*; ankle-rattles, *emafahlawane*; mouth-resonated musical bows, *umgcangala*, *sitontolo*, and *makhwindi*." (1979:169). He describes the *sikelekehle* (what Kirby calls *isikehlekehle*) as a one-string fiddle that uses a metal (often oil) can as a resonator and which is bowed with a small friction bow of horse or cattle hair.[15] Rycroft again describes the *ligubhu* and the *makhweyane* as the two "classic" Swazi instruments for solo song accompaniment (ibid.:169). He describes the *ligubhu* as having Nguni origin but the *makhweyane* as probably coming from the Tsonga people of Mozambique (ibid.) (further discussion of the claims of origin of the *makhweyane* can be found in Chapter Three). He closes his discussion of Swazi instrumental music by stating: "The *makhweyane* is still played, to some extent, in country areas; but the *ligubhu* is very rarely encountered: I know of only three players" (ibid). Beyond the writings of Kirby and Rycroft, and the recordings of the *makhweyane* player Mother Adelia (of the Servite Sisters of Swaziland) by veteran bow scholar David Dargie (discussed in detail in Chapter Three), there is a dearth of information on the *makhweyane* bow. It is from this position that this research developed so as to understand how this bow is played and how its music features in contemporary Swaziland.

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[14] The correct spelling of the monochord friction bow described by Kirby is: *sikelekehle*. The correct spelling of the *umqangala* bow in siSwati is: *umcangala*.
[15] Previous field research in Swaziland led me to Elias Matsenjwa, the self-proclaimed last *sikelekehle* player in Swaziland. He has since passed away. A musician based in Shewula (near the border with Mozambique), John Mahlalela, has started making a modified version of *sikelekehle* though it is unclear if he has ever played this instrument proficiently himself.

Though little is published on Swazi musical bows, much research has been conducted into other southern African bows. Scholarly interest in musical bows is demonstrated by the rich array of studies on South African (Dargie 1988, Joseph 1987, Dlamini 2004, Impey 2008), Mozambican (Johnston 1970 - 1973), and Zimbabwean (Kyker 2016) musical specimens. In addition to David Rycroft's work with isiZulu bow songs and friction chordophones in south-eastern Africa, important writing has come from Johnston (1970, 1971) (the Shangana-Tsonga *xizambi* friction-bow and relations between this and drum patterns) and Dargie's (1988) iconic work with isiXhosa bow players and other musicians. Dargie's various publications and recordings provide a detailed examination into the bow music, vocal songs and throat singing traditions (*umngqokolo*) of the Eastern Cape of South Africa (1980, 1988, 2009, 2010/1). Pertinent to this dissertation is Angela Impey's 1983 honours dissertation on the isiZulu *umakhweyana* and the songs and musicianship of Ndabisehlele Myeza (Honours thesis, UKZN), Impey's recent writing on the music of the Northern KwaZulu borderlands; and Rosemary Joseph's writing on romantic love and lyricism in isiZulu women's bow songs (1987). The isiZulu *umakhweyana* and Swazi *makhweyane* are closely related instruments and the relationship between these instruments and their repertories is discussed in my third chapter.

Considering the available literature on other southern African musical bows, this study aims to contribute evidentiary data for the hitherto relatively unknown Swazi *makhweyane*, its players, and the music created for it. A recent international conference focused on bow music, held in Durban, South Africa, highlighted many of the (sometimes contradictory) concerns deemed pertinent for scholars of this instrument: the lack of 'purely analytical' studies in recent work on bows, the ever-popular formulations of different notational systems for this music, and the continual worry that instruments are vulnerable and "dying out". What was particularly noticeable was our broad reliance on dated texts and methodologies. As Achille Mbembe states: "… there is no longer a "distinctive historicity" of these societies, one not embedded in times and rhythms heavily conditioned by European domination" (2001:9). Considering the historical tomes that form the basis of much of what we know about musical bows in southern Africa, my study distances itself as much as possible from the prejudicial biases of pre-apartheid and apartheid-era texts on ethical grounds. Rather this research is placed firmly in the contemporary Swazi nexus: where resources are scarce, where scholarship meets action, and where space needs to be made for participating individuals to speak the loudest in methodology and on the page.

Theoretical and methodological premises

> Music, like identity, is both performance and story, describes the social in the individual and the individual in the social, the mind in the body and the body in the mind: identity, like music, is a matter of both ethics and aesthetics. (Frith 2003:109)

I situate this doctoral research within Performance Studies in its focus and methodology. This study is integrally informed by performance: that of the musicians involved, the performance of culture in Swaziland and my own performance on the *makhweyane*. It examines how musicians perform their stories and identities on the *makhweyane*, how Swaziness is performed as a collective status, and how iterative, active research contributes to southern African musical bow studies. Comprising a wide field of diverse methodologies and subject interests, Performance Studies has been largely shaped by Richard Schechner (2006) and his disciples, and grows out of theatre studies. Schechner argues for a broad-spectrum approach when investigating performative behaviour (and not just the performing arts). This definition has been extended by scholars such as Dwight Conquergood (1995, 2002), and Tim Ingold (2013). Performance Studies is an interdisciplinary, epistemological intervention with the goal to weaken the divide between distanced knowing and active participation and practice. Michael Foucault's term "subjugated knowledges" refers to the underside of the academic pyramid: systems of knowing related to localised, vernacular data (1980:82). Foucault explains subjugated knowledges as two things: firstly, "those blocks of historical knowledge which were present but disguised within the body of functionalist and systemising theory and which criticism – which obviously draws upon scholarship – has been able to reveal" (ibid.). Secondly, he describes them as: "a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated", "low-ranking knowledges" (ibid.).

Performance Studies, as a loose field, encourages creative intercessions that bring to light indirect or embedded insight (Conquergood 2002:146). Conquergood states: "The constitutive liminality of performance studies lies in its capacity to bridge segregated and differently valued knowledges, drawing together legitimated as well as subjugated modes of inquiry" (ibid.:151). He further defines the potentialities of Performance Studies through three distinct branches: accomplishment (the making of art and culture, artistic process and form), analysis (interpretation, contemplation and comparison), and articulation (activism, action research, and connection to community) (ibid.:152).

My research is concerned with the performative nature of the *makhweyane* players' work and the discourse surrounding this instrument and its music. But once in the field, I

immediately became engaged in unexpected research articulations: performing and composing myself, recording albums for participants (requested by them in our early meetings), producing performances in different contexts, engaging with festival bureaucracy on behalf of a group of my research participants, and serving as mediator between musicians, media personnel, press and politicians. Often this led to messy moments of personal connection and friendship, playing, mistake-making, long trips and government meetings, but always important moments of insight and learning. Dwight Conquergood writes about "the promiscuous traffic" and "transgressive travel" between two different ways of knowing: the objective and abstract, and the practical and embodied (2002:145). The complication and disintegration of this binary, what Donna Haraway describes as the "view from above" and the "view from a body", is what current Performance Studies research engages (1991:196, also discussed by Conquergood 2002:146).

When one approaches an under-researched ethnomusicological enquiry with slender historical and published resources, and few remaining players to consult, new and dynamic methods need to be utilised and these have been some of the challenges facing this research. Many musical bow scholars and researchers of seemingly-vulnerable 'traditional' instruments are unable to position their unashamedly "salvage" endeavours adequately within the academy, but are preoccupied with the evanescence of their research field. These modes of discourse are seen as out of date in other disciplines and in broader ethnomusicology but have been slow to leave bow music circles. Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett describes salvage anthropological work: "Disappearance was and continues to be an enabling condition" (2004:5). When working within a field where few active performers remain, the rich field of Performance Studies and practice-based research allow for all manner of rethinking the ethical pitfalls and awkward intellectual moments with which this work had to contend. Conquergood writes:

> We can think through performance along three crisscrossing lines of activity
> and analysis. We can think of performance as (1) as a work of imagination, as
> an object of study; (2) as a pragmatics of inquiry (both as a model and
> method), as an optic and operator of research; (3) as a tactics of intervention,
> an alternative space of struggle. Speaking from my home department of
> Northwestern, we often refer to the three A's of performance studies: artistry,
> analysis, activism. Or, to change the alliteration, a commitment to the three
> Cs of performance studies: creativity, critique, citizenship (civic struggles for
> social justice). (2002:152)

Homi K. Bhabha describes the term "performative" as an action that "incessantly insinuates, interrupts, interrogates, antagonises, and decenters powerful master discourses" (1994:146-9). When considering the dearth of information regarding musical bows in

Swaziland and the possibilities of research navigating a historical and living "archive" project, it is poignant to consider what has not been and cannot be archived. With few remaining players of the *makhweyane* bow, the challenge is to resist the dated intellectual trends seen in the work of Kirby ([1934, 1965] 2013), Tracey (1954), and even Rycroft (1966, 1975, 1976). In an earlier time, the codifying of this music and most importantly, these musicians for posterity would have been of utmost importance but findings throughout this research encouraged me to interrogate the common tropes of elderly rural musicians as "culture-bearers" or 'traditional' practitioners or musicians, slowly withering away along with their "traditions" (Burnim 1985). An interrogation of these simplistic representations will be seen in the following chapters. In my analysis, my findings move away from the usual anthropological "temporal hierarchies": to extend my cotemporal experience with these musicians in Swaziland beyond my time there (Clifford 1988:16; Conquergood 1985:182). My approach in this research has been to attempt to operate without clean distance between subject and participant.

Having relinquished the comfort of any clear subject/object differentiation, I submit myself to the complexity of this deeper engagement and the ensuing, unexpected outcomes. Integral to this understanding of this music are the ideas of embodied practice and this is where a Performance Studies approach speaks to *makhweyane* music. Barbara Kischenblatt-Gimblett states: "Embodied practice and event is a recurring point of reference within performance studies" (2007:43) and indeed this doctoral project focused on musical practice as well as performance events (musical and other). This study, as well as the instrument, require a sensory and embodied approach, and so, link this work to other Performance Studies across disciplines. The fact that these musicians are often playing to themselves (or what I propose as a notional and historic 'audience') links their practice to Andrew Killick's term "holicipation". He describes this as: "when there is only one performer and listener involved, the solitary music-maker experiences the whole of the musical event" (2006:273). In this sense, these musicians are and have always been holicipants, as well as participants when opportunities arise.

As a musical bow player myself (performing on the isiXhosa *uhadi* and *umrhubhe* bows primarily), I have always been a holicipant in my own creative practice but experienced this specifically in the physical act of finding the ideal sound (with the resonance of the calabash). This holicipation deepened during my learning and playing of the *makhweyane* for this study under the guidance of my teachers (primarily Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula, Gogo Khokhiwe Mphila, and Make Tfobhi Shongwe). Rooted in Performance Studies, the research that informs this dissertation began with an open methodological approach, premised on the importance of practice-based engagement. Beyond playing the *makhweyane* myself, embodied practice within this research resulted in a multi-faceted,

action-based methodology including the performance of following articulated roles and responsibilities: learning to play, composing, rehearsing, performing, facilitation, administration, recording and mixing, marketing and press, and event production.

With *makhweyane* music individual micro-identities and stories are performed in small spaces but these musicians simultaneously perform their national identity through playing this instrument and other indigenous instruments. These musicians perceive their music as being of national cultural relevance. Shafer's term "soundmark" (slightly transformed and extended here) is also useful when considering the complex relationship between this instrument and its sound, and the Swazi community. Schafer describes this term as a sound, which is unique to a community (1994:9). In understanding the construction of this homogenous Swazi national community and its identity, I draw on Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) and Anderson (2006). The *makhweyane* as an image has limited authority in this nationalist construction, but due to the prevalence and importance of radio, the sound of the instrument as an enacted text has slightly more authority.

The field research that formed the basis of this dissertation was conducted over two years, with three research periods spent living in Swaziland (six months, three months, and one month respectively). Over the course of this study, numerous players of *makhweyane* bows and other so-called 'traditional' instruments were interviewed. Long form interviews were conducted, involving oral testimony, musical lessons, and other musical performances at people's homes. During this period, I was asked by two participants to help them record an album in exchange for their time in lessons and interviews. Over my fieldwork period, I produced two recordings (with a third incomplete at the time of writing) and facilitated two large public concerts (one at the *Alliance Française*, Mbabane, in 2014 and the second at the Bushfire International Arts Festival 2015). After the initial months of fieldwork, the CEO of the Swaziland National Arts and Culture Council (SNCAC) requested that my friend and translator, Vusi Sibandze and I, serve as acting coordinators for the Swaziland Traditional Music Association (STMA, sometimes referred to as the Swaziland Traditional Musical Instrument Association).[16] This position allowed me insight into the annual creative arts association meetings with government and created pathways for articulating the concerns and interests of the musicians I had met across the country. The following map shows the geographic distribution of these musicians (highlighted by diamonds) across the country.

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[16] During my field research, I worked closely with Vusi Sibandze. Sibandze helped me with translations and is himself a *makhweyane* player, guitarist and singer based in Mbabane.
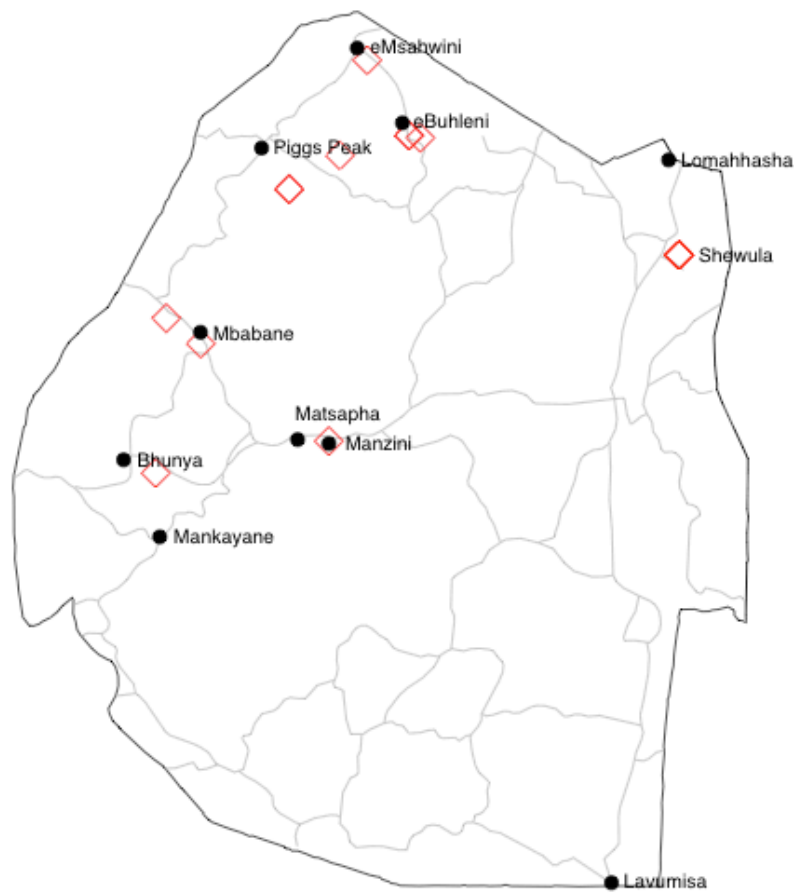
Figure 4 Map showing distribution of makhweyane *players included in this study.*

This map shows that the majority of participants in this study live in the rural vicinities of Swaziland. Of the twenty-one musicians interviewed and recorded, thirteen were *makhweyane* players (as opposed to other instrumentalists). Four known musicians had passed away in recent years. Four musicians were under the age of forty and these (plus one other older musician) were based or worked in and around the urban hubs of Mbabane and Manzini.[17] Some notable musicians had passed away before the start of this study, such as: Mkhulu Sidumo Tsela *(*from eNdzingeni/ eNvuma – sometimes incorrectly referred to as Ndumiso), Gogo Mhlaphetse (or Mavuso) who had taught Thobile Magagula, Mkhulu Sagila

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[17] The musicians interviewed and recorded for this study were: Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula (eBuhleni), Make Tfobhi Shongwe (eMsahweni), Gogo Sonile Sifundza (eBuhleni), Mkhulu John Mahlalela (Shewula), Mkhulu Mxofololo Dlamini (eMphini), Make Cecilia Mdluli (Manzini), Make Cathrina Magagula (Shewula), Gogo Lengiwe Dladla (Shewula), Gogo Ncola Lukhele (Shewula), Mkhulu Moses Mncina (eNsangwini), Babe Sipho Sifundza (eBuhleni), Make Lomatjele Shongwe (Shewula), Make Lomthandazo Nkomo (Shewula), Mkhulu Madimus Dlamini (Shewula), Mkhulu Solomon Shongwe (Shewula), Mkhulu Elijah Magagula (Shewula), Temalangeni Dlamini (Mbabane), Thobile "Makhoyane" Magagula (eMpolonjeni), Sibusiso Nkambule (Mbabane), Vusi Sibandze (Mbabane) and Smiles Makama (Msunduza).

Matse (*makhweyane* player, recorded by Mark Bradshaw in 2009), and Mkhulu Elias Matsenjwa – a respected *sikelekehle* player who was considered by many of the older musicians as an excellent 'traditional' artist. Another musician who I was unable to place was a player that Edward Mthethwa (a radio DJ at SBIS/ Swazi Radio, discussed further in Chapter Two) referred to and claimed to have recorded playing *makhweyane*. David Rycroft refers to a Princess Simangele Dlamini who he consulted in his field research and it seems likely that due to her involvement with Swazi Radio during the period of Rycroft's fieldwork that she was the musician to which Mthethwa had referred (E. Mthethwa, interview, Mbabane, 5 August 2014).[18] Apart from some of the musicians based in the Shewula area, many of the interviewed musicians had met each other during the "Smart Partnership" tour of the country. This tour was part of the King's fortieth birthday celebrations in 2008.[19] On the few occasions that everyone came together (a recording session at the SBIS Swazi Radio studios, and for *Bashayi Bengoma* concerts), all were happy to meet again and catch up on each other's news.

During this research, the merits of practice-based and composition-based methodologies became apparent. I argue for this type of action research as a metadiscipline within southern African ethnomusicology and as an important contributor to knowledge about musical bows globally. To deepen my ethnographic account of musical interpretation and practice and to aid my understanding of the performance and compositional aesthetics at play, I studied *makhweyane* with key players over a period of ten months. Ingold describes knowledge transmission as something that requires attention to the roles of perception and action; that occurs through "emplaced engagements with persons and things" (2000:354). The mere act of performing *makhweyane* songs involves careful aural response to quiet overtones, creative music-making, but also involves the player's body as a mechanism by which the instrument makes sound (the chest acts as the calabash mute and provides added resonance). With this in mind, the most relevant and appropriate methodology for researching *makhweyane* music must involve practice and copresence. From Conquergood's idea of "dialogical performance" (1985), Feld's "dialogic editing" (2012) and Chernoff's (1979) testing of possibilities and limits in improvisation in West African drumming, the principal methodology in this research has been through playing with other *makhweyane* players and to a lesser extent, through "compositional conversations". In these, I played my attempts at composing *makhweyane* songs for those present as a tool for

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[18] The *makhweyane* player Smiles or Smiler Makama informed me that Princess Simangele Dlamini played ligubhu. He had met her as a young man whilst recording at Swazi Radio (S. Makama, interview, Msunduza, 7 October 2016).

[19] This year was titled "40/40" as it was the joint celebration of the King's birthday and forty years of Swazi independence. This government-funded tour featured eighteen musicians who traveled around Swaziland performing on 'traditional' instruments (including the guitar) in free concerts for local communities.

creating conversation about musical parameters and taste. In doing so, I based this research on iterative and reflexive musical interactions. As a student, a performer and a participant observer, one's role, status and identity can allow further access to knowledge (Baily 2001:94). Learning to play and compose enabled me closer access to the music, the musicians' understanding of the music, and its embodied cultural meanings. Sarah Pink, in her discussion on sensory ethnography, states:

> The implication of understanding knowing as situated in practice is that it implies that to 'know' as others do, we need to engage in practices with them, making participation central to this task. The idea can be extended to seeing 'knowing in practice' as being an embodied and multisensorial way of knowing that is inextricable from our sensorial and material engagements with the environment and is such an emplaced knowing. (Pink 2010:34)

John Baily (2001) argues that there are many advantages to performance as a research methodology. The acquisition of performance skills by the researcher allows for direct investigation of the music itself and similarly, my composing of my own bow songs from my learning and my musical performance with and for these musicians deepened my "sensory embodied knowing" of innovation within this repertory (Pink 2010:34).[20]

As a white ethnomusicological researcher working in African music, my positionality bears mentioning at this point. Though a South African citizen, I grew up in the Mbuluzi area outside Mbabane and my family remains resident in Swaziland. Since leaving Swaziland for my studies in South Africa and then the United Kingdom, I have remained closely connected to Swaziland and continue to travel there regularly (outside of my doctoral field trips). The relative positions of my research participants and fellow musicians, that of my family still based in Swaziland, and my own position as a young, white, and privileged Swazi/South African have informed the focus and direction of this study. Whilst I initially thought my research would be largely based on *makhweyane* music within the context of the current political situation within Swaziland, once I began my interviews and lessons it became apparent that the data pointed elsewhere. What follows in this dissertation are the stories and ideas that emerged during my field research, with analysis, context and I hope a diligent care for the voices of these musicians.

I am an active musician and have played musical bows for the past ten years in different contexts and countries, initially studying isiXhosa bows under Dizu Plaatjies at the University of Cape Town. Before starting this doctoral research, I had previously met with

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[20] Reiner and Fox (2003:3) propose three principal criteria for musical composition to qualify as research: through its investigative nature, systematic investigation, and by providing an original contribution to knowledge. Further study into *makhweyane* and other bow music could make greater use of composition as a research tool.

two *makhweyane* musicians (in 2010 and 2011) who have been included in this current research. Throughout this dissertation, I treat field-notes and reflections from my lessons and interviews during my field research as data but give decided priority to the oral testimony, interview material, and songs shared with me by the participating musicians. Where field-note excerpts have been included, they serve to provide contextual information to performances and research experiences, and aim to clarify my thinking during my fieldwork.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to provide an introduction to Swaziland, musics within the country, and to contextualise the *makhweyane* musical bow within existing and complementary literature. There is a need for contemporary scholarly work to be undertaken on Swazi music and, in particular, on Swazi bow music. Though much has been written on the bow traditions of neighbouring southern African countries (Dargie 1988; Dlamini 2004; Johnston 1970; Joseph 1987), up until this point detailed research into Swaziland's bow traditions has not been done.[21] With this dissertation, I aim to soften the opposition between 'traditional musicians' and innovative urban practitioners. I am interested in the living repertory of these instruments but also in the contemporary spaces in which one can find these musical bows. This study aims not to idealise *makhweyane* music as 'traditional', but to address the complexity of individual experience within the sonic borders of a particular contemporary southern African environment.

In the following chapters, I will investigate active *makhweyane* players and how they are playing and composing for this instrument. In Chapter Two, I review the themes of cultural nationalism with regards to the music of the *makhweyane* musical bow in Swaziland. I detail the political and cultural construction of this apparently homogenous Swazi national identity, from the *Tinkhundla* ruling system, to the annual national *Incwala* ("first fruits") and *Umhlanga* ("reed dance") ceremonies, and beyond. I explore what this national narrative is and how it has been constructed historically and actively reinforced, both internally and externally. Musical bows (and other instruments) have been co-opted as icons of Swazi national identity and are used as public affirmation of this (most notably through public institutions such as national radio and television broadcasting) and also privately, in gospel choirs and the large annual arts festival "Bushfire". I ask how the *makhweyane* and its music

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[21] Rycroft produced important research in Nguni polyphony, instrumental forms and bow music, in particular from the period 1963-1964, with later field trips into the 1980s.

(as well as other so-called 'traditional' musical instruments) are situated in the broader Swazi national image, and how this has developed over recent decades.

In my third chapter, I investigate the material and historical construction of the *makhweyane* bow in Swaziland, and the musicians who play it. Drawing on ethnographic interviewing and archival sources, I describe the *makhweyane* bow and its music. Building upon David Rycroft's musicological analysis of Swazi music from the 1960s onwards, I examine the technical aspects of *makhweyane* construction and performance, and the processes of learning as they stand today, after decades of slowly-dwindling numbers of players. Due to the lack of scholarly (and other) documentation surrounding these bows, I draw together the available literature on the Swazi *makhweyane*, the isiZulu *umakhweyana* and other related bows (the Mozambican *xitende*) in order to create a historical, technical and acoustic profile of the instrument. Chapter Three includes profiles of the musicians who participated in this study and details from the interviews carried out in the field. In this chapter, I tease out the issues of learning, conveyance, and identity that appear in the oral testimonies from my fieldwork.

In the fourth chapter, I develop the social profile of the *makhweyane* as medium for expression, companionship and broadcast. I discuss the importance of radio in Swaziland and within the *makhweyane* sonic community. Drawing on the case studies of two new generation bow players, this chapter also explores how the younger generation of *makhweyane* musicians have utilised sound recordings to inform their own practice in different ways. It explores new modes of transmission in *makhweyane* music and creative practice.

In the fifth chapter, I consider creation, composition and innovation within the contemporary music of the *makhweyane*. Using composition and practice as research tools in the field, I draw upon the many conversations about personal style and creative practice in *makhweyane* music. In the case of these particular instruments, with their subtle sounds, and their use of the human body in the mechanics of producing the music, performing and creating sounds as a researcher was of utmost importance. Drawing on my own participant-observation fieldwork in Swaziland, analysis of recordings and performances, and the oral testimonies collected from numerous players, this chapter explores the subtleties of compositional innovation and holicipatory experimentation when playing *makhweyane*. I learned to play the *makhweyane* during my fieldwork (2014-5) and use my learning from these musicians to compose my own songs on the bow, thereby proceeding from iterative and reflexive musical interactions with these musicians. I close this chapter by reflecting on these "compositional conversations".

My sixth and concluding chapter brings together the two main concerns of this dissertation: the *makhweyane* bow as an icon, and the life of the instrument and the music in

reality. Here I link the micro-representations from my oral testimony work with the individual musicians, and the broader nationalist macro-representations of this instrument. I summarise my findings with regard to the relevant aesthetics in *makhweyane* musical composition, and the varying discourses surrounding the importance of this music and instrument in contemporary Swaziland.

CHAPTER TWO

'*Tingoma letingagugi*' ('The Songs that don't age'): The *makhweyane* bow and the Swazi national cultural narrative

> *Tsine, sichamuka emuva, sibemdzabu. Asisikhoni lesimanjemanje.*
> Us, we come from the past, we are so traditional.
> We are not able to do modernity.
> – Mkhulu Solomon Shongwe
> (S. Shongwe, interview, Shewula, 14 December 2015)

Introduction

In this chapter, I explore cultural performance and identity in Swaziland. I ask how a homogenous cultural construct, reliant on rural traditionalism (*umdzabu* in siSwati), is engaged and how musical expression manifests within this. I focus particularly on the music of *makhweyane* players. Drawing on fieldwork experiences and interview material, I examine individual and collective agency within this Swazi nationalist cultural imaginary. I draw extensively on Stuart Hall's formulation of identity as strategic and positional, as opposed to essentialist, and the understanding of cultural identity as "in process", in my analysis here ([1996] 2003:2).

This builds on the previous chapter, in which I provided a brief introduction to the country of Swaziland and the musical life of those within its borders. I introduced musical bows as instruments that can be found across the globe but which have particular resonance in southern Africa due to their prevalence and variety.

Despite critique of the 'tradition/modernity' dichotomy and the thought devoted to new modes of African and other mobile identities in recent decades, the terms 'Swazi culture' and 'traditional' are still weighted heavily within the country. Popular historiography informs us that Swaziland is a homogenous and exceptional African nation with deep roots in its geographic location. Evidence suggests, however, that it has only recently achieved such nationalist administrative integration. In 1978, Philip Bonner wrote: "Swaziland in the mid-nineteenth century was very far from being the integrated society usually implied in Swazi historiography" (Bonner 1978:222). As this chapter will show, the continual performance of a national cultural stasis aids this political project (though with varying degrees of success). In this context, concepts of 'Swazi culture' and strong notions of what counts as 'traditional' are employed to actively reinforce the idea of an old, homogenous, true 'Swazi culture'.

Despite the fluidity attributed to constructions and processes of identity elsewhere, the concept and term 'Swazi culture' as material and fixed is used prolifically throughout media and social interaction in Swaziland (Appadurai 1996:13). Statements such as "circumcision [is] against [Swazi] culture" (Shange 2015) and "Women chiefs do not sit well with Swazi Culture"[22] (Lushaba 2016) are examples of how the notion of a homogenous 'Swazi culture' is expressed regarding everyday issues. In a 2016 UNESCO report on the diversity of cultural expressions in Swaziland, Temahlubi Nkambule (of the Swaziland National Trust Commission) states: "The different Arts and Culture policies, Acts, Bills and the Constitution of Swaziland recognizes Culture [sic] as the foundation of the nation and as a unifying factor of the people and the nation" (Nkambule 2016). The "Swazi way of life" is commonly denoted as a static construction but authors such as MacMillan (1985) and Levin (2001) argue that the Swazi 'traditionalist' project has been developed over some time and intensively in recent times. Both argue that despite the current stasis, this cultural construct has proven itself to be changeable up until recently. In 1992, Kwame Anthony Appiah wrote:

> Invented histories, invented biologies, invented cultural affinities come with every identity; each is a kind of role that has to be scripted, structured by conventions of narrative to which the world never quite manages to conform (1992:283).

The aim of this chapter is not to discredit the validity of any aspects of 'Swazi culture' but to understand the style in which this community has been and is imagined and performed (Anderson 2006:6). Rather, I follow the logic of Carolyn Hamilton in her monograph *Terrific Majesty*. She maintains that all the factors in the creation and manipulation of the images and understandings of the notorious South African king, Shaka Zulu, are constructions, but at the same time, she argues that they are the result of processes and have potential roots in fact (1998:28).

The Swazi cultural imaginary succeeds in presenting a simple and timeless model of nostalgia by erasing micro-identities, minority politics and any potentially subversive practices. Homogenization is achieved through a variety of instruments, such as media and advertising, language hegemonies, clothing and fashion and armaments, which are "absorbed into local political and cultural economies" (Appadurai 1990:307). In addition, complexity arises from the numerous personal enactments of this image, whether by the famous ideologues like King Mswati III and other politicians, or by ordinary citizens. Of specific interest to this study is the way that the musicians in this study enact what it means to be Swazi, when they are alone or on a festival stage. This complexity is critical to

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[22] In this 2016 article by Alec Lushaba, he discusses the issue of whether women can serve as chiefs in Swaziland, a country plagued by deep gender division and discrimination (Lushaba 2016).

understanding the politics of culture in Swaziland and how music and the arts participate in this space.

In short, in this chapter I explore the surrounding conditions of performance of contemporary *makhweyane* music. Further, I seek to provide an overview of the recent historical and political developments within Swaziland in order to examine how music and the *makhweyane* bow interact with the ever-present collective imaginary while considering the socio-political present and contemporary political developments. It also explores how musicians participate in imagined forms of patriotism and cultural nationalism through performance (Turino 2000:12). Acknowledging the fluid and processual nature of the concepts of both "tradition" and "culture", I analyse how both the ruling elite within Swaziland and a small community of musicians (*makhweyane* players and other instrumentalists) alternate between agency and rigidity in the performances of their identity. This chapter analyses the notion of music, community, restorative notalgia and collective performance within the construction of 'Swazi culture' (Boym 2001).

Identity, nostalgia, and nationalism

This section discusses the concepts and themes that frame my analysis of music in culture within Swaziland. In analysing how music interacts with the Swazi cultural model, it is important to refer to the key notions of identity, nostalgia, and the agency of culture within nationalism. My usage of the term "identity" is based on the writings of Stuart Hall. He states:

> … identification is constructed on the back of a recognition of some common
> origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal,
> and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this
> foundation (2003:2).

Drawing on a particular thread from Hall (2003), as well as Frith's (2003) writing on music and identity, I explore the tension between individual and collective processes of identity formation. In his article on signs, identity and semiotics, Turino affirms the dual nature of identity, as collective and singular: "identities are at once individual and social; they are the affective intersection of life experiences variably salient in any given instance" (1999:221). If identities are simultaneously individual and social, it is in their social nature that belonging is created to a group, a place, and a time. Boym's definition of nostalgia highlights it as a further expression of local belonging:

> Nostalgia (from *nostos* – return home, and *algia* – longing) is a longing for a
> home that no longer exists or has never existed. Nostalgia is a sentiment of
> loss and displacement, but is also a romance with one's own fantasy. [...] It is
> not necessarily opposed to modernity and individual responsibility. Rather it is

coeval with modernity itself. [...] Nostalgia is not merely an expression of local belonging, but a result of a new understanding of time and space that made the division into "local" and "universal" possible. (Boym 2001:xiii-xvi)

I posit that in Swaziland's nationalist cultural construction, one sees the restorative nostalgia Boym describes, the "transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home": shown in the creation of bee-hive hut villages (no longer used as housing), performances of tribute by regimental warriors in 'traditional attire' (alongside the existence of the Swaziland Defence Force) and in further examples discussed below. Of the "lost home" Boym describes, perhaps in this case the home is less lost than fragmented in different urban realities. Whilst ideologues in Mbabane and Manzini describe a "Swazi way of life" (discussed in more detail below) through television and radio, there is varying and unpredictable financial and ideological support for those who live in ways closest to the model: rural subsistence farmers, with their mapped-out homesteads (*emakhaya*), and livestock anchors (Levin 2001:3). This paradoxical lack of care can be illustrated in state responses to the agricultural disruption caused by the drought of 2015/2016. This affected large parts of Swaziland in livestock deaths and failed crops. During this time, the King and his family travelled to the United States on a holiday that is estimated to have cost E16 million ($1.3 million) – almost the exact amount granted to the Swazi state in drought relief aid by the USA (Gibson 2016).

Benedict Anderson, in his seminal text "Imagined Communities", acknowledges the difficulties in attempting to define the nation, nationality, and nationalism but puts forward a useful definition: "it [a nation] is an imagined political community and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (2006:6). Partha Chatterjee's (1993) criticism of Anderson's theorising about the invention of "nations" was that "if nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined communities from certain "modular" forms already made available to them by Europe and the Americas, what do they have left to imagine?" (1993:5).

Bruno Latour's (1993) powerful rejection of modernity and the postmodern project mirrors Chatterjee's critique of this asymmetry:

No one has ever been modern. Modernity has never begun. There has never been a modern world. The use of the past perfect tense is important here, for it is a matter of retrospective sentiment, of a rereading of our history (1993:47).

Latour directs our thinking towards 'nonmodernity' (still a dependent denunciation of 'modernity') but his thinking encourages one to abandon postmodernism ("a symptom, not a fresh solution") and consider the fresh productivity of a world unshackled from its historic, Western frame that divides it along divisions such as humans and 'nonhumans', purification and mediation (1993:47, 91).

So, Latour's 'nonmodernism' retroactively opens up a nonlinear conversation about history, culture, and community in Swaziland. Further, decades-old conversations about globalisation and the renegotiation of superficial bordering in the twenty-first century, have posited nationalism and the nation-state as less relevant (Turino 2000:12). Yet, in Swaziland, conceptions and performances of 'tradition', 'modernity' and the 'nation' abound, as the country has forged its own ethno-traditionalist, monarchic, nationalist path.

As an absolute monarchy and historically occupied by a single socio-cultural linguistic grouping, Swaziland provides an unusual southern African case study of how nationalism and culture have been nurtured from the late nineteenth-century onwards (Levin 2001:1). The long history of Swazi nationalism and its "self-evident plausibility" has defied conventional notions of "response-nationalism", modernist reformism, or anti-colonial power in two ways (Anderson 2006:12, Turino 2000:16).[23] Firstly, since the late 19th century, the Swazi royal family have mobilised and manoeuvred their image in innovative ways, responding to all manner of political, economic, and social change, to maintain and recreate power amidst the 'Swazi nation' (Levin 2001). Secondly, recent decades have shown moments of particularly vehement engagement with the national Swazi imaginary from citizens within the country: both as resistance but also in favour of the status quo. Though one can argue that a cultural image of an essentialist and 'natural' identity in Swaziland has been engaged by the political and Royal elite, many ordinary citizens are also heavily invested in this construction and this sustains its immovability.[24]

By focusing on the actions of the king and government, nationalism and musical nationalism in Swaziland can easily be viewed as a "top-down" process where the powerful minority sculpt aspects of the cultural model that bolster their positions of power. But it is also useful to consider the "public resonance", and the numerous active processes amongst Swazi citizens that affirm or reinforce their cultural image (Fulcher 1987:4). Bohlman and Carl Dahlhaus remind one of the "nebulous qualities" of nation; how individuals can perform the "nation" in a transmittable web of processes (Dahlhaus 1980:101):

> Nationalism no longer enters music from the top, that is from state institutions
> and ideologies, it may build its path into music from just about any angle, as
> long as there are musicians and audiences willing to mobilize cultural
> movement from those angles. (Bohlman 2004:11)

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[23] In his writing on Zimbabwean popular music and nationalism, Turino describes modernist reformism as "projects based on the idea that a 'new culture', or new genres, styles, and practices, should be forged as a synthesis of the 'best' or 'most valuable' aspects of local 'traditional' culture and 'the best' of foreign 'modern' lifeways and technologies" (2000:16). This definition in itself highlights a common asymmetry found in Western/Other formulations: 'traditional' culture versus technology.

[24] In the political sphere, this appears to hinder oppositional political movements from gaining material ground.

Like many post-colonial African states, Swaziland is a nation-state described, as Anderson puts it, as being both "new" and "historical" (2006:11-12). Turino describes "time depth" as the linking of "earlier local civilizations and their "high cultural" remains to the new national culture" (Turino 2000:180). In Swaziland, this time depth has drawn upon not only modes of elite existence and societal structure in the past (the powers of the Monarchy and its sustaining institutions) but other aspects and images of historical rural clan living (Bhabha 2003:57).

Swaziland's past is complex and built on the exchange and loss of territory amongst numerous groups of people in the region. Within the state-sponsored and publically enacted nationalist rhetoric, this past is often simplified. The limitless future or nostalgia-fuelled utopian "past-as-future" proposed by ideologues, authors and the public is, however, less clear. Today this is increasingly disputed from the peripheries (Boym 2011).

Politics and culture in Swaziland

This section explores the current cultural landscape in Swaziland and, based on collected field data and archival research, it suggests that Swaziland's particular cultural imaginary is both created and simultaneously subverted. In order to understand the relationship between politics and culture in Swaziland, the recent history of this small state bears examination.

Swaziland was "founded" in the 18th century when numerous independent chiefdoms and kingdoms (*emakhandzambili*) were conquered and incorporated to form the Ngwane kingdom after pressure from both the Ndwandwe to the south and the Tembe to the east (Bonner 1983:10-11; Crush 1987). Ngwane II (originally from the northern Embo region and of the Dlamini clan) is the first Swazi king commemorated in modern ritual, though oral historians can trace leaders back to the sixteenth-century (Kuper 1963:7).[25] It is believed that under his leadership, the Swazis moved inland from the south-eastern coast over the Lebombo mountains (ibid.). The Swazi nation, in its current image, was consolidated by King Sobhuza I (1780–1836) whose marriage to the daughter (Thandile) of Zwide of the Ndwandwe group secured an important political truce in the region (Levin 2001:11).[26] Sobhuza's political savvy and accumulated military strength laid the foundation for further and greater gains by his son, King Mswati II (who reigned from 1840 – 1865). It is during the reign of Mswati II that white settlers arrived in northern Swaziland and settled there (Matsebula 2010:38, 48, 49).

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[25] It is assumed that these leaders referred to by oral historians were the earlier kings and chiefs of the Ngwane clan (before its expansion).
[26] An earlier dispute over maize lands in the Pongolo area (of South Africa today) had forced Sobhuza I to move North and away from Zwide and the Ndwandwe group. Zwide, at the time, had great military strength (Matsebula 2010:20).

A crucial consideration when examining the construction of modern-day Swaziland is the role of colonialism, at its formal start and again at its close (in the late 1960s). After much interaction and trade with European settlers and colonisers (detailed by authors such as Bonner (1978, 1983), Crush (1987), Matsebula (2010), the 1890s saw a Swaziland that had transitioned from a relatively self-sufficient society to one reliant on wage labour and imported goods (Crush 1987:5). King Mbandzeni died in 1889 and left the throne to his young heir (fourteen at the time), Bhunu (officially named Ngwane V), son of Labotsibeni Mdluli (Matsebula 2010:149). Ngwane became king at the age of eighteen in 1894 and had to endure the Transvaal government's disruptive occupation and control of Swaziland. Bhunu died in his early twenties in 1899 just after the start of the Anglo-Boer war (1899 – 1902) (Matsebula 2010:149-176). As mentioned in Chapter One, Swaziland became a British Protectorate in 1902 after the Ango-Boer war (Davies, et al. 1985:1/2). As a British protectorate, Swaziland endured increasing administrative control and taxation. After the death of King Bhunu, his mother Gwamile (Labotsibeni) acted as regent, along with his brother Malunge (Kuper 1963:13; MacMillan 1985), until Sobhuza II (or Mona, as he was originally named) came of age in 1921.[27]

The first half of the twentieth-century saw much industrial and agricultural development in Swaziland. The Havelock asbestos mine, at Bulembu, was the major industrial enterprise in Swaziland before World War II. After the war, local and South African companies developed and invested in the regional forestry industry (Matsebula 2010:219). The 1940s and 1950s saw various proclamations come into law (the Native Administrative Proclamations of 1944 and 1950, the Native Courts Proclamation of 1950) as control of Swaziland was tersely fought for between British colonial powers and the paramount chief Sobhuza II and his advisors (Matsebula 2010:221-243).

Swaziland gained independence from Britain in 1968. As mentioned in Chapter One, Sobhuza II, the Paramount Chief at that time won the first post-independence elections (Davies et al. 1985:6). After these elections, the post-independence state transitioned into a constitutional state (ibid.:9) and this was followed by a disruptive aftermath lasting into the 1980s. In 1973 Sobhuza II declared a state of emergency due to public resistance to his refusal to accept parliamentarians from opposition political parties (the NNLC in this case). Davies writes about how the brief period of democratic Westminster-style state structure (before Sobhuza's actions) was afterwards referred to as "un-Swazi" (Davies et al. 1985:46).

General political dissatisfaction increased after the death of King Sobhuza II in 1982. At the time, his heir, Mswati III, was only fourteen. The ensuing years saw much manoeuvring across the political spectrum. Levin describes the period:

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[27] Sobhuza II (Mona) was only a baby when his father, Bhunu, had passed away (Matsebula 2010:170).

His [Sobhuza's] death initiated a prolonged period of internecine strife within royalist circles which increasingly brought into question the legitimacy of the popular 'traditions' and political institutions which he had created. (2001:145)

The end of Sobhuza's "authoritarian populism" created a great vacuum in which many political figures across the board began to compete (Levin 2001:146). Apart from a notable teachers' strike in 1977, oppositional politics had been virtually non-existent in the previous decade before Sobhuza's death but this was to change (ibid.). In July 1983, the People's United Democratic Movement (Pudemo/ *Insika Yenkhululeko YemaSwati*) was formed, only to have its leaders charged with high treason in 1990 (though they were later acquitted). Levin identifies several major power contestations between the death of Sobhuza II and Mswati III's coronation in 1986: the ousting of Prime Minister Mabandla Dlamini; the dismissal of the Queen Regent Dzeliwe (for supporting Mabandla); an attempted coup at Phondo Royal Residence (the result of a feud between Finance Minister Sishayi Nxumalo and Prince Mfanasibili); numerous removals and suspensions; and the ultimate reversal of King Sobhuza's decree that had increased the powers of the *Liqoqo* (the king's council) (Levin 2001:149-166, 182).

After Mswati III came to power in 1986, tussles between the princes and notable politicians continued. Royal pardons were given to those incarcerated during the earlier skirmishes (Prince Bhekimpi and others convicted of high treason), and concerns around corruption continued to grow (Levin 2001:185-7). Opposition to the *Tinkhundla* system (a royal regional council created by Sobhuza II in 1955) had arisen from the mid-eighties but increased not only from the political opposition, but also from parliament and the media (ibid. 2001:213).[28]

In the last twenty-five years, Mswati III's position and that of the royal elite in Swaziland have been called into question numerous times. The following list is a selection of the main political and civic events indicating the growing dissatisfaction with the status quo in recent years:

- The Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions strike of 1996, which had a turnout of more than one hundred thousand workers and lasted nine days (Levin 2001:239).
- The attempt by the King to buy a luxury plane for his private use with state funds in 2002. The sale was halted after protests broke out.
- The Pudemo petrol bombings of 2005, for which twelve members of the organisation stood trial for high treason (a crime punishable by death). No one was killed in the attacks ('Treason charges for Swazi attacks', 2005).

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[28] Levin (2001) relays in detail the turbulent political climate after King Sobhuza II's death in 1982 and the struggle against the Tinkhundla system.

- The death of the Pudemo deputy president Gabriel Mkhumane in April 2008 in Mbombela (formerly Nelspruit), South Africa. Questions have been raised within opposition circles as to the role of the Swazi police in this accident (Mathebula 2008).

- King Mswati's fortieth birthday celebration which occurred in the same year as the 40th independence celebrations. These two lavish events drew much criticism with a minimum estimated cost of E24.1 million ($1.7 million). Mbabane and Manzini saw large demonstrations against this waste of state money, led by trade unionist Jan Sithole ('Swazi King celebrates in style', 2008).

- The death in custody in May 2010 of Pudemo member Sipho Jele, who was arrested for wearing a Pudemo t-shirt. The police told Jele's family that he had committed suicide in custody and instructed them to bury his body on the same day, averting any inquest. The police then disrupted the memorial service held for Jele and arrested several suspected Pudemo activists (Mathebula 2010; 'Danish report on activist killing', 2011; 'Swazi police disrupt activist funeral', 2011).

- The 2010-2011 financial crisis set off by the decline in Southern African Customs Union (SACU) revenue meant that government was unable to meet their public wage bill and threatened to cut civil servants' salaries. With government being the main employer in Swaziland, the effect on the Swazi economy would have been devastating (Redvers 2013). A large teachers' strike followed. Swaziland's fiscal troubles have continued through the 2015/2016 financial year with a further reduction in SACU receipts and a weakened regional economic outlook (Mafusire 2015:1). Growing dissatisfaction and economic pressure led to people walking out of the large Sibaya meeting called by the King in August of 2016.

In September 2013, King Mswati III declared Swaziland a "monarchial democracy" after having a vision.[29] He described the new system: "The ballot box being the will of the people providing advice and counsel to the king which ensures transparency and accountability" ("Mswati declares Swaziland a monarchial democracy" 2013). Here we see the value attributed to what Appadurai describes as the "master-term": democracy (1990:300). Despite being an absolute monarch, King Mswati III, in this statement, engaged the discourse of political change but simultaneously reinforced his original, powerful political status.

James Clifford's observation that "stasis and purity are asserted – creatively and violently against historical forces of movement and contamination" (1997:7) is demonstrated by the above list. The list documents the actions of an increasingly paranoid state, with

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[29] The popular musician and television host, Mshikishi, composed a praise song about King Mswati III's term "monarchical democracy" (V. Sibandze, interview, Malkerns, 20 October 2016).

increased police brutality and financial frivolity. Additionally, the consistent presence of political resistance shows the slow devaluation of nationalist rhetoric amongst the citizenry (or parts of it at least).

Levin argues that Sobhuza II played an important role in the inception and maintenance of 'Swazi culture' as a homogenous imaginary:

> Mythical thinking in Swaziland owes much to the manner in which King Sobhuza II was able to create and construct Swazi 'tradition', which unlike the petty bourgeois nationalism which characterised several African independence struggles, became the principal mobilising factor during the decolonisation period. (2001:2)

In the current climate of regular civil unrest, exacerbated by the King's overspending, I suggest that under the reign of Mswati III, the ruling elite of Swaziland have continued this move away from an earlier fluid and diverse formulation of 'Swazi culture' in an attempt to stabilize the populace "whose own ethnoscapes are in motion" (Appadurai 1990:301).

King Mswati III, the Royal family and advisors, politicians and other ideologues encourage a static image of a rural Swazi life through deliberate vocabulary and infrastructure in an attempt to possibly distract the populace. Through processes of territorialisation and power centralisation started in past centuries, the notion of the Swazi nation and its current homogenous cultural image are engaged every day in Swaziland by those in power. This, however, also translates into a myriad of complex performances in the everyday lives of people (Anderson 2006:19). It is useful to map the key features through which this cultural model is understood and realised, and to explore how these spaces or relations between sites are produced.

Creating "The Swazi way of life"

> I do not want my people to be imitation Europeans but to be respected for their own laws and custom. – King Sobhuza II (Kuper 1947:2)

In its Arts and Culture policy bill, the Swazi government's definition of culture draws from UNESCO (1982): "Culture, in its broadest sense, can be understood as the set of distinctive features not only spiritual and material, but also intellectual and effective which characterise a stated society or social group, encompassing letters and arts, ways of life, fundamental human rights and value systems such as traditions and beliefs" (Arts and Culture Policy

document 2014:9). In line with SADC (the Southern African Development Community[30]) and the African Union, this bill describes the key elements of 'Swazi culture' as including: museums, monuments and sites, oral traditions, languages, architecture (such as local "bee-hive" huts), archaeology, archives, music, dance, drama, ceramics, painting, basketry, weaving, floral design, sports and recreation, language and literature, and traditional knowledge systems (including traditional medicine) (ibid.).

Stokes (1997:3) and Bohlman (2004:81) note that notions of place (and their inherent hierarchies of order) are constructed through elements of culture (such as music) using ideas of difference and drawing attention to social boundaries. Swaziland shares ceremonies, musical forms, architectural styles, and material artefacts with other groups of people in the bordering areas of South Africa (the province of KwaZulu Natal to the south) and Mozambique (the chiTsonga/xiTsonga communities to the east). Despite this, the state and its cultural bodies still maintain the exceptionalism of Swaziness in its various enactments and representations.[31] Considering the historical and political context of contemporary Swaziland, this section seeks to understand what 'Swazi Culture' represents in the country today and how music features within this construction.

From a historical survey of Swazi politics, it is possible to see the value "culture" holds in this nation's internal and external conflicts and interactions.[32] There are two notions that have been crucial to Swazi national identity over the past century (employed at different times and in different ways): firstly, and unsurprisingly, the idea that 'Swazi culture' is exceptional and particular in relation to other countries and regions in Africa and the world; secondly, that 'Swazi culture', in its entirety, is an insular and homogenous fixed entity. Juniper Hill, in her discussion of "global world music" fusions in Finland, describes how regional variances can be standardized, how homogenization can take place when music is in the service of nationalism:

> Romantic nationalist propaganda extended this sense of communal ownership to the "imagined community" of the nation. Local and regional traditions became the property and inheritance of everyone from all regions of the nation. (2007:74)

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[30] The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is an interstate union formed in 1991 out of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference. It consists of fifteen southern African states and exists to promote socio-economic cooperation.

[31] This is perhaps less clear to communities who live in the borderlands as Angela Impey discusses in her two articles based on research in the interface regions of KwaZulu-Natal, Southern Mozambique, and Swaziland.

[32] In their foreword to Kuper's "The Swazi: A South African Kingdom", George and Louise Spindler's introductory notes hint at the climate from which Hilda Kuper's writing emerges. They state: "The full meaning of the Swazi way of life becomes most dramatically apparent in the description of religion, magic, sorcery, and ceremonial. We see how incongruent Western and Swazi concepts are, and come to understand the difficulties the Swazi encounter in making a smooth adjustment to the modern Western way of life" (1963:vi).

In Swaziland, foreigners from the region and abroad travel to view aspects of 'Swazi Culture' and occasionally to partake in its large performances (*Umhlanga*, the King's birthday celebrations, etc.). This internal and external affirmation of Swazi cultural singularity has strengthened its tenets over the years. Since the early twentieth-century, writers have remarked at how Swaziland is particular and unique in relation to her surrounding countries. Sir Alfred Pease, in 1914, stated: "Swaziland is an unusual country" (Crush 1987:3). MacMillan describes turn-of-the-century accounts of Swazi life:

> Most people went on living in their 'traditional' bee-hive houses, while many continued to dress in skins and carry knobkerries and spears. The Swazi were already noted as a 'conservative' and 'colourful' people whose 'traditional' ceremonies, such as those that accompanied the installation of Sobhuza, brought white spectators and as early as 1919, film crews. (1985:646)

The idea that Swaziland has maintained its "culture" in the face of adversity, that it is one of the last absolute monarchies in the world, is heralded with pride by politicians, the Swazi media and the King alike. Muswazi and Magagula, archivists based at the University of Swaziland, point out in their introduction to an annotated bibliography on 'Swazi culture', the common and self-realising trope that Swaziland is a special case within Africa, but also posit that this may be due to the acceptance of independent foreign influences:

> Following the attainment of independence and increasing globalisation, African nations struggle to retain their original cultural identities. However, numerous commentators have singled out the unique experiences of Swaziland, especially the resilience with which the originality of its culture has survived and co-existed with alien cultural influences. (Muswazi et al. 2003)

Much of the available scholarly and non-fiction literature (Kuper 1963, Nxumalo 1976, Kasenene 1993) on 'Swazi culture' appears to have a firm mandate: to codify, without nuance, Swazi norms and customs in a direct fashion. This often takes the form of a list divided into: birth, marriage, religion (*emadloti* or the spirit world), medicine, clothing, regiments and death. The Swaziland National Trust Commission, in charge of cultural and natural resources in the country, describes 'Swazi culture' under these exact headings, with further notes on praises, "praise names" and surnames (Patricks 2000). Hilda Kuper was a prominent social anthropologist best known for her work on Swaziland. Her 1963 book entitled "The Swazi: A South African Kingdom" fleshes this list out slightly, paying particular attention to the hierarchical aspects of Swaziland's society (clan history, kinship and lineage, regiments, and political structure) in the first half of the twentieth century. On gender equality, Kuper writes:

No equality is expected or desired between Swazi husband and wife. He is the male, superior in strength and law, entitled to beat her and to take other women. She must defer to him and treat him with respect. But a Swazi woman is not an abject and timid creature; she claims her rights as "a person" as well as "a wife". (1963:26)

The writings of Sishayi Nxumalo provide a good example of the essentializing of behaviour, culture, and society amongst those with political weight. As a former head of Tibiyo TakaNgwane (the investment arm of the Royal family), the former Minister of Finance and the acting Prime Minister in 1996, Nxumalo, in earlier years, also penned a booklet "Our Swazi Way of Life" (1976).[33] Perhaps paradoxically, he prefaces the book by dedicating it to "all who cherish the higher ideals of a society governed by tolerance and understanding", and then proceeds to expound on "how a Swazi lives" in a most coded and simplistic way (1976:3). From the intricacies of married life, the role of women in society, to ploughing, religion, old age and death, Nxumalo's account is stilted but provides ample detail regarding what Swazi life should be. The following example of his prescriptive text falls under the title "behaviour":

There are thus a number of accepted patterns of behaviour which have stood the test of time and will probably continue to do so with more success in the future since the need to "ape" the colonial masters in order to advance in the society they controlled has been removed by independence. [...] Standing symbolises hostility – readiness to fight or run. The proper course in this case is either to remain seated if on the ground, or to sink to the ground, if seated above it. Similar deference is shown when two people meet in a narrow path… [sic]. (Nxumalo 1976:11)

At its close, Nxumalo's writing reluctantly describes how change, due to development and contact with other societies, has changed "socially approved behaviour patterns" (1976:11). He, like Kuper and Kasenene, devotes the end of his publication to explaining how foreign law, moral "doubt", Christianity, migrant labour and new dimensions of achievement have further moved Swazis away from their 'traditional' way of living (Nxumalo 1976:18-22; see also Kuper 1963:73-84; Kasenene 1993:141-145). Like other ethnographic texts from the sixties and seventies, Nxumalo, Kuper, and Kasenene put forward 'tradition' as the norm, and change is seen as abnormal and problematic. Again, 'history' is pitted against that which is "new" and a past-as-future is advocated for (Anderson 2006:11-12).

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[33] This book is particularly interesting considering the long political career Nxumalo had initially as an opposition politician (coming out of independence) and then within the heart of the Royal ruling elite. The relationship between political power and cultural formalization is here perfectly demonstrated.

Though these texts present a codified sense of Swazi cultural traditions and behaviour, through invoking the ancient, the 'natural' and the unchanging, they communicate how the nationalist discourse has been shaped and perpetuated. Muswazi and Magagula state: "By word of mouth and manner of behaviour, what is *naturally* Swazi has been preserved and passed through generations, – thanks to elderly people who are regarded by Swazi society as custodians of culture, oral history and traditions" [my emphasis] (Muswazi et al. 2003).

An entirely distinct and separate mode of living did not (and does not) exist in the territory now recognised as Swaziland. The early history of the consolidation of the Dlamini group is one of interaction and movement from disputes with the Ndwandwe of the Pongola area of KwaZulu-Natal, to the conquests and concessions, and subsequent porous border area of the Maputaland area of southern Mozambique. With regards to white settlers in the area in more recent times, Hilda Kuper states: "From the time of Mswati [I], the social context of the Swazi has included Europeans, and in the colonial situation Europeans and Africans (coloniser and colonised) interacted, borrowing from each other" (1963:74).

Beyond this, there is evidence to suggest that the ruling elite in Swaziland have used culture and the idea of Swazi 'traditional' life in a *fluid* way to ensure their positions of power during times of great external and internal turmoil. An example of this is Sobhuza's creation of a new 'traditional' system of governance through the *Tinkhundla* (formerly war recruiting centres in the early 1950s (MacMillan 1985:657).[34] In 1978, the *Tinkhundla* officially became centres for local committees of chiefs who ruled over numerous distinct administrative regions nationally; and this model of rule continues to cause grievances in Swaziland today.[35] In 1985, Hugh MacMillan emphasised that Swazi 'traditionalism' is not synonymous with "conservatism" and that one should not understand it as resistant to change (643).

Whilst neighbouring South Africa was developing civic and political consciousness under increasingly adverse and restrictive governance, Swaziland in the 1930s moved towards an ideology of 'traditionalism' that "sought to make sense out of dislocation" but simultaneously preserved the position of the elite (MacMillan 1985:643).[36] While MacMillan

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[34] In regards to the *Tinkhundla* system, Macmillan states that "[i]t was clear that 'traditional', in this context, meant anything but old or inherited. It was as it had been so often in the past, a disguise for something thoroughly new and intended to keep power in the hands of a small section of the population" (1985:665).

[35] Since the early 1990s, there are fifty-five recognised *Tinkhundla* regions.

[36] An example of a more complicated royal, Queen Labotsibeni, not considered a forward-thinking 'traditionalist', became the primary funder of the Abantu-Batho publication/newspaper in Johannesburg. This paper was connected to the new South African Natives National Congress. She also encouraged her son and brother to "play an active part in the creation of the congress" in anticipation of Swaziland being finally incorporated into South Africa's borders. (MacMillan 1985:647/8).

complicates how we understand the Swazi royals politically in the first half of the twentieth-century, Kuper's earlier writing often reinforces a simpler message:

> Sobhuza typifies the dilemma of many a hereditary African ruler. He is a king
> at the crossroads – and for him there is no green light. The clash of cultures is
> part of a more basic conflict between two social systems: one, a small-scale
> monarchy with a rather feudal economy, the other a colonial structure based
> on expanding capitalism. (1963:4)

Macmillan (1985) suggests that the relatively smooth transition from colonial rule to direct monarchical rule and this particular model of 'traditionalism' was possible due to the small size of Swaziland and her relative isolation (MacMillan 1985:644). From its roots in the creation of a fund from which the Queen Regent Labotsibeni could buy back concession land, and the founding of a Swazi National School (*Zombodze*), modern Swazi nationalism endured a complex relationship with British protectorate rule (MacMillan 1985:646).[37] After Queen Labotsibeni's death in 1925, Sobhuza II and his advisors embarked upon a programme of what MacMillan calls "ethnic mobilisation": "their only resort if they wished to survive as an African aristocracy" (1985:648).[38] This active "ethnic mobilisation", with the increased territorialisation of land, resulted in a sophisticated nostalgia apparatus, and so, enduring loyalty from the majority of Swazis then and to an extent, now.

MacMillan critiques scholars who have assumed a more static understanding of "tradition" in their writing about Swaziland but I would argue that the increasingly unpredictable political climate in recent decades has seen the government and key cultural players advocate such a static understanding of 'Swazi culture', and engage what Boym describes as restorative nostalgia:

> The fantasies of the past determined by the needs of the present have a
> direct impact on the realities of the future. […] While futuristic utopias might
> be out of fashion, nostalgia itself has a utopian dimension, only it is no longer
> directed toward the future. Sometimes it is not directed toward the past either,
> but rather sideways. The nostalgic feels stifled within the conventional
> confines of time and space. (Boym 2001, 2011)

Music, *Umhlanga*, *Incwala*, and the nation

Within the many cultural elements that define and differentiate groups, music is a key "source of identification, a shared symbol of collectivity, and a means of generating and

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[37] While these small concessions were granted to the Swazis, the 1914 partition resulted in the loss of substantial amounts of land, chiefs were stripped of their legislative power, and regiments declined (MacMillan 1985:646).

[38] An early example of Sobhuza's "ethnic mobilisation" was his 1935 document entitled: "The original Swazi political organization" (MacMillan 1985:648).

enforcing social conformity" (Leyshon et al. 1998:2). Not only does one identify with fellow listeners (present or not) when listening to music, one emphasises and connects with performers and their narratives. Simon Frith states about popular music: "The experience of pop music is an experience of identity: in responding to a song, we are drawn, haphazardly, into affective and emotional alliances with the performers and with the performers' other fans" (2003:121). It is in this embodied environment of music (as composer, performer, or listener) that all notions of identity and place can be played out, that listeners can feel a sense of belonging "in the midst of the most fragmentary mobilizations" (Berland 1998:132).

Nations are collective groups and as Bohlman states, "music often musters a collective at the moment of performance" (2004:10). In his argument, Bohlman is referring to the "music of the masses" that was harnessed to perform nationhood in late eighteenth-century Europe but this need not be the only interpretation of his idea. When music is played, a whole ensemble is engaged. When there is a lone performer, all who pass by are listeners and are part of this momentary communal experience. In its sonic moment and its ambiguity, musicians and listeners can weave their own national identities and agendas into any number of musical genres or repertories. This fluidity makes music a perfect ally for nationalist discourses:

> Music is malleable in the service of the nation not because it is a product of national and nationalist ideologies, but rather because musics of all forms and genres can articulate the processes that shape the state. […] Music can narrate national myths and transform them to nationalist histories. Music marks national borders, while at the same time mobilising those wishing to cross or dismantle borders. (Bohlman 2004:12)

In Swaziland, music is integrated into religious worship, work, protest and importantly, cultural performances. Much has been written on the two most public examples of performed Swazi nationalism: the *Umhlanga* ("reed dance") and *Incwala* (Kingship renewal) ceremonies. The *Umhlanga* is an annual event, held usually in August, where the maidens (*imbali*) of Swaziland partake in a seven-day ceremony based around the Ludzidzini Royal village. Tens of thousands of young women from throughout Swaziland are sent to cut reeds for the rebuilding of the fencing of the Queen Mother's home. The first day is set aside for participants to register. On the second day, the King sends the girls out to collect reeds. Once they have done this, they return to the royal residence, Ludzidzini, and what follows during the final days is the self-display, parading and dancing of groups of girls (divided into groups representing different regions) in front of the Royal family and recently, tourists (V. Sibandze, interview, Malkerns, 20 October 2016). This mass-participatory musical and dance performance, along with much feasting, continues for two days. *Umhlanga* often provides an opportunity for the King's new choice in wife, though many

argue that this is not the sole purpose of the event. The following field note excerpt describes the experience of attending *Umhlanga* as an observer and how community, nation, and state power are woven together in this complex (and inherently musical) ritual.

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31 August 2014

*The Ezulwini valley is crystal clear from the icy winds of winter. Ludzidzini Palace and its surrounding grounds are a hive of activity and every square metre of land is covered with young girls, heavy-duty open-back trucks, food stalls and tourists. The girls and their collected reeds are climbing onto the trucks to the left and we can see the procession of tall reeds entering ahead of the cars in front of us. I see the Swazi flags start to emerge from the dust and I start to hear the whistles (*imfengwane*) and singing. All around is the soft "whirr" of German luxury vehicles passing by and the marching singing* imbali *(young maidens) swirling around the soft, dusty hillside. A well-dressed Swazi couple (in the bright red and black* emahiya *that forms part of what is considered traditional attire and reflective J-Lo sunglasses) call us over.[39] We cross the road and they welcome us, offering to be our tour guides. Photography is forbidden past a certain point on the grounds. The woman comments that I have dressed appropriately for the day as pants are forbidden for women. I explain that we are actually from Swaziland and I am aware of how women are encouraged to dress at official events but she has stopped listening and is looking to engage another group of visitors. Past the security guards, with their automatic rifles, is the Swaziland National Trust Commission's specially constructed beehive hut village. I can see awkward* mahiya-*clad (red and black printed fabric) tourists (probably European) walking around the huts and stalls. Amidst the distant, ever-changing singing, they are timidly reading the display boards that explain what happens on each day of the Umhlanga festival, their pale white skin burning under the bright winter sun. Amongst the Swazi participants, there are many visibly malnourished young girl-children and many fat well-heeled older men and women in the same place. Two men walk past in traditional attire and it is only as they pass me that I realise that the heaving, dripping plastic bags they are laden with are filled with cow flesh and blood – perhaps remainders from the last feast or food for the next. As we exit through the large manned gates, I overhear a man in his thirties dressed in traditional attire and expensive sunglasses explaining the politics of*

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[39] In siSwati, when someone is dressed in traditional attire, people say "*uvunulile*" ('you are dressed in attire'). *Emahiya* is fabric that is printed commonly in red, black and white, often with royal imagery on it.

Swaziland to two foreign women. As I walk past, I overhear him saying: "They want us to change to a democracy so that we can all start fighting each other".[40]

The above field note extract paints a portrait of the experience of attending *Umhlanga* and highlights some notable themes when considering nationalism in Swaziland: loyalty to the monarchy in the face of great inequality, the mass participation required to perform this nation, and Swazi exceptionalism as maintained from within and viewed from outside. The performative aspects of this festive event can be read in the details: approximately forty thousand young girls perform their tribute to the nation but also to their specific territories and local communities in singing set songs and dancing in regional groups, dressed in what is considered 'traditional' attire.[41] This is an event in which female regiments perform their Swaziness but the spectacle has an audience beyond the king and his consorts, with tourists from southern Africa and Europe in attendance. Within this mass participatory event, there are still opportunities to view class differentiation: in extra-ritual superficialities such as the expensive sunglasses, the luxury vehicles, but also in the range of 'traditional attire' on display (from the full royal beadwork worn by the Dlamini princesses, to the bare, faded skirts and t-shirts worn by those who cannot afford anything else. Participants enjoy heavy feasting throughout *Umhlanga* and this is believed to be a pull-factor for attendance. An important factor in assessing loyalty by *Umhlanga* attendance is that families can be fined if they do not send their daughters to attend.[42]

The *Umhlanga* festivities are accompanied by a beautiful wash of choral singing provided by the groups of maidens. Many *ummiso* songs (choral dance-songs of any character sung by young girls) can be heard simultaneously as the girls dance in an endless procession across the fields of the Royal Palace, Ludzidzini. The following song is a popular favourite at *Umhlanga* and describes a battle scenario between Swazi and Zulu troops. It is titled '*Tsine Sambamb' uZulu*' (We have caught the Zulu) and the composer is unknown.[43]

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[40] Extract from field note entitled "*Umhlanga* (Sunday)" (Ludzidzini, Ezulwini, 31 August 2014).
[41] Africa News reported that 98 000 maidens attended *Umhlanga* in 2016, though it is unclear how accurate this number is (Akwei 2016).
[42] The attire required to take part in *Umhlanga* is very costly and often when participants cannot afford to buy this, they just wear normal clothes.
[43] An audio recording of this song, recorded by David Rycroft, is supplied with this dissertation.

Tsine sambamb' uZulu[44]	
Leader: *Wo Zul' uts'ayihlome lonyak'!* *Sesaba kwaliwa tikhulu takaNgwane* *Wo, latsi manya manya lawuphos' umbane,* *Wo, latsi phati phati luyawubek' umbane,* *Sambamb' uZulu sesaba kwaliwa tikhulu takaNgwane* Chorus: *Tsine sambamb' uZulu sesaba kwaliwa,* *Wo, tsine sambamb' uZulu* *Wo, tsine sambamb' uZulu sesaba kwaliwa,* *Wo, tsine sambam' uZulu*	The Zulus are saying let it be war this year! We are afraid of being rejected by the Swazi chiefs Woh, flash, flash, and it strikes [lighting] Woh, pain, pain, it gently puts We have caught the Zulu but we are afraid of the falling by the Swazi chiefs We have caught the Zulu but we are afraid of the falling We have caught the Zulu We have caught the Zulu but we are afraid of the falling We have caught the Zulu

The above song describes a battle between Swazi and Zulu forces at the Lubuya River near Lavumisa, in the south of Swaziland during the reign of King Mswati I (1480–1520). This, like other *Umhlanga* songs, has strong nationalistic rhetoric woven into its lyrics: hinting at the spiritual powers of the Swazi leaders (invoking lightning to chase the Zulu warriors away), and emphasising a boundary, friction, between Swaziland's closely-related nation to the south. Bohlman emphasises music's ability to narrate national myths and histories and '*Tsine sambamb'uZulu*' is a powerful, lyrical example of this, drawing on the mythological and supernatural powers of Swazi rulers in battle, and in the act of performance when sung at a mass-participatory enactment of the Swazi Nation, *Umhlanga* (Bohlman 2004:12).

A second important cultural event on the national calendar is the annual *Incwala* ceremony. Hilda Kuper, drawing on Turner's seminal writing about ritual, published numerous analyses of the complex ceremonies performed in the annual *Incwala* or "kingship" festivities. According to Levin, the *Incwala* ceremony was adopted from the Ndwandwe group when King Sobhuza I married the Ndwandwe leader, Zwide's, daughter, Thandile (2001:11). Kuper described *Incwala* as a "ceremony rich in Swazi symbolism and only understandable in terms of the social organisation and major values of Swazi life" (1963:68). In her writings on the supernatural in 'Swazi culture', she describes *Incwala* as an act of paying homage to the royal ancestors every year before the rainy season and

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[44] Transcription by David Rycroft (1976:187). Translation by Vusi Sibandze.

describes *Incwala* as an annual series of celebrations and rites that are performed in public and in secret by different parties within a period of approximately one month. *Incwala* involves the following:

- The Little *Incwala* (*Incwala lencane*) lasts for several days, beginning on the summer solstice. As the moon cycle changes, the public attendees or regiments (*emabutfo*) perform different sacred songs and dances dedicated to the king. The formation of the dances changes as the festive days pass. The Little *Incwala* ends at dawn, and the attendees (the young men who are fetching the branches from the special thorn tree, *lusekwane*, and the water people who have travelled to the sea) return home. In the following weeks, the songs and dances are rehearsed in preparation for the Big Incwala.

- The Big *Incwala* (*Incwala lenkhulu*) lasts for six days from the night of the following full moon. A new musical theme is introduced on the first day of the Big *Incwala*: a sacred lullaby (Kuper 1968:59). Young men are sent out to cut a magic tree. They return on the second day with the cuttings, singing this lullaby. The young men then catch a black ox which will later be used in a ritual where the King is symbolically reborn.

- The "Great Day" is a highpoint within the Big *Incwala*. The King performs numerous rites and is treated with ointments in seclusion to renew his powers and ensure the commencement of a new year. This day is ended with the singing of the song '*Incaba kaNcofula*' (a war song sung by men only, transcribed by David Rycroft in 1968) after which no one may sing and a day of silence and seclusion begins.[45] As Kuper says, "The *Incwala* songs are closed for the year" (1963:71). This day ends with the singing of different national songs (those that recount the great deeds and leaders of the past) (Kuper 1968:90). Rycroft's transcription of '*Incaba kaNcofula*' can be seen below.[46] It is unclear whether Rycroft recorded this song as it does not feature in the Rycroft Collection housed with the British Library. Of the song, Rycroft writes: "It is sung very slowly, with great pathos and a strong diaphragm-vibrato, and

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[45] *Incaba* refers to a mysterious and formidable power in siSwati. '*Siyincaba*' is the motto on the Swaziland coat of arms and can be translated as: 'We are formidable' (V. Sibandze, interview, Malkerns, 20 October 2016). Rycroft describes this song as describing a "largely forgotten historic incident" (1976:172). Apart from its important use in the *Incwala* ceremony, this song was historically sung before warriors set off for battle. Rycroft's transcribed version was obtained from Prince Dumisa Dlamini in 1968.

[46] An audio recording of this song, recorded by Hugh Tracey, is supplied with this dissertation. This performance of the song is drastically different from the transcription by Rycroft.

accompanied by solemn dancing". He obtained the version he transcribed from Prince Dumisa Dlamini (Rycroft 1976:172).[47]

Incaba kaNcofula

Men's voices

Traditional (arranged by D. K. Rycroft)

[47] A version of this song was recorded by Hugh Tracey and can be heard on the ILAM release titled "The Nguni Sound". This recording varies from the Rycroft transcription in that it retains only chorus phrases but has varied descant parts above (in terms of lyrics and melody).

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D. 1: Ndab' u-ya wu-ga-ye - ya nga-ni? Fine

D. 2: [For D. S.]

Chorus: Nda-ba! Nans'___ i - nca - ba

In his discussion of music and cultural nationalism in Zimbabwe, Thomas Turino states:

> Music and dance create the emotional charge that helps possession to take place and, during nationalist rallies, allow people to begin not only to imagine the nation, but to have the experience of being a part of it. (2000:174)

In Swaziland, the *Umhlanga* and *Incwala* ceremonies are the two largest and most important performances of "nation". Dance and music (specifically choral songs) play a crucial role in the demarcation of rites and spaces during these festive events. In both cases, songs are often used to accompany movement (the young women fetching reeds, the young men returning with their wands, the King approaching his wives and trusted colleagues).

With both *Umhlanga* and *Incwala*, new compositions are written over the years for participants to sing, though it is also common for existent songs to be re-arranged or modified with new lyrics (V. Sibandze, interview, Ezulwini, 1 August 2016).[48] Despite the apparent compositional and performative fluidity of these genres, older sources often paradoxically describe the rigidity and purity of the repertory. Rycroft states: "Swazi ceremonial music still appears to be totally unaffected by Western influence, and retains a distinctive individual style which sets it off from Zulu and other Nguni music" (1979:168).[49] In Kuper's *African Arts* article on *Incwala*, she states:

> Among the Swazi of South-Eastern Africa, [...] there are a few occasions in the life cycle of every man and woman when dances are optional, many occasions when dances are obligatory, and others when dancing is taboo. Each occasion, requiring its own music, costumes, personnel, and

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[48] It is possible for the girls partaking in *Umhlanga* to compose new songs to be rehearsed and performed during the event, for example, Princess Sikhanyiso has contributed songs in the past to the *Umhlanga* repertory (V. Sibandze, interview, Malkerns, 20 October 2016).

[49] Considering the recent participation of Zulu maidens in the Swazi Umhlanga ceremonies and vice versa, the extent to which this statement is true calls for further research.

organisation, receives a relative meaning within the broad total context of Swazi culture. (1968:57)

Her 1968 article dates from before independence came to Swaziland, yet the importance and inflexible nature of these ritual songs, emphasised by Kuper, can be found in other sources. About polyphonic ceremonial vocal music, Rycroft states: "The repertoire ranges from serious ceremonial music and formal dance-songs, reserved for specific occasions, to numerous occupational and recreational forms […] Certain items for the annual national Incwala ceremony are treated as sacred and may not be performed at any other time" (Rycroft 1976: 167).

When politicians and archivists cite the importance of music in Swaziland, they most often refer to the polyphonic choral songs of the *Incwala* and *Umhlanga*, as opposed to any instrumental repertories (Kasenene 1993:35, Culture Policy 2014). Many of the large-scale Swazi ceremonies (such as the annual *Umhlanga* ceremony, or weddings or *imitsimba* for instance) require large groups of people as performers and performing listeners or audience members. In these events, music has a visceral connection to the connotations of these iconic events: the experience of singing, playing, and listening "demands a deeply physical response to the nation" (Bohlman 2004:3). This brings me back to the question of how the listening and performing of music in Swaziland contribute to the "cultural placing of the individual in the social" (Berland 1998:132). How does one make sense of the sound experience of nationalism in Swazi *makhweyane* music, for instance, or *sitolotolo* music? The above evidence shows that choral music is an integral part to mass-participatory events but the music of the *makhweyane* and other local instruments does not feature in these mass performances of "nation".

Due to the importance of communally performing 'Swazi culture', my research has shown that the *makhweyane* and other solo so-called 'traditional' instruments occupy peripheral spaces within the Swazi cultural imaginary. The often solitary nature of these musics and the relatively quiet acoustics of these instruments mean that they are left out of popular mass events. When they are included (as accompaniment for a live band, or gospel choir as seen in the 2010 Tihlabani Awards in Manzini), the value of these instruments and players as representations of local culture is often in how they look, rather than how they sound. One of the few examples to contradict my assertion is the use of Mkhulu Bhemani's *makhweyane* recording to herald the national news of Swazi Radio but this appears to be one of the few experiences of the sound of the *makhweyane* to which non-players have access.

I posit that in the case of these lesser-known musical repertories, often visual texts or materials are more readily cues for Swaziness, drawing on what Samuels et al. have described as the historic "dialogic relationship between sound and sight" (2010:333). This

relationship, with regards the performance of Swaziness, was evident in the numerous home performances that I attended, when musicians hastily changed into their *emahiya* (traditional red cotton cloth worn by women and men) and men reached for their animal skins (*emajobo*) in order to play their music for me. A further example of this dialogic relationship between the sonic and the visual is the series of postage stamps below, dating from 2003. These display the stereotypical visual attributes of a *makhweyane* or *sitolotolo* player: an older, married woman in traditional attire (*imvunulo*) in front of rural fencing and "beehive" buildings.[50]

Figure 5 Musical instrument national stamp series of Swaziland (2003).

This national stamp is part of a series of stamps which depict different traditional instruments: the *lishongololo* (Kudu horn) aerophone, the *sitolotolo* mouth harp, the *emafahlawane* leg rattles, and the *makhweyane* bow. Created by Ezulwini-based artist Philip Dlamini, three of these stamps (2003) depict musicians in *mahiya* fabric or animal skins beside a beehive hut, or cattle byre fence while they make music with these instruments. The stamps affirm firstly the more recent state spelling of *makhweyane* and *sitolotolo*, but they also serve as a portrayal of what the instrument means and where it belongs: within that rural, traditionalist imaginary. The *makhweyane* player is depicted as a respectable, married woman (as with the *sitolotolo* stamp) standing in front of a traditional home wall (made of reeds) beyond which is natural greenery – playing into the common triangulation of traditional musician (notably a woman), home spaces, and the rural, natural environment. The invocation of this triangulation further highlights the peripheral role these musicians

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[50]The *sicholo* black hair cover shown in this image is worn by married women, though the accompanying white headband can be worn by married women or unmarried women (*ingcugce*). As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the red, black and white printed fabric wrapped around the player's body is called a *lihiya* (pl. *emahiya*).

occupy as Swaziland continues its transformation into a largely urban, globalised, and capitalist society.

Action and instrumentality: Scholars and ideologues

Having considered the possible ways in which cultural rhetoric has been used in Swazi politics over the last century and how different musics are woven into this, it is worth considering who the ideologues and culture bearers have been and are today, since this has direct bearing on the *makhweyane* players of this study. In these enactments of the Swazi cultural imaginary, who has agency and how does this manifest itself? In this section, I will use the terms "ideologues" and "players" to refer to scholars, politicians, organisations, and institutions within Swaziland who hold and have held sway on cultural matters; to understand the ebb and flow of cultural agency in Swaziland and within this cultural map.

The dissemination of the Swazi cultural model, from textual sources, has rhetorically and historically involved elders in the community and this largely remains the case today. On one side, politicians and journalists refer to the ways of old that Swazis have strayed from: emphasis is put on "culture days" and artistic competitions, and there is much talk of how educational infrastructure has failed to protect traditional arts (S. Dlamini, interview, Manzini, 21 August 2014). Stanley Dlamini, the CEO of the Swaziland National Arts and Culture Council or SNCAC (under the Ministry of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs), stated during an interview in 2014:

> I think the issue of technology killed traditional music because when technology came to this part of the world, people started listening to the Celine Dion's of this world and Beyoncé's of this world through TVs and radios… such that you'll find a small kid singing a Celine Dion song as opposed to a traditional song. And I also think that education played a very big role in disintegrating our music because traditional music was… it's not also performed in most schools in Swaziland. In fact, some schools, like your missionary schools, they don't even do 'culture days', let alone traditional songs. So, that also is a challenge because the education system was brought by the Europeans and the Europeans have their own style of thinking and they were here to promote their nationalism which then becomes… culture became one of the critical components that should be eroded in order to influence people's ideology. (S. Dlamini, interview, Manzini, 21 August 2014)

Whilst the narrative that older Swazi traditions are vulnerable is common, there are, conversely, numerous elderly practitioners of arts, crafts and medicine that continue to

perform their traditions. In this study, most of the *makhweyane* players are elderly and consider themselves important bearers of this musical tradition. They are each acknowledged as such by their immediate community. If their music is better known, as is the case with the music of the group, *Sigubhu Sebalozi*, and to some extent Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula, their music may be acknowledged further afield "in town" (in the urban areas of Manzini, Matsapha, Mbabane, and Piggs Peak).

Beyond the older men and women across the country, members of the Royal family or people with political power have historically disseminated much information about culture in Swaziland. The studies of MacMillan (1985) and Levin (2001) show that the Royal house played guardian over these "colourful" customs and scholars such as Kuper and Rycroft were granted access to this information through princely and other royal "informants". In an un-authored note published under the title "The Music of the Swazis" in the Journal of the African Music Society, it is stated that permission constraints made the audio recording of Swazi music in the first half of the twentieth-century difficult. Special authority had to be granted by the Paramount Chief (Sobhuza II from 1921 until 1982) and his council (author unknown 1952:14).[51] In the case of Brian Marwick's study, his "informant's" brother (Maboya Fakudze) went on to become a prominent *Liqoqo* (the royal advisory council) member and as MacMillan describes him, "a major source of oral history" (1985:655). For the early anthropologists, royal access was indeed an issue when documenting the large mass performances of 'Swazi culture', such as the *Umhlanga* and *Incwala* festivities. Many aspects of these and other ceremonies happen behind closed doors where only key personnel are granted entry. Thus, government and the leaders of Swaziland provided much of the access and commentary revolving around cultural practices. The relationship between culture and power is, in this way, cemented.

As urban society moves further away from the elders in the *emakhaya* (the scattered homesteads of the rural areas) who act as oral historians, I argue that the channels through which oral history is disseminated (historically only through the elders), have diversified.[52] The urban portrait of "Swazi tradition" is circulated through traditional and social media, hearsay, education, historical and enacted texts (television, film, radio broadcasts, festivals). Swazi radio is an important mediator of thought and music. Swazi TV has become an

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[51] This note goes on to describe one song in particular: '*Inqaba ga Ngqofula*' (The Fortress of Ngqofula) ['*Incaba kaNcofula*' in correct siSwati] and to discuss the growing popularity, at the time, of the *sibhaca* dances, which are believed to have come from the amaThembu isiXhosa mine workers and then spread to KwaZulu-Natal and Swaziland and beyond (Author unknown 1952:14).

[52] See for example the work of Hamilton (1998). In her book *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention*, she notes that "Indigenous oral histories demand historicization, have their own canons, and are governed by rhetorical strategies and narrative conventions that are in some respects similar and in other ways different from those of guild historians" (Hamilton 1998:31).

increasingly important disseminator of cultural information within Swaziland, especially within the urban centres of the country. In the rural areas, many families still cannot afford a television and do not have electricity. There is a popular TV show, hosted by the musician Mshikishi, dedicated to local music (kwaito, *Mbaqanga* and other popular styles), titled "*Washumkhukhu*" (Burning house).[53] Television journalists have a mandate to find stories throughout Swaziland and throughout my research, were enthusiastic collaborators. On one occasion, a team of three cameramen and journalists accompanied me on a trip to visit the *makhweyane* player, Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula and this resulted in a twenty-minute feature, following an independent narrative of how endangered the *makhweyane* and *sitolotolo* were, and how much a national Swazi treasure Mkhulu was for hand-crafting his own *sitolotolo* instruments.

In addition to these channels, competitions prove to be an ever important and popular platform for creative and cultural mediation. In Swaziland, competitions are held for all nature of cultural practices from the "Miss Deaf Swaziland" pageant to "Miss Cultural Heritage", from acapella *umbholoho* singing competitions, to *sibhaca* dance competitions. Describing the nature of musical competitions, Martin Stokes states: "Contexts are constructed by musicians, audiences and media in these events, in which meanings are generated, controlled and negotiated" (1997:15). During interviews and interactions with politicians and media personnel, they suggested competitions as a key method for reviving a practice. The Swaziland National Council for Arts and Culture (SNCAC) CEO, Mr. Stanley Dlamini, suggested to me in an interview that regional competitions amongst *makhweyane* bow players would help to verify who was the best player in an area (instead of accepting membership from any interested person in the proposed Swaziland Traditional Musicians' Association).

This speaks to Jane Fulcher's (1987:4) concept of "public resonance" where many ideologues in Swaziland, media personnel, bureaucrats, and organisations seem to anticipate what might have "public resonance within culture and the arts.[54] During my fieldwork, I applied to SNCAC for funds in order to host a concert (titled *Bashayi Bengoma* or "Song beaters") at the local branch of Alliance Française for the musicians with whom I had been working. Numerous event organisers implied that I had been successfully awarded money for said concert due to the nature of the event (a celebration of 'traditional' Swazi culture) and the type of music programmed. It was implied by two informants that had the concert's content been less obviously related to conventional notions of 'Swazi culture', it

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[53] The name "*Washumkhukhu*" refers to a house (usually one that is quickly assembled out of grass, mud, or corrugated iron) on fire. This poetically refers to when a party is good and dancers are sweating from exertion on the dancefloor. The TV programme airs on Fridays on Swazi TV.
[54] Jane Fulcher, in her monograph on French Grand Opera and politics, writes about how the national theatre in France is described as having a "public resonance" associated with it (1987:4).

would have been harder to curry (financial) favour from the government. Despite this perceived hierarchy within the arts, no one from the SNCAC attended our concert, though numerous promises were made to do so.

The above examples, from scholars, to politicians, and media, display how the national cultural imaginary in Swaziland is inherently linked to the agency of powerful ideologues. As we move further into the twenty-first century, enacted and performative texts such as the rap videos of Princess S'khanyiso, the ever-popular *Incwala* and *Umhlanga* ceremonies, and the touristy "Mantenga Cultural Village"[55] take on new roles as authoritative cultural information and experiences, and live on incongruously with the realities of people's lives and the political wishes of increasing numbers of Swazi citizens.

Songs as testimony

The peripheral position of *makhweyane* players and other instrumentalists in Swaziland has been discussed earlier in this chapter. Whilst institutions, texts and mass performances hold sway in the propulsion of the concept of 'Swazi culture', individuals have agency as well. Individual musicians have the ability, even from their peripheral positioning, to engage this cultural imaginary and powers within and beyond it. The case study put forward in this section speaks to the dialogic possibilities within *makhweyane* music in the cultural and political environment of contemporary Swaziland.

In traditions around the world, song can be a platform for musicians to articulate what they cannot do elsewhere. *Makhweyane* songs are no different in this regard, despite the rigid modes of cultural expression in Swaziland. The *makhweyane* player and multi-instrumentalist Smiles Makama (also known as Smiler) described this facility in *makhweyane* music:

> When I listen to the ladies, the instrument is a way of telling about everything
> they think. Protest against the culture in the country or the expression of love,
> you know. Sometimes I find it political, you know, because what they were
> saying were things that they could not say otherwise. Telling the story of what
> they feel, how they see the men behaving in the country, or whatever. So, it
> could be quite serious. They were telling serious stories. (S. Makama,
> interview, Msunduza, 7 October 2016)

An example of the capacity for *makhweyane* songs to critique the status quo can be seen in Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula's '*Inkinga eNyakatfo*' composition. Magagula, a

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[55] Mantenga Cultural Village is a tourist destination between Mbabane and Manzini where there is a mock Swazi village of beehive huts and cattle byres, along with a permanent ensemble of singers, dancers, and other performers. The "Kingdom of Swaziland" website refers to it as "a living museum of old traditions" that "represents a classical Swazi lifestyle during the 1850s" ("Mantenga reserve, village and falls" 2013).

makhweyane player from Enyaktfo, assumed the nickname 'Gezi' in his earlier days, which in English means 'electricity' or 'fire'. He told me that his musical prowess was such that when he played, onlookers used to call out: "Shisa Gezi, shisa!" (Burn electricity, burn/ burn them up!) (B. Magagula, interview, eBuhleni, 7 August 2014). Now he is close to his nineties and a widower. He lives alone on his assigned land, growing a few vegetables, and playing *makhweyane* to himself in the evenings.[56] When I initially approached him in April 2014, Magagula had not performed in public for many years. Despite this, at the beginning of the year, Magagula was selected for a lifetime achievement award from SNCAC for his contribution to the performing arts. This award was accompanied by 5000 *emalangeni* (the currency in Swaziland) in prize money but over a month later, by May 2014, Magagula's award money had still not arrived and those around him feared it had been "eaten". After some investigation by Vusi Sibandze and myself, the money unexpectedly appeared again.

Magagula speaks about organising the young men in his area into a performing *sibhaca* dance group when he was a teenager, and learning numerous instruments over the course of his long life. Decades ago, he was recorded playing the *makhweyane* by Edward Mthethwa and Gideon Dlamini of Swazi Radio and as mentioned earlier, the sounds of his bow bring in the hourly news broadcasts on the siSwati radio channel to this day (though few people know who is playing) (E. Mthethwa, interview, Mbabane, 5 August 2014).[57] In this sense, SNCAC and those who know him recognise Magagula as an important musician, but as mentioned previously, he hardly ever performs in public. He, like many other citizens of his generation, is outwardly a supporter of the monarchy and a representative of 'Swazi culture'. Even though he is recognized as a supposed "cultural treasure" of the nation, Magagula lives in dire poverty. Though the rhetoric supplied by government and ministerial channels values artists such as Magagula, he is relatively unknown to the rest of the country and largely unsupported. In the following song, we can read the numerous ways that Mkhulu Magagula engages the old in the new, whilst retelling an important political story.[58]

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[56] In Swaziland, a man can be assigned a portion of land by pledging allegiance to a local chief and paying a small fee (*kukhonta* in siSwati).

[57] Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula does not earn royalties from this radio-play due to SBIS recording policy. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

[58] Throughout this dissertation I assign song titles to the song transcriptions I have provided. It is not common practice amongst *makhweyane* players to title their songs and compositions, but I use a repeated lyrical phrase for each song to do this for the sake of analysis and clarity.

Inkinga eNyakatfo [excerpt][59]	
Bhemani Magagula	
6 May 2014	
Kunenkinga-inkinga-inkinga-inkinga-inkinga, *Inkinga eNyakatfo* *Kunenkinga-inkinga-inkinga-inkinga-inkinga,* *Inkinga eNyakatfo* *Hhekele, baba namake* *Hhobh! Ngiyakhala kaNgwane. Whop!* *Ngiyakhala kaNgwane.* *Balwa ngetibunu kaMkhweli, Nkosi* *Bayalwa ngetibunu kaMkhweli, babe* *Nkosi bayibulele kaMkhweli, ha!* *BakaMaguga balwa tibunu bomake*	You have a problem, problem, problem in eNyakatfo You have a problem, problem, problem in eNyakatfo Hhekele, mother and father. Whop! I am crying, Swaziland. Whop! I am crying, Swaziland They are being fought with bottoms, at Mkhweli, Lord. They are killing the chief/King at Mkhweli. Those of the Maguga family are being fought with bottoms, mothers.

This song describes a notorious incident in an area known as KaMkhweli where there was a dispute regarding communal land rights and a large commercial farming enterprise. In 2000, the two traditional chiefs of the Macetjeni and KaMkhweli areas were forcefully evicted by security forces, with two hundred of their followers. Prince Maguga (a relative of King Mswati III) had laid claim to the land in this region and so ordered the removal of all inhabitants under cover of darkness. After this violent event, the King, Police Commissioner and armed forces refused to allow the communities to return to their homes, and ignored the numerous court orders that ordered their return. This led to the King's controversial and contested decree of 2001, which gave all ministers and public officers immunity with regards to legal recrimination.

In Mkhulu Magagula's retelling of this unhappy episode in recent Swazi history, he highlights a particular event where citizens of the area voiced their dissatisfaction with Prince Maguga's actions. As a method of demonstrating their disapproval, the women of the area went to his house, lifted their skirts and exposed their naked bottoms to him. This is a relatively common way to demonstrate protest in Swaziland, particularly when there is no recourse to political action. Though there is a comical aspect to this larger story, the tale ends darkly as the Prince died soon after this incident. Magagula's song poetically warns that when women show their bottoms to you, you will be destroyed. The underlying message is that though the community was weak and poverty-stricken, its constituents were able to curse their leader when he had misbehaved, in an act of unexpected citizens' power.

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[59] An audio recording of this song is supplied with this dissertation.

In this musical case study, we hear a song similar in structure to others by Magagula and other *makhweyane* players. The melodic accompaniment provided by the *makhweyane* is cyclical, with a treble recurring overtone melody that supports and answers the vocal material. Magagula uses repeated phrases to ground his storytelling and to return to themes, for example the phrases: "*Kunenkina – inkinga – inkinga - inkinga - inkinga - inkinga - inkinga eNyakatfo*" (There are problems at eNyakatfo), and "*Hekele babe nomake*" (an exclamation followed by 'father and mother'). In his constant reference to "*babe*" (father), he is paying homage to his ancestors and perhaps even reporting events back to them. Magagula uses the characteristic *tibongo* (spoken praise) passages to encourage and direct his listeners: "*Khala makhweyane! Sihambe eMbabane! Khuluma mantombazana*!" (Sing/play *makhweyane*! We go to Mbabane! Speak, young women!). Though Magagula, in the complete song, hints at numerous stories from different areas, his overall theme is a lament of the hardships found across Swaziland. In this song, Magagula has used his favoured compositional technique of reflecting on one's surrounding happenings, and performing one's reflections through short, abstracted, poetic (and often repeated) lyrics but it is the heated lyrical content of the song that is surprising. About the song, Magagula stated:

> *Labbabe tibunu kaboGogo ngababona emaphepeni, ndvuna. Ngababona emaphepeni ngasengiyabafaka labafati bambulala lobabe. Ngiyatsemba nawe bowukhona. Nasengiyabafaka kela.* [...] *Wagcina asahambe ngetinyawo-four nyawo, loMaguga. Wahamba nga-four nyawo wagcina sahambile kulomhlaba. Tibunu tiyabulalana. Nasengiyafaka kemine lengoma. Ubobe uciphile lapho.* [...] *Nasengiyamfakake loMaguga. Labafati balwa ngetibunu nje balwelani? Tibunu tiyabulala. Wafa ngetibunu. Tibunu tagwatjulwa sewufile.* [...] *Ngiyabonga Gogo nasengiphendvula kanje ngitokulandzela lomlandvo.*

> Those of the bums, granny, I saw them in the paper, leader/boss. I saw in the papers then I put them in the song, the women they destroyed the man [Maguga]. I hope you saw them. [...] I then put them in here. He ended up in a wheelchair, Maguga [*slang – "on four wheels"*]. He ended up in a wheelchair – he ended up going away from this world [*dying*]. Bottoms can kill. Then I put it in my song. I hope you are recording here. I put Maguga in the song. What makes the ladies fight with their bums? The bums can kill. He died with the bums. Once they show you the bums, you are dead [...] Thank you, Gogo,

when you answer like this so I give you the history. (B. Magagula, interview, eBuhleni, 6 May 2014)[60]

This particular story of land dispossession in the Mkhweli area is remembered by many as a turning point in uncontested loyalty to the King, particularly in the rural areas. Other low-level chiefs feared for their safety and security and many were distressed by the disingenuous way in which the royal ruling elite behaved. So in 2014, Bhemani Magagula responds to the King's call for new songs, by composing a song that highlights and reminds listeners of this historic event and the power that an act of women's resistance can have on an important political figure. Through poeticism and humour, Magagula reminds his listeners of this controversial act in recent Swazi history.

His compositions reflect his everyday realities, but also serve to document events of local and national importance. In another of Magagula's recent compositions, he laments his treatment at a national clinic: he sings about how the nurses told him to go home and die as the pills they stock are for young people. Without overtly expressing political sentiment, Magagula is reminding us that support for the monarchy is not uniform, simple, or unconditional. As his lyrics remind us: "*Kuyakhalwa kaNgwane*" (There is crying in Swaziland).

Vusi Sibandze described the ability of the older generation to criticise the current King and ruling elite:

> In Swaziland, an old person is respected for his level. Even in the Royal Kraal, it is just that there are those set-ups where some people will screen those going to speak to the King but an old man telling them the truth, nothing is done because he is taken as a custodian of Swazi culture. He knows more than them. It will be just that they don't like what he is telling them because through his talking there is experience and wisdom. So, that is respected. Such an example is at home. If the child has messed up with the mother, then the child will run to go to grandmother's house. If she is in grandmother's house, nobody will beat that child no matter what wrong she has done because that is refuge. Then Gogo will have to deal with the case. You don't touch Gogo! It goes the same. Even the King, these old people like Mkhulu Bhemani are telling him straight. They are older than him. They know more than him. [...] That is how he gets to know the truth because the young people will never confront him, because it is his equals. But the old people, they are always seeing him as a boy. Because they know his father. He knows it is his

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[60] Mkhulu Magagula uses the term "*Gogo*" which translates as 'grandmother' and as a term of respect. He often uses this term for men and women.

father's buddies. He will give them that respect. (V. Sibandze, interview, Ezulwini, 1 August 2016)

In his discussion of politics and resistance in Congolese popular music, Bob White identifies five strategies used by musicians in Kinshasa to "communicate with people in power" (2014:132). He terms these: indifference, overt resistance, derision, indirect discourse, and praise. Amongst so-called 'traditional' musicians in rural Swaziland, the tools used most commonly would be indirect discourse, and praise, but Magagula's song about kaMkhweli is evidence that there are complex combinations of simultaneous loyalty and dissatisfaction between these two markers in *makhweyane* music. Magagula's songs use evocative, humorous and poetic lyrics to show how even the most marginalised and peripheral (in his case, as an elderly, rural *makhweyane* musician) can engage their citizenship. In response to the King's anxiety, artists were encouraged to invigorate their traditions by composing new material. In doing this, a sense of community and Swaziness inspired this musician to draw on local stories for song lyrics, and these inevitably contained the moments of frustration and resistance witnessed in contemporary Swaziland.

Bashayi Bengoma ("The song beaters")

Musicking is about relationships, not so much about those which actually exist in our lives as about those that we desire to exist and long to experience. [...] By bringing into existence relationships that are thought of as desirable, a musical performance not only reflects those relationships but also shapes them. It teaches and inculcates the concept of those ideal relationships, or values... (Small 1998:183-184)

In Magagula's performance of his kaMkhweli song, he performs numerous roles to his "nation": that of the elderly moral guardian, the idiomatic and humorous bard, the peripheral and solitary commentator. During my fieldwork, I had the opportunity to work with a collective of *makhweyane* musicians and players of other so-called 'traditional' instruments. In this way, I was privy not only to the performative agency of solo musicians playing to themselves, to me, and to their immediate communities but also to the processes by which an ensemble could come together and perform to audiences, each other and broader society.

In mid-2014, after numerous months of field research in the various provinces of Swaziland, Vusi Sibandze and I (as acting coordinators of the Swaziland Traditional Music Association) decided to organize a fundraising concert for the instrumentalists I had interviewed. Numerous musicians had spoken of their lack of performance opportunities and

evidence of their need for extra income was apparent from the start of my field research. The local branch of Alliance Française in Mbabane offered to host the event and sixteen musicians voiced interest in performing in this daytime concert. The concert was titled *Bashayi Bengoma* (Song-beaters/ song-hitters), at the suggestion of Sibandze, and featured *makhweyane* players but also players of the *sitolotolo* (mouth harp), *inkhositina* (concertina), *imfiliji* (harmonica), *sitontolo* (mouthbow), *sikelekehle* (monochord bow), and guitar.

Though many of these instruments are solo instruments, the most cost-effective way of profiling the work of all the musicians was to have them play in a group concert. The logistics resulted in a long concert where each player got up in front of the assembled crowd at the Alliance Française to perform one or two songs. There was not enough funding to schedule rehearsals before this concert and it was unclear as to whether the musicians would want to collaborate musically, and so a mosaic approach was decided on as the most viable possible presentation. At the end of the concert, as the crowd started to drift away, the musicians present began to form small trio or ensemble groups and improvised together on stage in different configurations. What had been a formal performance space in front of a paying audience transformed into a rare platform for these traditional musicians to experiment communally. Oft-holicipators or solo performers turned into creative participants and collaborators in front of the audience. *Bashayi Bengoma* – a performance collective and vehicle for further opportunity – was born.

During my research, these musicians came together under this title and performed music in solo, duo, and ensemble arrangements. This section expounds the experiences and music of these *makhweyane* and other musicians in different solo and collective performative contexts. The musicians in *Bashayi Bengoma* chose to dress in traditional attire and by virtue of the instruments they played, the narrative that developed around their few performances was often framed within the discussion of local salvage ventures, rural nostalgia and the constructed matrix referred to as 'Swazi culture'. The *Bashayi Bengoma* collective, as a recent construct, is situated at the nexus of the particular contemporary cultural processes at play in Swaziland.

As an example of group musical endeavour, there were numerous interesting aspects of participation and reception to be considered. The Annual Bushfire International Arts Festival is held at House on Fire in the Malkerns Valley. House on Fire is an entertainment venue that consists of an amphitheatre and numerous outdoor stages and bars. Covered in mosaic and concrete sculptures, it is an eternally flourishing multi-purpose setting with different floor levels and numerous paths crisscrossing the space. After the performance at Alliance Française in Mbabane in 2014, the CEO of the Bushfire Festival, Jiggs Thorn, approached me and asked whether I would submit an application on behalf of the *Bashayi Bengoma* musicians to perform in 2015. *Bashayi Bengoma* were accepted and

the musicians were thrilled as they had heard so much about the Bushfire festival on national radio but had not been included in past line-ups. With a limited budget from Bushfire and sixteen musicians to coordinate, Vusi and I (as their logistical coordinators) had to engineer a forty-five-minute set from what had been essentially collected solo performances (with some improvisation) the year before. The logistic challenges of assembling sixteen musicians (some of whom are physically frail and all of whom come from different corners of the country) were substantial but one day-long rehearsal was booked at a studio in Manzini and the ensemble was due to play on the second day of the festival.

The rehearsal was a chaotic demonstration of how few chances these solo instrumentalists have had to make music communally.[61] The performers divided into smaller groups and workshopped music, adding additional instrumentation to existing songs, i.e. Gogo Khokhiwe Mphila's *makhweyane* song '*Akuna'nkomo*' (There are no cattle) was arranged for a lead singer (Mphila) and group of five responsorial singers with *emafahlawane* (ankle-rattles). The two simplest songs for the full group to perform together were compositions by Mkhulu Zwangendaba Dlamini, a guitarist and the lead singer of the traditional band, *Sigubhu Sebalozi*. The performers present knew both songs due to their radio play and while everyone was rehearsing, the group naturally joined in on these items. '*Sengiyahamba mfana*' (I am going now, boy), originally a *umtshingosi* flute composition by Mkhulu Moses "Phayinaphu" Mncina, was a particular favourite amongst the group and it was decided that this would be a strong song to end off the festival set. The florid and ornamented flute melody was transformed into a simple guitar-accompanied song with the lyrics below.

Sengiyahamba mfana Mkhulu Moses "Phayinaphu" Mncina	
Sengiyahamba, mfana (x 3) *Mine sengibuyel' ekhaya* *Sengiyahamba, mfana* *Sengibuyel' ekhaya ngoba indlala seyidlala ngami* *Ngibuyel' ekhaya ngoba indlala seyidlala ngami* *Sengibuyel' ekhaya*	I am going now, boy Me, I am going back home I am going now, boy I am going back home because hunger is playing with me I am going back home because hunger is playing with me I am going back home

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[61] The rehearsal took place on 22 May 2015.

On the morning of the 29th of May 2015, *Bashayi Bengoma* arrived early in Manzini from the far reaches of the country. The musicians came dressed in the traditional attire of *emahiya* fabric and beaded *emagcebesha* necklaces, and armed with their various instruments. Make Shongwe from the Shewula region had also arrived with a large live rooster (part of an on-going sale arrangement between herself and Vusi Sibandze) and I brought stock of the good but hastily-compiled album of recordings from the Alliance Française performance of 2014. After an insufficient sound check and with the inescapable bass of a DJ set elsewhere at the festival, the ensemble was ready to play. On the narrow stage, performers came forward to the assembled microphones at the appropriate times, and the accompanying group of musicians danced and sang in time in the background. An appreciative audience of largely foreign tourists enjoyed the sounds of Mkhulu Moses Mncina's plastic *umtshingosi* flute, Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula's rhythmic *makhweyane* playing, Gogo Sonile Sifundza's unusual hand whistle, and Make Shongwe's *sitolotolo* (mouth harp) train song. The set ended with an ensemble rendition of '*Sengiyahamba mfana*' led by Mkhulu Dlamini and his guitar, with the audience clapping along.

Both performances by *Bashayi Bengoma* (at the Alliance Française in Mbabane and the Bushfire Festival) demonstrated, firstly, the flexibility with which these elderly musicians can musick. With limited or no rehearsals and little contact with each other's music, the musicians adapted their individualistic styles of playing and singing to perform collectively. A second reflection drawn from these experiences is that, though they performed a crucial role for audiences (in acquainting them with instruments and sounds local but relatively unfamiliar), these musicians again complied with the visual expectations of what a 'traditional' ensemble of Swazi performers should look like. Here the dialogic possibilities between musicians and state was downplayed in their choice of repertory but the relationship between sound and sight was again augmented for performative effect. The musicians dressed in full traditional attire, danced choreographies based on regimental dances (in both senses invoking the communal via subtext), and due to sound equipment inadequacies, the sound of this music took a step back from how this music looked.

Figure 6 Bashayi Bengoma *perform in the House-on-Fire amphitheatre (29 May 2015).*

Figure 7 Bashayi Bengoma *pose at the end of their performance (29 May 2015).*

Inoue states: "A particular mode of hearing and seeing is, then, an effect of a regime of social power, occurring at a particular historical juncture, that enables, regulates, and proliferates sensory as well as other domains of experience" (2003:39). Turino, in his discussion on cultural performance and nationalism in Zimbabwe, describes how national cultures are often depicted as "ancient primordial components of the land"– how "time depth" is strategically woven into musical and other performances. Through their traditional attire and with the visual and sonic index of traditional instruments, the players in *Bashayi Bengoma* also draw upon time depth. Through their performances, they invoke sensory and

other complex experiences of Swaziness for themselves and for their audiences (Turino 2000:180).

Conclusion

Appadurai defines culture as an ephemeral human discourse that "exploits difference to generate diverse conceptions of group identity" (1996:13). In this chapter, I have argued that the state in Swaziland supports a network of symbolic, nostalgic stasis with an active calendar of tribute performances to maintain a distinct group identity. Further I argue that the degree of rigidity and homogeneity employed within this cultural imaginary has increased since the reign of Sobhuza II, as the political terrain in Swaziland has itself become more contested.

Society can be seen "in" music as Stokes states (1997:2). In Swaziland, this means we see evidence of a homogenizing, traditionalist agenda related to power structures existent today inside and surrounding cultural events (both small and large scale). On closer examination, however, this is more complex than simple "top-down" engagement. Whilst the big cultural players favour a static construction consisting of the more 'traditional' arts, their support and follow-through is weak, in predictable asymmetry, as older instrumentalists are treated as less important than the popular mass-participatory events of *Umhlanga* and *Incwala* outline earlier.

Despite the obvious hierarchy amongst cultural practices, instrumentalists engage with, against and in different modes of performing the "nation" despite their varying value within this society. The case study of Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula's *kaMkhweli* song disrupts notions of simple engagement with Swazi nationalism and power structures. Magagula uses his compositions on the *makhweyane* bow to document and historicize the goings-on in his region and nationally. He weaves together moral messages and humour, the visceral and the abstract, the critical and the favourable.

When given the opportunity, the *Bashayi Bengoma* ensemble of traditional instrumentalists came together in what appears (and sounds) like a national cultural group. The music of these instruments (including and exemplified by the *makhweyane*) fits into the Swazi nationalist discourse and provides a space for people within the country to listen deeply to their "nation" but opportunities for this experience are few and far between. Though visually performing to a nineteenth-century image of rural Swazi men and women, *Bashayi Bengoma* also pit differing solo instruments together in unusual combinations – Mkhulu Mncina's *umtshingosi* shrieks out above Gogo Mphila's *makhweyane,* in different acoustic and tuning contexts but creating a new musical conversation. It is through this traffic of hesitation, enthusiasm, confusion, and celebration that artists perform the cultural imaginary

but also transcend it, "constructing trajectories, rather than boundaries across space" (Stokes 1997:4).

Though the songs of the large performative rituals of *Umhlanga* and *Incwala* are those that most Swazis hear and recall annually, the lone instrumentalists continue to play and compose lifting dust in their locales. Given a larger platform, these musicians subtly adapt but also invoke national polity and individual micro-identities using their music. It is through these musical performances, acts of listening, playing, and thinking, that their individual and social identities, as contemporary musicians, rural farmers, innovators and improvisers, are constructed and mobilised (Stokes 1997:5).

CHAPTER THREE

Awuyicecebule **("May you peel it"): The historical, material and social identity of the**
makhweyane

Introduction

This chapter explores the historical, material, and social identity of the *makhweyane* musical
bow. Drawing on numerous fieldwork interviews with *makhweyane* players, completed over
2014 and 2015, it locates the Swazi *makhweyane* bow amongst diverse contemporary
enacted texts to create an image of the instrument and its use in contemporary Swaziland.
Peeling back the layers, it also draws upon the existing recorded archive of *makhweyane*
music and slim written sources from Percival Kirby, David Rycroft and David Dargie's field
trips to Swaziland (as well as others) over the course of the past century to understand how
the instrument is constructed, learned, and performed in Swaziland. When encouraging a
musician to play a song, players say to each other "*Awuyicecebule*" (may you peel it) and I
borrow this phrase to frame this chapter which seeks to understand the *makhweyane* as a
musical instrument, and how it is known and played today.[62]

As stated previously, southern Africa is home to numerous musical bow variations.
Beyond the *makhweyane* bow, the most commonly played bows are the isiXhosa *umrhubhe*
mouthbow and *uhadi* struck bow of the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, the isiZulu
umakhweyana gourd-resonated bow of the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa, the
Sesotho and Setswana *segankhuri* and *lesiba* bows, the Venda *chihwani* bow, and the
xiTsonga *xitende* gourd-resonated bow of southern Mozambique (Stacey 2016).[63]
Internationally, musical bows are best known through the "globally mobile" *berimbau* gourd-
resonated bow of Brazil, used in the martial art and dance form *capoeira* (Senay 2014:408).
The *berimbau*, like the mbira, *didjiridu* and *shakuhachi*, has enjoyed global popularity with
capoeira roda and ensembles emerging in cities across the world. Pinto and Gonzales
(2016) assert that the renown of the *berimbau* is based largely on its accompanying
instrumental role within *capoeira*. Southern African musical bows have not been privileged
with such global popularity and debates surrounding their longevity frequently arise amongst
performers, scholars and audiences.

When investigating the nature of *makhweyane* music and the place held by this
instrument in contemporary Swaziland, common discursive tropes have become apparent.

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[62] The phrase "*Awuyicecebule*" denotes the peeling of an orange or other fruit and is interpreted as
'play your song' in a musical context.
[63] Parts of this introduction have been drawn from a forthcoming report on the inaugural International
Bow Music Conference held at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, in February 2016. This report
is due to be included in the *Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa* (2016 issue).

These are evident in conversations with musicians, Arts and Culture council representatives, government policy, and in the portrayal of this music by the media in Swaziland. *Makhweyane* music is considered to be rare and vulnerable, and in need of support. It is often portrayed as a woman's music, and is seen as part of a rural cultural archetype (as discussed in Chapter Two). We have expectations as to where instruments should be, where they reside and what their attached geography might be. Numerous musicians in this study assert these constructions of rural Swazi life but also subvert them in nuanced ways. The propinquity and intimacy of this instrument and its music are complicated by the often-strident messages that are portrayed in the lyrics of the songs, and the visceral life experiences that are woven around it.

Having introduced the national cultural environment surrounding the *makhweyane* and other Swazi music, this chapter serves to lay out the material and musical processes surrounding this instrument*,* drawn from my recent field research and the findings of those who have gone before (Bates 2012:264). It asks: what is known about the *makhweyane*, how is this instrument learned and how does it work? This chapter offers a reading of the *makhweyane* as instrument: through historical and contemporary texts, through related instruments, and finally, through the learning, practices, and words of the players themselves.

Umakhweyana, *xitende* and *ligubhu*: Locating the *makhweyane* within the archive

This section examines the historicity of the Southeastern musical bow archive and where the *makhweyane* is positioned within this. The ephemeral harmonics that resound around the struck rhythmic patterns in *makhweyane* music can be compared to its presence or paucity in any archive. When examining the available literature relating to the *makhweyane*, the act of considering what cannot be and has not been archived, is poignant. Amidst the scarcity of information about the instrument, one can only imagine what spectres exist, what was not recorded and what could not be heard over past decades. Due to this, it helps to contextualise the *makhweyane* within its immediate family of geographically-related musical bows (isiZulu and xiTsonga bows) and not the broader sphere of other southern African bows (the more distantly related isiXhosa, Sesotho and Setswana bows). The diagram below shows the relationships between the five, prominent calabash-resonated musical bows of south-eastern Africa.
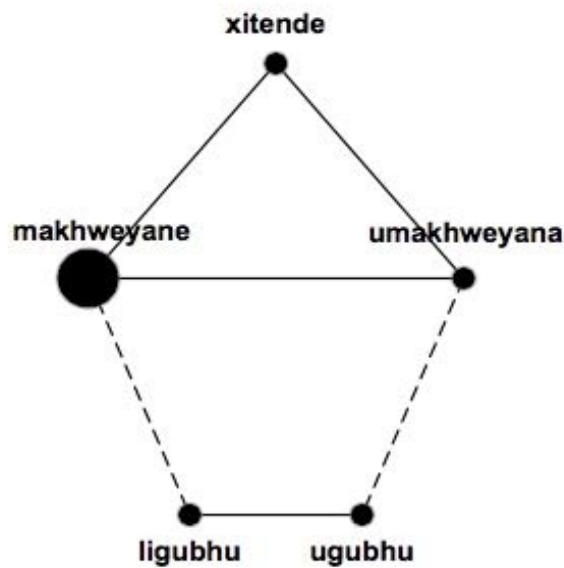
Figure 8 South-Eastern African musical bow complex

The Swazi *makhweyane*, isiZulu *umakhweyana* (of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa) and Tsonga *xitende* (of southern Mozambique) all have calabash resonators and are braced musical bows (with their vibrating string divided into two asymetrical portions or notes). The closest relationship in construction, language and playing technique is between the Swazi *makhweyane* and the isiZulu *umakhweyana*. The Mozambican *xitende* (the only xiTsonga gourd-resonated bow) is related to both of these bows but is constructed from slightly different materials, with performers favouring notably different rhythmic constructions to the Swazi-Zulu musical dyad (Johnston 1975:767). The lower portion of the diagram shows the two gourd-resonated bows that are closely related in construction: the Swazi *ligubhu* (no longer found) and the isiZulu *ugubhu*. These two bows both have calabash resonators but do not have braced wires (therefore only a single note is created from the open string). This diagram situates the *makhweyane* structurally and culturally in amongst its nearest cousins.

In tracing the modern history of the *makhweyane*, there is little available information (in print or on record) to understand how this instrument arrived in Swaziland or how it functioned in early Swazi society. There is little documentation (print, audio or audio-visual) describing musical instruments of any kind in Swaziland from the first half of the twentieth century. During this time period, despite British colonial rule, special authority had to be granted by the Paramount Chief (Sobhuza II from 1921 until 1982) and his council in order to do cultural research in Swaziland. It appears from the dearth of early sources that this

permission was difficult to acquire (unknown author 1952:14).[64] Linguist David Rycroft's song transcriptions (included as an addendum to his siSwati language manual "Say it in siSwati") are prefaced with the following acknowledgement:

> Drafts of the song-texts of the ceremonial music were submitted in 1968 to
> His Majesty, King Sobhuza II, and his approval was graciously granted for
> their publication. (1979:167)

Much of the musico-cultural literature is dominated by discussions of the *Umhlanga* and *Incwala* ceremonies, discussed in earlier chapters. When considering what is understood about Swazi musical bows and what is considered 'traditional' music, the two major sources of information are the writings of early organologist and collector, Percival Kirby (1887-1970, active between the 1930s and 1960s), and the linguist and musicologist, David Rycroft (1927-1997). Kirby's *Musical Instruments of the Indigenous People of South Africa* (1965) is the first scholarly evidence of musical bows in Swaziland and their importance and Rycroft's later study relies heavily on Kirby's propositions.[65]

This pivotal text of southern African organology and material culture has recently been revised in a third edition (2013) and Michael Nixon's foreword highlights the notable problems of relying on such a text, created during the political and social environment of 1930s South Africa. An example of some of the problematic opinions Kirby held can be seen in his discussion of tuning across southern Africa:

> But I think that it will be clear that, with few exceptions, such fine shades of
> intonation do not exist for the South African native. True, his musical system
> is radically different from that of present-day Europe, but, like that of many
> Europeans, his pitch-sense is frequently at fault, and the almost universal lack
> of permanent absolute pitch standards gives him little opportunity of
> improving it. Pitch, to the South African native, is, however, chiefly relative,
> not absolute. But in the harmonic series he has a definite standard by which
> he may measure intervals; and it is one of my objects to demonstrate to what
> a great extent it has controlled his art. (Kirby [1934, 1965] 2013:xvii)

Amongst the taints of notions of "primitive culture" and cultural evolution, Kirby was primarily concerned with the organological identification of instruments according to ethnic group and often anonymised the musicians he consulted. This is particularly disappointing in the case of the Swazi entries. Due to its small geographic area and the lineages amongst

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[64] An un-authored note published under the title 'The Music of the Swazis' in the Journal of the African Music Society purports that permission constraints contributed to this.
[65] The original title of this book was *The Musical Instruments of the Native Races of South Africa* (1965).

existing musicians, it might have been possible to place the players consulted in Kirby's study.

Kirby travelled to Swaziland on nine separate occasions as part of his research into African traditional instruments. As with the anthropologist Hilda Kuper's monumental research on Swaziland, control over cultural information was, for many years, held by the Swazi royalty and Kirby gained research access in Swaziland through contact with the then paramount chief, Sobhuza II. During the nine research trips undertaken, Kirby appears to have come into contact with numerous *ligubhu* players as well as *makhweyane* players and other musicians. His technical descriptions of instruments such as the *sikehlekehle* (friction bow), *umqangala* and *utiyane* (mouth bows) and *sitontolo* remain the only published information on these Swazi instruments ([1934, 1965] 2013:214, 217, 225, 239).

What is concerning about Kirby's writing about the gourd-resonated bows appears to be his perception (or lack thereof) of how the calabash overtones are utilised in this music. Rycroft highlights this lack of understanding with regards to this crucial musical aspect of bows:

> How it is that Kirby missed this feature is uncertain. From discussions with him on the subject, shortly before his death in 1970, he said that he was never aware of it. This might have been due, either to not standing close enough to the resonator to detect the variations. In his reference to these instruments in his book, Kirby in fact appears to have misinterpreted the significance of moving the resonator to and from the body. He expressed the opinion that 'the pitch of the air column in the open calabash corresponded to the pitch of the string when pinched; when "shaded" by the performer's breast it corresponded to the pitch of the open string". (1975/1976:61)

The role of the calabash resonance and overtone melodic fragments is discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

David Rycroft's research into Swazi music follows on from Kirby's organological findings. In 1968, David Rycroft published an LP entitled *Swazi Vocal Music* as the first part of a series issued by the *Koninklijk Museum voor Midden-Afrika* and the *Royal Belgisch Radio en Televisie*. This recording project included diverse Swazi musics and the accompanying booklet provides some of his only detailed published writing on bow music in Swaziland. Rycroft describes numerous men's song repertories such as walking songs, regimental walking songs, lifting chants and hunting songs. He describes how women sing lullabies, *Umhlanga* dance songs (sung by young girls during the "reed dance"), various wedding songs (i.e. the bride's *simekezo* lament at leaving her family home), *ingoma yekuhlakula* or weeding songs, group walking songs, *ummiso* dance songs (any dance song with young female singers), work-party songs and *makhweyane* songs. For mixed gender

performance, he highlights *sibhimbhi* anthems, *umgubho* ceremonial anthems, royal wedding songs and what he simply calls "political songs" (such as the song titled '*Sikhala ngemaphoyisa*' ("We cry about the police")) (Rycroft 1976:167-193).

As highlighted in earlier chapters, a prevalent trope in the writing on musical bows in southern Africa from the 1950s onwards, especially in Swaziland, is how few bow players remain and this concern has preoccupied bow scholars until today. In the opening paragraph of Rycroft's 1966 article on friction chordophones, he states:

> During a linguistic and musical research trip through the Eastern Cape Province, Natal and Swaziland in 1964 it was seldom that one encountered a traditional musical bow at all. In all, I was able to find a few isolated players of only two of the six varieties noted by Kirby among the Zulu and Swazi, and two of the three types he noted among the Mpondo – one of the Xhosa-speaking tribes of the Eastern Cape. (1966:84)

Despite this, Rycroft was able to make numerous recordings of *makhweyane* and *ligubhu* players during his fieldwork. The *makhweyane* players recorded by Rycroft were Sitandi Mabuza of kaMkhonta (Manzini), Mazinyo Mavuso (unknown location), and numerous unnamed female performers. Sitandi Mabuza was recorded numerous times by Rycroft singing *a capella* songs, as well as performing on the *makhweyane* and *sikelekehle* monochord bow. Rycroft also recorded Mrs. Bhekinganwa Nkhabindze who played *ligubhu* and sang for him. Nkhabindze and Mabuza accompanied each other on songs such as the *ligubhu* song '*NakaNgwane sebaphelile bantfu*' (In Swaziland, people are finished/ dying). In the music section ("*Tingoma takaNgwane*"/ Songs of Swaziland) of Rycroft's siSwati language manual, he acknowledges the help of the following people: Princess Simangele Dlamini, Sitandi Mabhuza, (Mrs.) Bhekinganwa Nkhabindze, (Mr.) Mazinyo Mavuso, Gladys Mkhonta, and (Mr.) J. S. Matsebula, though it is unclear if all of these individuals were musicians whom he recorded. In the David Rycroft South Africa Collection, housed at the British Library Sound Archive, many songs and recorded interviews are missing metadata and so it is not possible to say definitively who performed many of the *makhweyane* and other songs, such as '*Ngiyayesab' inkomo*' (I fear the cow), or '*Bashiye Balele*' ([I have] left them sleeping) which remain anonymous.[66] The recordings and writings of Rycroft leave us with many beautiful song performances but little contextual or detailed information regarding the *makhweyane* as his published writings on Swazi music do not match his large recording archive.

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[66] The David Rycroft South Africa Collection is housed at the British Library Sound Archive with online access ("British Library Sound Archive"). Full discussion of the song '*Bashiye balele*' can be found in Chapter Four.

Swaziland and its main towns are mere hours from Maputo, the capital city of Mozambique and these countries share a geographic and cultural interface along the Lubombo mountains. The Mozambican *xitende* gourd-resonated bow (pronounced *shi-tende*) is a close cousin of the Swazi *makhweyane* in construction and sound. Thomas F. Johnston has written about the *xitende* bow, as well as other Mozambican instruments, such as the *xivambi* friction bow and various drums. Of the *xitende* he stated: "The *xitende* braced gourd-bow is played by the wandering newsteller (*xilombe*), because it leaves the mouth free (size: 5 foot)" (Johnston 1975:765). Between 1980 and 1988, ethnomusicologist and musician David Dargie recorded two Mozambican *xitende* players (Peter Chuma and Piet Mabasa) living in South Africa, as well as a *makhweyane* player called Mother Adelia Dlamini of the Servite Sisters of Swaziland. These recordings are purposefully paired together on Dargie's release titled *Tsonga Xitende, Swati Makhonyane* [sic].[67] Dargie recorded the *xitende* player, Mr. Mabasa, at his home at Xigalo, and at the home of Mrs. Elizabeth Baloyi at Ramukhuba, both in the Malamulele district in Giyani, Limpopo Province on the 15th of November 1988. Dargie recorded Mr. Chuma at St. Scholastica Mission in the village of Mulima Vuka, Limpopo Province, on the 8th May 1982. About this recording session with Chuma, Dargie stated:

> In addition to his fine bow, he wore leg rattles. At times as he sang he danced to the rhythm, at times he sang seated. […] His system of performance was usually to present several songs in a group, beginning each song with some rapid beats (fourths) on his bow. Sometimes he sang solo. But the women in the hall also knew and loved the songs, and in some performances they joined in, clapping, playing a small drum, and singing with fine voices and attractive overlapping. (Dargie 2003).

Dargie describes how Chuma would stop the string of his *xitende* at different lengths to create more than the standard two or three fundamental tones (producing the fundamentals A - C - D - E) (Dargie 2007:71). The music of Chuma and Piet Mabasa displays rhythmic qualities similar to other recorded Mozambican bows and musical forms (like *timbila* music) in that there is pervasive use of what Dargie terms "a rapid pulse system" (ibid.). The struck bow patterns are fast (i.e. *tempi*: 130 bpm in most of the recorded performances) and consist of quick hemiolic additive rhythms. This emphasis of hemiolic triplets (similar to the rhythmic characteristics of the popular *timbila* xylophones) at high *tempi* can be seen in the music of contemporary *xitende* player, Matchume Zango, as well. Zango is a young *timbila* and *xitende* player (and drummer) based in Maputo who learned *xitende* from the Chopi musician Horancio. Zango's playing technique differs from that of Swazi *makhweyane*

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[67] This album is available through the International Library of African Music, at Rhodes University (South Africa), along with the rest of Dargie's recorded catalogue.

players in that he holds the calabash resonator low on his torso and with pick-up microphones attached to the inside of the calabash. As a well-travelled musician, Zango's stage presence and musical sets are carefully constructed. His bow playing innovatively involves the interlocking of bow bass rhythms (created from the sound of the *xitende*'s mic-ed up calabash hitting his body as he plays), his struck bow pattern and his voice.

The construction of a *xitende* is similar to that of a *makhweyane* though the materials used for the wooden stave, wire (copper or piano wire is often used for *xitende*) and resonator differ (Dargie 2003, Johnston 1975:765).[68] Some examples of *xitende* make use of a metal lid or plate in between the wooden stave of the bow and the resonator, as well as metal lid rattles attached to the top of the stave (seen in the photos of Mr. Peter Chuma's instrument and described by Johnston; Dargie 2005; Johnston 1975:765). The calabash position of the older *xitende* players (Chuma and Mabasa) is higher than that of younger performers like Matchume Zango, with the opening in contact with the player's chest right under the shoulder. In the recordings made by Dargie, Mabasa plays a *xitende* bow that uses a plastic container instead of a gourd-resonator. Calabash substitutions can be seen in the *xitende*, *makhweyane*, and *umakhweyana* bows held in the Kirby Collection of Musical Instruments at the South African College of Music. In these cases, the gourd-calabash resonator has been replaced with a tin can.[69] The intent behind these substitutions can never be precisely verified but access to the right calabash plants, growing them (which can be a challenge) and possible timbral experimentation may have been reasons. During my fieldwork, only one musician, John Mahlalela, had an instrument which varied the resonator material from the standard *sigubhu* or pumpkin calabash. He had made his own shorter *makhweyane* and used a tin can as the resonator.[70]

Released on the same compilation as the above *xitende* players are the *makhweyane* recordings of Mother Adelia Dlamini (made by Dargie). Mother Adelia's musical compositions were adaptations of Christian songs on to the *makhweyane* bow. Since these recordings were made, Dargie informed me that when Mother Adelia's term at the mission was complete, her *makhweyane* bow was destroyed, as her innovations within the Catholic community were unfortunately viewed negatively. Mother Adelia's recorded songs are compositions that adapt liturgical and religious text onto the *makhweyane*, with

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[68] Matchume Zango stated that he favours the coconut shell as a resonator over a gourd and builds his stave from a wood called *mtsikiriti ou mdane.* He uses piano wire for his *xitende* wire (M. Zango, personal communication, 5 October 2016).

[69] The Kirby Collection of Musical Instruments is housed at the South African College of Music (University of Cape Town) and is a collection of more than six hundred instruments from across sub-saharan Africa and beyond. There are numerous musical bows in this collection.

[70] Zango states that most *xitende* players based around the city of Maputo are male. He learned from a Chopi musician called Horancio (M. Zango, personal communication, 12 February 2015 & 5 October 2016).

titles such as '*Inkhosi ingumalusi wami*' ('The Lord is my Shepherd' – a psalm setting), '*Yetsi Maria*' ('Hail Mary'), '*Yetsi Nkhosikati*' ('Hail holy Queen' – a setting of the *Salve Regina*), 'Jesu uvukile' ('Jesus is risen'), and '*Woza, Moya loyingcwele*' ('Come, Holy Spirit').

Many conversations about the vulnerability of musical bow traditions in Swaziland circle the enigmatic *ligubhu* bow. Rycroft suggests that the *ligubhu*, the large unbraced Swazi bow, is of Nguni origin but the *makhweyane* probably comes from the Tsonga [chiTsonga] people of Mozambique (Rycroft 1976:169) (discussed in Chapter One). He closes his discussion of Swazi instrumental music by stating: "The *makhweyane* is still played, to some extent, in country areas; but the *ligubhu* is very rarely encountered: I know of only three players" (ibid.). One of these mentioned players was Mrs. Nkhabindze, heard on the song recordings '*E Bambulele*' (S/he has been killed) and '*NakaNgwane sebaphelile bantfu*' (Even in Swaziland, the people are finished/dying). As discussed in previous chapters, during my fieldwork (from 2013-2015) I did not come across any *ligubhu* players and when asked, only one musician interviewed (Smiles Makama) knew of the instrument and spoke of its beauty in the characteristic nostalgic way. Khokhiwe Mphila informed me that the only *ligubhu* that she had ever seen was an instrument brought to Swaziland by the music teacher and recordist Mark Bradshaw (who worked with 'traditional' musicians in the country in the mid-2000s) (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 16 August 2014). Considering the timing of David Rycroft's research in Swaziland (late 1960s and early 1970s) and the respective ages of the musicians interviewed in this doctoral study, this implies that the *ligubhu* probably ceased to exist in the 1970s. It is therefore not possible to establish what musical and repertory links may exist between the *ligubhu* and the isiZulu *ugubhu*, and the *makhweyane*. The remnant connection between these two unbraced bows and the *makhweyane* can be situated then in Rycroft's legacy: through his detailed interactions and study of the music of Princess Magogo (the famed isiZulu *ugubhu* player and composer), and the limited words and recording tape he dedicated to the Swazi *ligubhu*.

The isiZulu *umakhweyana*, Mozambican *xitende* and Swazi *makhweyane* all share what Rycroft terms "triradical tonal organisation": all three instruments produce struck patterns formed of three fundamental tones (a lower open fundamental, a middle open fundamental and a higher note created from stopping the shorter portion of wire with a knuckle; Rycroft 1967:97).[71]

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[71] Rycroft borrows the term "triradical" [his spelling] from organic chemistry where it denotes a collection of three singular electrons.
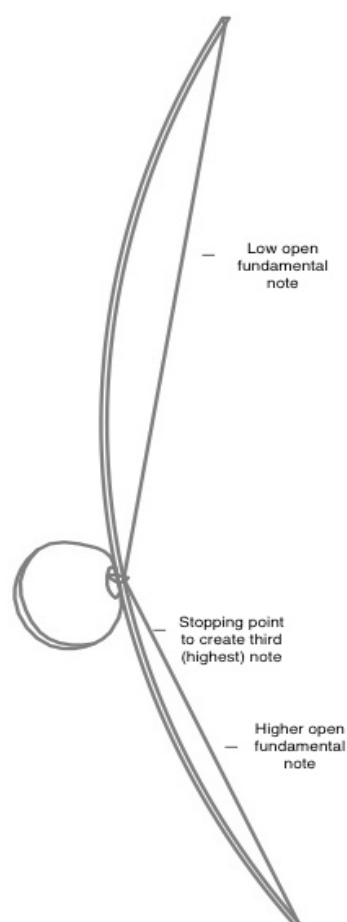
Figure 9 The fundamental notes of the makhweyane.

The isiZulu *umakhweyana* bears the closest physical resemblance to the Swazi *makhweyane* and this connection is reinforced by their almost identical names. The prominent isiZulu *ugubhu* player, Princess Magogo, dismissed the *umakhweyana* as a borrowed instrument from the Tsonga. Rycroft described the *umakhweyana* as more frequently found in KwaZulu-Natal but focused his isiZulu bow research on the *ugubhu*. With prominent *umakhweyana* players active in recent decades, authors such as Angela Impey (1983, 2008), David Dargie (2007) and Rosemary Joseph (1983, 1987) have discussed repertory and playing technique. Though few *umakhweyana* players remain, Joseph described having encountered numerous middle-aged women who had played as young girls during her field research in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Her study focused on formulations of romantic love and courtship through *umakhweyana* songs and chronicles the lyricism and poetic tools woven into this music. Since that time, and through the efforts of Brother Clement Sithole and ethnomusicologist Sazi Dlamini, musicians such as Mama

Bavikile Ngema and Brother Clement himself perform regularly in Durban.[72] Though the *umakhweyana* is closely related to the Swazi *makhweyane*, the extent to which these two musical bows differ in compositional approach and musical style is yet to be analysed. The nature of this connection is grounds for further research.

From the above historical context, there is little evidence from which to illustrate the changing music, contexts and functions of the *makhweyane* bow. Because of this, one has to rely on the oral testimony and first-hand accounts of contemporary Swazi musicians' experiences to piece together an understanding of the construction, learning, and playing of the *makhweyane* bow.

Making and playing the *makhweyane*

Bows are simple in construction but their acoustic principles are complex. As stated earlier, the predominant melodic material created by a musical bow is formulated from the overtones emitted from the calabash. A taut string is plucked or struck in a rhythmic pattern and a note is heard. At the same time, a series of quieter overtones emerge and a skilful player can manipulate these to create melodic layers in the music. A crucial component in the quality and strength of this overtone engagement is in the materials used and methods employed in the construction of a musical bow.

Due to the small number of players (and also teachers) of this Swazi bow, the materiality of the *makhweyane* is of interest to this study. A number of *makhweyane* players first experienced this instrument by overhearing other performers and then experimented with making an instrument for themselves. The roles of performer and instrument-maker are closely intertwined, both amongst older and younger generations of *makhweyane* players. The *makhweyane* is constructed out of a large wooden stick or stave referred to in siSwati as the *lutsi* and this is made from the wood of the *Lugagane* tree (*Acacia ataxacantha* or *Senegalia ataxacantha*).[73] This tree is found across the country but particularly in the North-West provinces, and is a small tree with flexible branches, often referred to in English as the "Flame Thorn" ('Swaziland's flora database' n.d.). Young firm trees or large branches are harvested and stripped to create the stave, which is usually between 1.2m and 1.8m in length. Ideally the wood will be naturally slightly curved but if not, due to the relatively flexible nature of this wood, the stave is then wedged between the floor and a wall to create an artificial curve and left to dry in the sun (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014). The

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[72] An active African Music department at the University of KwaZulu-Natal has allowed for Sithole to teach *umakhweyana* to undergraduates for numerous years. Sazi Dlamini, a bow player himself and a lecturer at the same department, spoke of many accomplished *umakhweyana* players in the province whom he works with.

[73] The *Lugagane* tree is also harvested for use in the construction of traditional "bee-hive" huts due to its pliable nature (S. Makama, interview, Msunduza, 7 October 2016).

lugagane wood is specially chosen by instrument makers due to its pliability and the fact that it does not lose its springy quality (S. Makama, interview, Msunduza, 7 October 2016). Favoured staves for *makhweyane* construction are curved to between 20 and 50 degrees and though dried out, are still pliant and therefore resonant.

Growing a good calabash or *sigubhu* is a challenge, as insects tend to destroy the vegetable casing before it reaches an appropriate size. If harvested too soon, the calabash can shrink once full instrument construction is complete (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014). Both Gogo Khokhiwe Mphila and Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula are skilled in growing the calabashes or *sigubhu* used as resonators. Mphila describes the growing of *sigubhu*:

> *Loku kwentekanjena angitsi sihlanyele tinsanga. Sihlanyele ke toti toti kusukela kulinyiwe. Toti nyalo kuyavunwa longikhatsi utokwati kukuvuna. Sekuvutsiwe, lokunye ukukhandza sekomile.*
>
> It happens like this – we have planted [*sigubhu*] seeds. We have planted them when we planted [the maize]. When it is harvesting time, you'll be able to harvest the *sigubhu*. When it is ripe, some you will just find dry [when it starts turning brown]. (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014)[74]

Another *makhweyane* player and maker, Sagila Matse (now deceased) used to rotate his *sigubhu* whilst they were growing in order to shape the bulb of the vegetable appropriately for the *makhweyane*. By turning the vegetable on its stem and tilting it, one can change the bulbous character of the broad end of the calabash (V. Sibandze, interview, Ezulwini, 1 August 2016). Once the *sigubhu* has been harvested, the top, narrow head of the calabash needs to be cut off carefully due to the vegetable's brittle outer skin and then the insides of the structure are removed to create a hollow resonating chamber. The calabash is attached to the wooden stave just below halfway, and between this and the wooden stave is placed a ring made of string and fabric, called the *inkhatsa*. A short, dried piece of grass, stick, or hard wire is used to strike the wire (or *luthaka*). This wire is strung from the top of the wooden stave to the bottom and drawn in by a brace (*inkhokha*) at the calabash. This stick is referred to as *lutsi lwekushaya,* which translates as the 'stick for hitting'. No chemicals are added to the *makhweyane* instrument to treat the wood but it is common practice to hang the bow off the roof of one's house or high on an indoor wall, suspended in the air, which discourages insects from eating the wooden and vegetable materials (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 7 June 2014).

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[74] A less direct translation would be: "The *sigubhu* is planted during the summer, the ploughing season. Then when the maize is ready, the *sigubhu* is ready. It is seasonal." (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014).

During my research, *makhweyane* of different lengths and shapes were examined. The two active and regular *makhweyane* makers were Gogo Khokhiwe Mphila and Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula, with Mphila's instruments being the longer of the two (up to 1.80m in stave length). In some cases, the *makhweyane* staves appeared to be longer than both related instruments, the Mozambican *xitende* and the isiZulu *umakhweyana*, despite two early photographs (Figure 9.6 from Kirby's *Musical Instruments of the Indigenous People of South Africa* 2013: 273, and the A. M. Duggan-Cronan image titled "Swazi strolling player", 1941) which both show much shorter and thinner *makhweyane* staves.

In order to create the best sound, the *luthaka* or wire which is strung from the top of the bow to its bottom is taken from a thick, wound, zinc-compound, wire rope used in forestry and agricultural industry around Swaziland (V. Sibandze, interview, Mbabane, 1 April 2014). Another favoured wire for the making of the *makhweyane* comes from car tyres:

> The strings, we got them from car-tires. You have to cut a car tire. The strings there are springy, not like wire. So bendy, it depends on how you adjust it on the other stick. If you loosen it up, it can go down in key. (S. Makama, interview, Msunduza, 7 October 2016)

This wire, when used in the making of a *makhweyane*, is often slightly curved and not straight, hinting at its former use (as seen in Figure 10 below).

Figure 10 Brace and twisted wire detail on a makhweyane *made by Khokhiwe Mphila.*

The images below show how the *makhweyane* wire is secured at both ends of the wooden stave.

Figure 11 Wire ties at top of two makhweyane *bows. The bow with the black stave was constructed by Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula and the light-staved bow was constructed by Gogo Khokhiwe Mphila.*

Figure 12 Wire tie at bottom end of makhweyane *bow.*

Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula was heralded by the majority of players interviewed as the best instrument maker in Swaziland (of *makhweyane* and *sitolotolo* mouth harps). He

remains the only living maker who forges his own *titolotolo* (plural of *sitolotolo*) by hand.[75] He likes to paint his *makhweyane*, sometimes adorning them with his name, colourful polka dots and other decorations (as seen in Figure 13). It is worth noting that outside of Swaziland, isiZulu bow player, Sazi Dlamini, and Mozambican *xitende*-player, Matchume Zango, both stated that painting the calabash resonator detrimentally affects the resonance of a bow, but this seems not to be the case with Magagula's particularly fine instruments.[76]

Figure 13 Decorated calabash detail on a makhweyane *made by Bhemani Magagula.*

As an innovative instrument-maker, Magagula has also replaced the common *lutsi lwekushaya* (the stick used to hit the wire and create rhythms), usually made of dry straw or grass, with a thick metal wire beater (Figure 14). There is an imperceptible difference in timbre between the stick and wire beaters, possibly due to the relative thickness of the struck wire, which lends an overwhelming metallic sonorous quality to *makhweyane* music whatever beater is used.[77]

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[75] Both Tfobhi Shongwe and Cathrina Magagula spoke of their older relatives (fathers, uncles) as being able to forge their own sitolotolo mouth harps. These men are now deceased, making Bhemani Magagula the only maker of sitolotolo according to my findings.

[76] This was mentioned in conversation with Sazi Dlamini at the First Bow Music Conference at UKZN, in February 2016. (S. Dlamini, personal communication, 25 February 2016; M. Zango, personal communication, 20 July 2014).

[77] Further research into the acoustic differences between these two different beaters would prove useful.

Figure 14 Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula playing makhweyane *with his metal beater at his home near eBuhleni (6 May 2014).*

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, *makhweyane* music is created from three struck tones: the lowest note from the top and longest segment of the wire, a second higher note from the shorter, bottom segment of the wire, and the highest note which is created when the player stops the bottom wire segment with the knuckle of his/her middle finger. The tuning of the instrument is dictated by the tautness of the wire and where the calabash and brace are situated along the wooden stave. A player can tighten the wire by leaning into the stave and bending it further (thus loosening the wire) and then adjusting the wire fixture at the top of the bow (seen in Figures 11 and 12). Once the wire is secured, the bow stave is released from its depressed position, increasing the tension of the wire and returning the instrument to its upright playing position. Due to the complex tying method used to secure the wire to the stave, precision tuning is not possible.

Both Rycroft and Kirby observe that both *ligubhu* and *makhweyane* tunings favour an interval of a tone: a tone between the open and stopped wire in the case of *ligubhu*, and a tone between the two wire segments in the case of the *makhweyane* (1979:169). The third tone (created by stopping the lower portion of wire) usually produces a note a semitone

above the higher tone (lower half – seen in Figure 15). Kirby describes the common *makhweyane* tuning as G (3), A (3), and B flat (3) (with the B flat created by the stopped lower portion of string) ([1934, 1965] 2013:275). Though the archival recordings of David Rycroft are also evidence of the dominance of the tone interval between the upper and lower portions of wire (with slight discrepancies in the precise tuning – often a sharp tone), contemporary players play bows tuned to varying pitches due to the sizes of the bows and the musicians' individual preferences. Though the chosen pitches may vary, the whole-tone interval tuning is still used by the majority of musicians today. When asked about how to tune a *makhweyane*, Khokhiwe Mphila stated that she didn't aim for a particular note or frequency but tightened the bow until the sound felt right for that particular bow stave. Due to the large size of Mphila's bows, they are often low. Gogo Yengiwe Dladla (from Shewula) tuned her *makhweyane* to the interval of a minor third, (B flat (2) and D flat (3) below middle C) and her instrument had extremely loud second partials (an octave above the fundamental tone) possibly due to the small size of the opening on her calabash resonator. The varying stave lengths, calabash-opening diameters, and wire thicknesses all contribute to the diverse spectral palettes found amongst contemporary *makhweyane* instruments.

Figure 15 Gogo Yengiwe Dladla plays makhweyane *at Shewula (Photo credit: Claudia Ramos).*

Stopping the lower portion of wire with the index or middle finger knuckle of the left hand creates the third fundamental tone on the *makhweyane*. Historic recordings show that earlier musicians favoured creating this third fundamental a semitone above the lower portion note. Today, however, it is less common for musicians to integrate this higher note

into their songs – the songs recorded over 2014 and 2015 show that contemporary *makhweyane* players rarely use the third note. Tfobhi Shongwe and Cathrina Magagula use it only in a short arhythmic fill or coda at the end of their songs, and Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula, who uses the third note extensively, creates it a tone above the lower portion fundamental. The tuning he favours can be seen in Figure 16.

Figure 16 Preferred fundamentals used by Bhemani Magagula.

When *makhweyane* players are performing, the second, third, fourth, and fifth partials can be heard emitting from the calabash opening. The figure below shows a section of a harmonic series with a fundamental pitch of C2 and related partials or harmonics above.
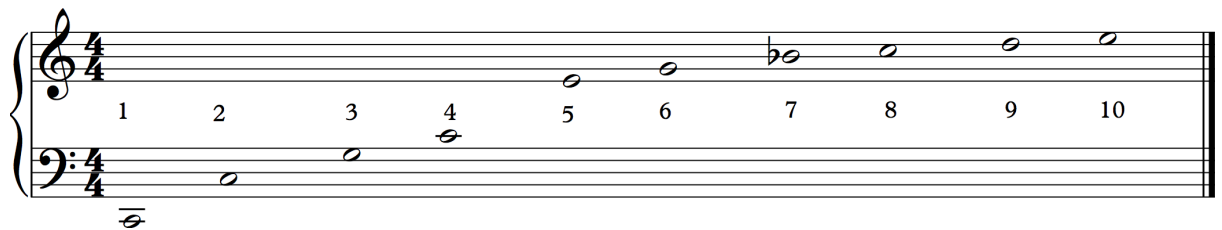
Figure 17 Harmonic series with a fundamental of C2 notated on staff notation.

When the calabash is closed, Khokhiwe Mphila describes the sound through mimesis – as "mmmmm". When the calabash is open, she described the *makhweyane* sound as *kuphefumula* – able to 'breathe' (Khokhiwe Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 7 June 2014).

Figure 18 Make Tfobhi Shongwe plays makhweyane at her home in eMsahweni (4 July 2014).

Tfobhi Shongwe describes the technique of playing with the calabash:

> *Kusuke kungulengoma leleshoko kutsi kufanele ngivule kanjani ngivale kanjani. Kufuna kutsi kuhambisane nalengoma, ngobanje ngihle ngikonje ngibindza. Ngifuna kuva kutsi kuyahambisana yini nalengoma nalesikhweyane.*

> It's the song that controls me, how to open, how to close. It needs to go together the singing and the playing, that's why I sometimes keep quiet [to listen to the instrument]. I want to hear if it goes together the song and the *makhweyane*. (T. Shongwe, interview, eMsahweni, 4 July 2014)

Mphila describes the correct position for the calabash opening as on the breast of the player. Bare skin creates the clearest harmonics but with people wearing clothes nowadays, a higher position just below the shoulder was used by most of the older players as it provides a flat surface to evenly seal the calabash opening (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 7 June 2014). With the harmonics that emerge from the bow "breathing", a single song performance is a contrapuntal texture made from vocal melody, struck rhythmic pattern and overtone melodic fragments or accompaniment. In order to create clearly audible overtone melodies, players often damp the bottom segment of wire (the higher note) with the back of the left fore-finger) so that the upper resonance of the top segment of wire is clearer.

Without using this damping technique, a louder overall tone is produced but the overtone clarity is reduced as both notes (for instance G (3) and A (3) and their partials are being sounded simultaneously).[78]

Rycroft (1966, 1976) and Dargie (2007) have both often referred to a bow scale:

Figure 19 Makhweyane *fundamentals, prominent overtones and the resultant scale (Dargie 2007:70).*

The first bar of the above score shows three fundamentals in the bass clef. These are the two open tones created by the two portions of wire on the *makhweyane*, with the additional third note: in this case, a tone above the middle note. The clearest harmonics over the two open string fundamentals are the second and third partials, the same note an octave above and a fifth above that. The partials beyond this, usually accessible with other musical bows, are less clear due to their quiet volume. The third fundamental, created by stopping the lower portion of wire, creates only the second partial clearly (an octave above the fundamental tone). The second bar illustrates the resultant scale created from the primary emergent overtones – a pentatonic scale. This scale is then used in the creation of the overtone melodic fragments of a *makhweyane* song, as well as framing the general tonality of the music. Vocal melodies use this emergent pentatonic scale as a skeleton from which extra-scalic ornaments and occasional tones may be added to any performance.

There is a greater flexibility in communal tonality in the performance moment. On more than one occasion, collaborative musicking meant that two *makhweyane* (tuned to completely different notes) played the same material in a striking bitonal arrangement with little consternation from the performers. This occurred when Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula and Gogo Sonile Sifundza played a duet (her playing *makhweyane* singing and him accompanying her on a harmonica in a different key); when I have played with Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula, and when a large group of musicians collaborated together for the Alliance Française and Bushfire concerts (2014 and 2015 respectively), sometimes to beautiful effect.

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[78] Dargie mentions this damping technique as well in his article on the isiZulu *umakhweyana* and the musicians of Maphophoma (2007:68). During my field research, I found that not all players damped the bottom wire segment when striking the top segment. It was a technique used by some musicians and even then, not used in every song.

Some additional playing techniques can be used to vary the *makhweyane*'s timbre, such as damping the lower portion of vibrating wire whilst striking it or touching the *inkhokha* or brace. The spectral make-up of the middle fundamental tone (lower portion of wire) without finger damping, and the same note with the damping action can be viewed below in the following spectrogram illustration, where every alternate note is dampened:
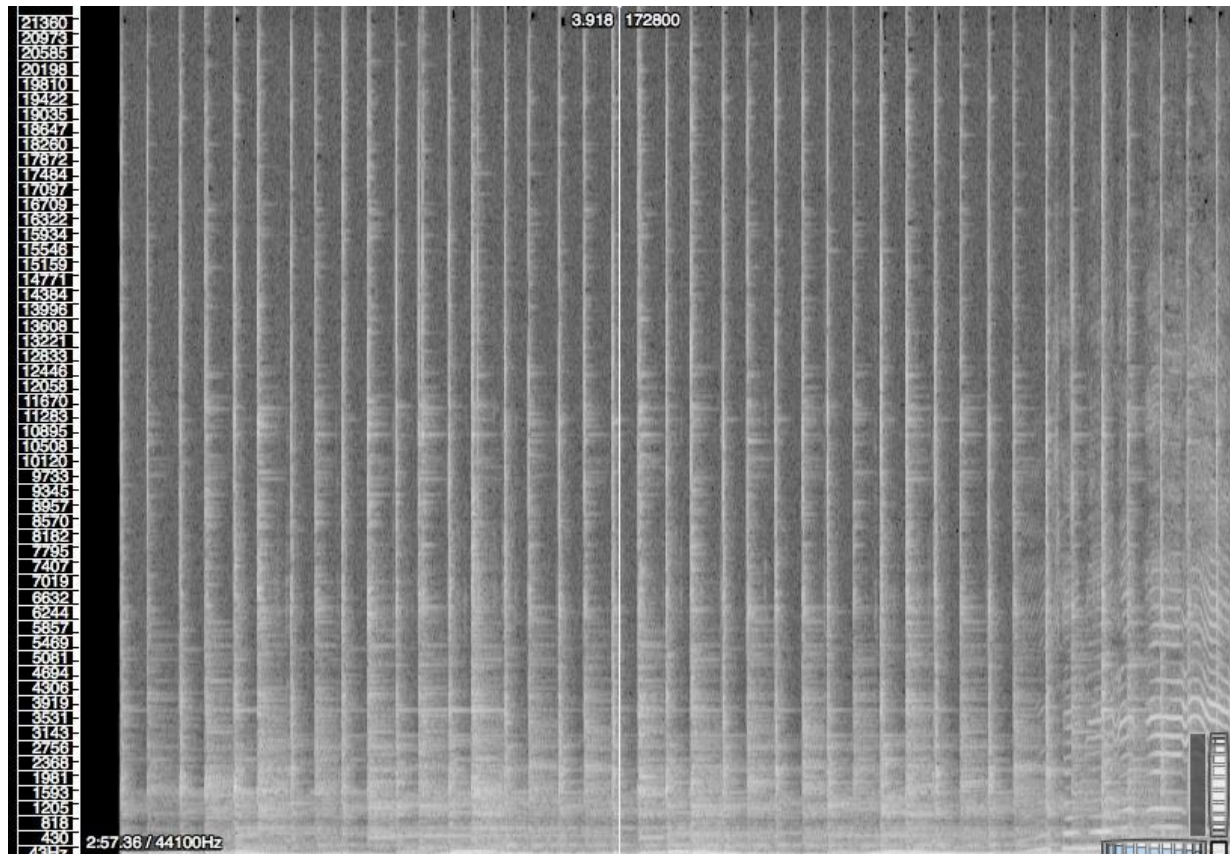
Figure 20 Solo makhweyane *introduction to Mphila's song '*Lutsandvo luphelile*'.*

The above representation is the solo *makhweyane* introduction to the song '*Lutsandvo luphelile*' (The love is finished) by Khokhiwe Mphila.[79] It shows us the rich series of frequencies that can be heard when the *makhweyane* is struck. The damping effect of the finger on the brace or *inkhokha* can be seen within the regions of between 4694 Hz and 6632 Hz and elsewhere in the spectrum. This spectrogram gives a sense of the rich palette of frequencies emitted from the *makhweyane* when a rhythmic pattern is performed. Figure 21 shows the struck bow pattern (represented by the vertical lines of related frequencies) and how the vocal melody of this song (represented by the curved, varied and broadly horizontal parallel lines) interacts with the *makhweyane's* sound.

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[79] An audio recording of this song is supplied with this dissertation.
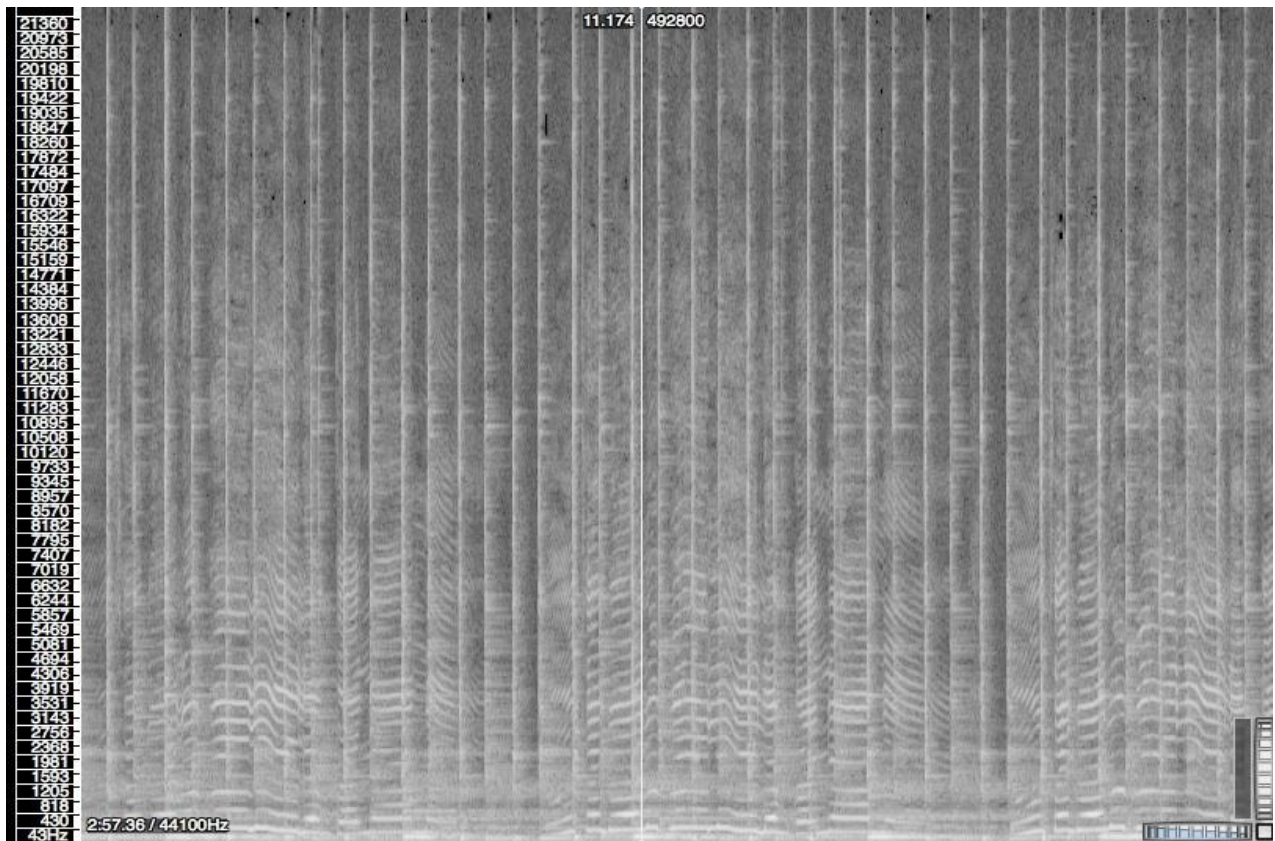
Figure 21 'Lutsandvo luphelile' (vocal melody and makhweyane *struck pattern).*

The song *'Lutsandvo luphelile'* (represented in the spectrograms above) is one of Mphila's favourite songs to perform. The lyrics in this version of the song '*Lutsandvo Luphelile*' begin by describing a scenario where a suitor falls out of love with his lady. Mphila sings: "The love is finished". The protagonist in this song calls out for her mother and father, as she deals with this heartache. The British musician, recordist and researcher, Mark Bradshaw, recorded this version of the song as part of the CD project *Traditional Music of Swaziland* in 2008. Bradshaw had come to visit Mphila and invited her to be a part of the project. The performance of this song (seen in the section below) was modified by Mphila to tell a fictitious story where the protagonist is in love with Beksho (Bradshaw), a man from far away. Thsepiso (a Sesotho name) was an assistant of Bradshaw's on this recording project and is also included in the song story.

Lutsandvo luphelile		
Khokhiwe Mphila		
2008		

Lutsandvo luphelile, mnganami	x2	The love is finished, my friend
Mine bengisoma kaZikhodze	x2	I've gone looking for love at Zikhodze
Wo babe namake, mnganami	x3	Oh, father and mother, my friend
Wo babe nama, woh babe		Oh, father *and* mother, oh father
Wo babe nama, Bheksho		Oh, father and mother, Bradshaw
Wo babe namake, mnganami bo	x2	Oh, father and mother, my friend
Ngigane khashane Bhek'sho		I've fallen in love with Bradshaw from afar
Awuhamb' lukubitha, awuhambe		May you go Tsepiso, may you go
Awuhambe siThepiso, Awuhambe		May you go, Tsepiso, may you go
Awuhamb' uyombita, Awuhambe		Go and call him, may you go
Wo babe na make, mnganami		Oh, father and mother, my friend
Ayimale!		Reject him! [the community is saying]
INSTRUMENTAL INTERLUDE		
Wo babe na make, mnganami	x3	Oh, father and mother, my friend
Awusale sihambe siyeSiteki		You should stay and we should go to Siteki
Awusale siham', Bheksho	x2	You should stay and we should go, Bradshaw
Awusale sihamb', Thepiso	x2	You should stay and we should go, Tsepiso
Sithepiso kaMthimkhulu	x4	Tsepiso Mthimhkulu [his name and surname]
Uye wayofika leNsangwini bo'		He came to eNsangwini
Bahamba naba Beksho kusho komake		They came together, with Bradshaw, saying to mother
Sisele siyakhala		We are left crying
Sesibona emaswati ayakhala		Swazis are crying [because the man is taking her]
Basala bayakhala		They were left crying
Emaswati adulile		Swazis are expensive

The *makhweyane* has always been viewed as a solo instrument, played to accompany one's singing voice and this is the same for many other southern African musical bows. Despite the common conception that it is played alone in solitary musicking, even as early as 1934, Kirby describes viewing a duo performance:

> The *umakweyana* [sic] of the Swazi is a much slenderer instrument than those of the Tshopi and the Thonga, as it is usually played by girls as an accompaniment to their voices. Although generally played singly, I have seen and heard two played together in Swaziland. In this case the girls carefully tuned the instruments together, the notes produced by each half of the string

in the one exactly agreeing with those of the other, a feat of some difficulty

considering the elastic nature of the instruments. ([1934, 1965] 2013:208)

In contemporary performance practice, though musicians are isolated from one another across the rural areas of Swaziland, collective playing is thoroughly enjoyed when the opportunity arises. In the case of the two concerts I facilitated over the period 2014 to 2016, a group of players, many of whom played *makhweyane* with varying levels of skill and experience, collaborated with interesting results. Beyond that, smaller groups of players have joined together to play and share repertory. An example of this practice is Gogo Khokhiwe Mphila (*makhweyane*) and Mkhulu Moses Mncina's (*umtshingosi* flute) duo. The nature of solo and collaborative performances and arrangements is discussed further in Chapter Five.

This section has explored the making and playing of the *makhweyane* bow itself. Having come to terms with the materiality and tuning of the instrument, I now consider how *makhweyane* players use the voice above the struck, bow pattern.

Overtone engagement and the voice in *makhweyane* songs

The term for singing in siSwati is *hlabela* and the general term for song, like in isiZulu, is *ingoma*. Kasenene describes Swazis as "a singing people" (Kasenene 1993:35). Rycroft, acknowledging the importance of song, divides Swazi songs into three categories: ceremonial music and dances, occupational songs and recreational songs (Rycroft 1976:167). Rycroft's LP entitled *Swazi Vocal Music* (issued by the Koninklijk Museum voor Modden-Afrika) contains recordings of songs titled according to function and these include various walking songs, regimental songs, chants, royal wedding songs, lullabies, and hunting songs. The 'traditional' repertory described by Rycroft, as well as the religious repertory, are often accompanied by physical gestures or *kugidza* (what Rycroft describes as "postures of dancing") (ibid.:168).

Rycroft, along with others, maintain that the majority of Swazi music is vocal and generally polyphonic choral music, with musical instruments playing a small role generally (Rycroft 1976:167). With a strong choral tradition and a plethora of gospel and church choirs across the country, this is still the case and most of the commonly-known songs are religious (Kasenene 1993:35).

Throughout my fieldwork, musicians spent little time talking about vocal quality and singing specifically despite the *makhweyane*'s role as an accompanying instrument to the voice. On voice quality, Rycroft describes preferences in women's vocal performance thus: women tend to sing in chest voice in their lower ranges, adopting a slow "diaphragm vibrato" (1976:172).

Though Khokhiwe Mphila has a notable nasal quality to her voice, numerous musicians referred to the player Gogo Mhlaphetse as: "the one with the Chinese voice" (T. Magagula, interview, eMpolonjeni, 7 December 2015) – this prejudicial description being linked to Mhlaphetse's high vocal range.[80] During my field research, numerous vocal timbres were heard as every musician I interviewed (from both the older and young generations) was a self-taught vocalist. Most players (male and female) sang freely in their chest voice.

Dargie and Rycroft both described the importance of overtone melodies or the selective amplification of harmonics in southern African bow music (Dargie 1988, 2007, Rycroft 1975/6:60). As I described with reference to Bhemani Magagula's song *'Ang'nankhomo'* (I have no cattle), the overtones created by the *makhweyane* often serve as a secondary or respondent voice in this implied counterpoint. When describing overtone engagement in *makhweyane* performance, Smiles Makama stated:

> With the calabash, you can make it speak, talk. That is what they [older generation players] say, "yoh, you are playing but it doesn't talk". If you are just playing [on the string] – they really undermine you. I got a lot from them and I still can't play everything they do. (S. Makama, interview, Msunduza, 7 October 2016)

The symbolism of the overtone melodies as voice or vocalisation is particularly poignant when considering the holipatant playing to him or herself. As a holicipant, the musician is providing the instrumental accompaniment, but also, through the overtones, the respondent vocal melody as well. Having claimed the importance of the overtones in the sound and surrounding concept of the *makhweyane*, the ability of musicians to harness these varies. This is also dependent on the quality of the instrument that a musician plays and on this note, Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula's instruments are highly respected. Two musicians whose instruments "sing" out their overtones clearly are Make Kathryn Magagula and Make Tfobhi Shongwe.

Having explored the creation of the sound of the *makhweyane* instrument and the voice in this music, the next section investigates the processes by which contemporary musicians learned to play.

Learning in the veld

Gogo Khokhiwe Mphila was born in eNdzingeni, to her father, Caca, and her mother, Titseni.[81] Her mother's side of the family raised her, in particular her maternal uncle. She

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[80] Mhlaphetse passed away several years ago but before her passing, Thobile "Makhoyane" Magagula was able to play with her and learn from her.

[81] I first met Mphila at the Manzini Trade Centre in late 2009 when she was preparing for the annual Tihlabani music awards. Though we didn't get to speak very much in this initial encounter, I was later

spent her youth taking care of livestock with her cousins in the fields. It is during these times, out along the hills and at home when she learned to play the *makhweyane* (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014). She describes this environment:

> '*Sho kutsi ngikhule ngihlala nabomzala. Labanye nje lebesivama kuba khona nabo balapha kaMatsebula. Bekuna Lokufa, Ntsambose, Mandewu naboBitana. Kusho kutsike beselusa nabo laboMandewu.*
>
> It means that I've grown up living with my cousins. Others that we used to be with are from the Matsebula family. There was Lokufa, Ntsambose, Mandewu and Bitana. It means that we were taking care of livestock with Mandewu. (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014)

Two older relatives first taught Mphila to play and in return, she carried out duties (grinding maize by stone, etc) for them. Her first teacher was an older female relative for whom Gogo carried out household tasks in exchange for the lessons. Her second teacher was a cousin who taught her whilst they looked after livestock in the fields. Mphila described how playing an instrument to pass the time was common during her childhood, but that if one wanted lessons, one had to pay. She described how if your teacher's cattle strayed and started damaging a neighbour's crops, it was your job, as the music student, to bring them back, returning to your teacher to continue your lesson. The student would be responsible not only for his or her own livestock but also for those of the teacher (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014).

> '*Sho kutsike nome lakweluseni ngafundza khona lokushaya sikhoyane. 'Sho kutsike namzala bekakhona namzala Sibusane. Ngumntfwana wamalume bekatsi asishaye. Kutsi mineke ngasifundza tindlela letingi-2. Mawufuna ngikufundzise kushaya sikhweyane. Acuphumbila ngisile. Angitsi besisila etjeni kudla kwemphuphu. Atsi nangatsi ngifundzise ingoma utawuva. Kutawuba nendishi ludziwo hhayi indishi, ludziwo. Acuphe umbila ugcwale lendishi ludziwo. Ngitawusila loludziwo ngilucedze, angifundzise lengoma kutsi itsini.*
>
> It means that even taking care of livestock, that's where I learned to play *makhweyane*. It means cousin Sibusane was also there. The child of my uncle, she used to say, "let's play". Then I learned it in two ways. If someone wants to teach you to play *makhweyane*, you must do the grinding [of maize] for her to make mielie meal. Once I say teach me to play a song, there will be

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able to visit Gogo Mphila at her homestead near Piggs Peak where I was able to interview her and listen to her play *makhweyane* and *sitolotolo*. I was able to have regular meetings and lessons with her throughout my fieldwork in 2014 and 2015. Mphila's marital name is Masango but she goes by Mphila.

a dish but not a dish, a clay pot because there were no dishes. There were clay pots. She will fill the clay pot with maize. I will grind all the maize in the clay pot, then she will teach me the song. (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014)

Mphila describes how her teachers taught her how to make a *makhweyane*, how to play it and how to write a song. It is at this young age that Mphila attempted composing her own song, titled '*Mbhilibhi*' (the name of a famous local bus, discussed in detail in Chapter Four). Beyond this initial original song, Mphila played other songs, which she described as commonly known amongst young girls in that time. She speaks about how songs are characterised according to themes, such as love and courtship songs, wedding songs, and songs of complaint.

Amongst different southern African bow traditions, female musicians often speak of how musical bows were used in games during teenage years and early courtship. Madosini, in her interview with Sazi Dlamini, describes the *imifihlelo* seeking games. The young girls used to play the isiXhosa *umrhubhe* mouth-resonated bow as they played (Dlamini 2004:144). Similarly, the *makhweyane* could be used in hide-and-seek games where one participant would hide an object and then someone else would search for it. A *makhweyane* player would play the instrument loudly and quieten down as the seeker got nearer the hidden object (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014). During Mphila's childhood, *makhweyane* was integrally woven into courtship rites. If one were in love as a young woman, one would compose a song about how one felt. There were mourning songs for when one had been rejected in love. There were songs to discourage a friend from pursuing a boy who was thought to be not good enough – songs created to influence and advise people (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014). An example of this would be one of Mphila's original songs composed when she was a young girl that makes use of the lyrics: "*Akusilo jaha sikikila*" (That is no gentleman, that is a dwarf) – a message song to discourage a friend from accepting a suitor. Mphila describes how when two girls were in love with the same boy, they would write songs as a way of mocking one another in order to win the love of the young man (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014).

The *makhweyane* would also be played when a young woman decided she likes a suitor. She would go to his home with a group of friends and perform a "*kuhlehla*" love dance, announcing to the nearby community that the suitor's feelings were reciprocated. There was song repertory reserved for this ceremony but if there was a local *makhweyane* player, she would participate as well. *Umtsimba* is a traditional Swazi wedding and this has

vocal repertory but Mphila is able to play *umtsimba* songs on her *makhweyane* (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014).[82]

Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula was born in eNkambeni (his father's home) but his parents passed away when he was young and he was relocated to Lomahasha, where he was raised by his extended family (B. Magagula, interview, eBuhleni, 31 May 2014).[83] Magagula learned to play music out in the fields, whilst minding livestock. In his childhood, there were wild hyenas and so it was imperative to watch the cattle and goats. Magagula learned to play *sitolotolo* mouth harp first, His maternal uncles were musicians and they taught him how to handcraft or *kufula* (to forge something out of metal) *sitolotolo*.[84] He was interested in instruments and dance from an early age, organising *sibhaca* dance troupes as he grew up. His father's sister (close to him in age) taught him how to play *makhweyane* later after he left Lomahasha and moved to his current area, eNyakatfo. He began playing her songs and progressed onto composing his own. Once he had grown up, Magagula took a short *"joyina"* contract at the Havelock asbestos mine in Bulembu in north-western Swaziland. Due to his leg injury, he worked for only one season and never returned. *Makhweyane* is his favourite instrument but he also enjoyed playing *imfiliji* or *belebane* (nine-hole harmonica), and has recently taken up the concertina (B. Magagula, interview, eBuhleni, 31 May 2014).

I met Gogo Sonile Sifundza through her son, Sipho, who is the local helper in the eNyakatfo area. Whilst trying to find out if Bhemani Magagula was receiving a state pension due to his dire financial situation, I explained my interest in *makhweyane* and in Bhemani Magagula's playing to Sipho. I went to visit at Sipho's family home to discuss support for Bhemani and during this visit it became apparent that the Sifundzas were a musical family. Sipho's mother, Gogo Sonile Sifundza, brought out a dusty *makhweyane* and played a few song fragments for us. Sonile had played *makhweyane* as a young girl and had learned in the field while looking after livestock. She would sing and perform a complex, hocketing whistle with the other local girls in the Luve area (where her familial home was). Only on my second visit did it become clear that Gogo Sifundza had not played *makhweyane* since her marriage and that when she played on our first visit, it was the first time since then (S. Sifundza, interview, eBuhleni, 26 June 2014). Her children had not known that she could sing or play. She described her learning: "*Ngakufundza ngisese ngumntfwana, ngiselusa*

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[82] See Rycroft (1979) for a transcription of "*Ingoma yemtsimba webukhosi*" (Royal wedding song), "*Simekezo*" (Bride's lament) (1979:173, 181).

[83] Magagula is unclear of his age. He claims he was born in a time when there was a great flea infestation. During his childhood, he witnessed a notable locust or *inkasana* (locust with red underwings) season as well (B. Magagula, interview, eBuhleni, 31 May 2014).

[84] Magagula does not have children of his own and spoke of how he wished he had someone to whom he could teach his rare skill (B. Magagula, interview, eBuhleni, 31 May 2014).

ngisidzandzane" (I learned that when I was still a child, I was still taking care of livestock) (S. Sifundza, interview, eBuhleni, 13 June 2014).

Make Tfobhi Shongwe is an unusual example of a *makhweyane* player who has enjoyed the good favour of the Royal family. The Queen Mother (*Indlovukati Ntfombi*) had been aware of Shongwe's talent and sponsored the building of her small house in eMsahweni. The Queen mother calls on Shongwe to perform at Ludzidzini Palace on occasion. Shongwe, a younger musician, started learning *makhweyane* in 1968 whilst in the first grade. After that year, she fell ill with polio and stopped attending school (T. Shongwe, interview, eMsahweni, 4 July 2014).[85] She never had formal lessons but she learned to play by following a senior girl in the area who would play while they were minding the livestock. It is due to the open fields where the cattle would graze that she learned to play, because she was able to listen and watch from afar before returning home to make and experiment with the instrument herself. She describes her learning process:

> *Betitemdzabu mineke nganginenkinga yekutsi nakashaya bengibese ngitakhela kwami kubekuncanyana. Bengibuka lokutsi ushaya kangakhi ngala ashaye kangakhi ngale. Ngikwakhile njenami kwami kwamakhweyane. Ngifake luhwayela. Ngikope ngako nakashaya. Wo, ngetulu ushaya kabili ngaphansi ushaye katsatfu. Ngihlabela ke naletingoma nalo kuhlabela kuhle kuphambana kwagcina kwase kuyacondza.*
>
> They were traditional songs [what her teacher was playing]. I had the problem of listening to her while she was playing then started creating my own songs while she played, my own little thing. I would look at how many times she would beat this side, and how many times the other side. I had made my own simple, little *makhweyane*. I used a wire. I used it to copy when she was playing. Oh, above she beats twice and below she beats three times. I would even sing the songs. It wouldn't go together but I kept trying until I got it right.
>
> (T. Shongwe, interview, eMsahweni, 4 July 2014)

Shongwe described her playing technique with particular reference to note selection thus:

> *Uye untjintje letingalo awushayi nje kufanane konkhe. Angitsi nje nangingabekisa la. Ayifanani nangingashaya la. Akunofanana lokushaya kwami. Asengibekise nje, kukhona lokucala ngetulu kukhona lokucala ngaphansi. Uyabhala lokutsi kushaya kangaki.*
>
> You change fingers. You don't beat the same/the sound differs. Let me make an example. It's not the same when I am beating. My beating won't be the

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[85] It is unclear what her illness was though it seems likely to be polio, which has left her unable to walk easily. She articulated that bad spirits were at play (T. Shongwe, interview, eMsahweni, 4 July 2014).

same. There is where you start on top, or at the bottom. You count the number of beats. (T. Shongwe, interview, eMsahweni, 4 July 2014)

As a devout Christian, Shongwe sings mostly adapted gospel songs and original religious songs on the *makhweyane*. She does play 'traditional' repertory, drawing from the *lutsango* or women's regimental songs. She also arranged some *kumekeza* wedding songs for *makhweyane,* and composed some original songs for wedding ceremonies (T. Shongwe, interview, eMsahweni, 4 July 2014). Shongwe learned to play *sitolotolo* at the same time as she learned *makhweyane* and is an equally fine player of both instruments. Similar to Bhemani Magagula's story of his uncles, Shongwe's father knew how to construct *sitolotolo* by hand (though she did not pick up the craft) and he was her primary teacher on the instrument.

Female players of *makhweyane* often stopped playing once they were married. Make Cathrina Magagula comes from a family of many girls. She learned from her older sisters who would play around the house (C. Magagula, interview, Shewula, 18 August 2014). She stopped playing as a young girl and only restarted once she had returned from Lesotho in 1976 (where she moved as a young bride after marrying a Mosotho man). The oldest woman interviewed was Gogo Yengiwe Dladla of Shewula (whose precise age is unknown) who described how she started to play *makhweyane* as a young girl when the soldiers left for World War II (Y. Dladla, interview, Shewula, 18 August 2014). Gogo Ncola Lukhele (also from the Shewula area) played as a girl and stopped when she got married. Now that she is older, she described how she only plays for herself in the house because she still has the instrument (N. Lukhele, interview, Shewula, 18 August 2014). She plays the songs that her sister taught her all those years ago such as '*Ngiphekeletele mtwana make*' (Accompany me, mother's child) which can be extrapolated back to the period from between 1940 and 1960, when Lukhele was a young woman. These surprisingly graphic song lyrics are asking for the singer's sister to accompany her to her marital home, drawing on the theme of young bride's anxiety about marriage (N. Lukhele, interview, Shewula, 18 August 2014).

<div align="center">

Ngiphekeletele mntfwana make[86]

Gogo Ncola Lukhele

18 August 2014

</div>

Ngiphekeletele mntfwanamake,	Accompany, my mother's child,
Ngiye ekwendzeni x3	I am going to my marital home
Sibumbu umnandzi kulabakudlako	Vagina, you are nice to those who eat you
Ngikuva ngendzaba x2	I hear the news
Maye babe, mine, kulabakudlako x2	Oh, my father, to those who eat you
Ngiphekeletelele mntfwanamake,	Accompany, my mother's child,
Ngiye ekwendzeni x2	I am going to my marital home
Sibumbu umnandzi kulabakudlako,	Vagina, you are nice to those who eat you
Ngikuva ngendzaba x2	I hear the news
Maye babe, mine,	Oh, my father,
Ngiye ekwendzeni x2	I am going to my marital home
Ngiphekeletele, mntfwanamake,	Accompany, my mother's child,
Ngiye ekwendzeni	I am going to my marital home
Sibumbu umnandzi kulabakudlako	Vagina, you are nice to those who eat you
Ngikuva ngendzaba	I hear the news
Ehhe!	Ehhe!
Sibumbu umnandzi kulabakudlako	Vagina, you are nice to those who eat you
Ngikuva ngendzaba x2	I hear the news
Ngiphekeletele, bhabhalazi,	Accompany me, hangover,
Ngiye ekwendzeni x2	I am going to my marital home
Maye babe, mine, kulabakudlako x2	Oh, my father, to those who eat you
Ngiphekeletele, mntfwanamake,	Accompany me, my mother's child,
Ngiye ekwendzeni x3	I am going to my marital home
Maye babe, mine,	Oh, my father,
Ngiye ekwendzeni	I am going to my marital home
Sibumbu umnandzi kulabakudlako	Vagina, you are nice to those who eat you
Ngikuva ngendzaba x2	I hear the news
Ngiphekeletele, bhabhalazi,	Accompany me, hangover,
Ngiye ekwendzeni x2	I am going to my marital home
Ngiphekeletele, mntfwanamake,	Accompany me, my mother's child,
Ngiye ekwendzeni x2	I am going to my marital home
Maye babe mine,	Oh, my father,
Ngiye ekwendzeni x2	I am going to my marital home
INSTRUMENTAL CYCLE	
Ngiphekeletele, bhabhalazi,	Accompany me, hangover,
Ngiye ekwendzeni x2	I am going to my marital home
Sibumbu umnandzi kulabakudlako	Vagina, you are nice to those who eat you
Ngikuva ngendzaba x2	I hear the news
Maye babe, mine, kulabakudlako x2	Oh, my father, to those who eat you
Ngiphekeletele, bhabhalazi,	Accompany me, hangover,
Ngiye ekwendzeni x2	I am going to my marital home

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[86] An audio recording of this song is supplied with this dissertation.

The song '*Ngiphekeletele mntfwana make*' is surprising for both its mentioning of female genitalia and hangovers. It is one of the few songs heard during my fieldwork that openly engaged with what is today seen as sensitive topics.

Mkhulu Philemon "Mxofololo" Dlamini is considered an excellent concertina or *inkhositina* player and lives in the eMphini village over the mountains from Luyengo, towards the town of Bhunya. Our meetings have always been brief and efficient. One blustery overcast day, I drove to Mxofololo's village to seek out this renowned musician. "Mxofololo" is a nickname given to him due to his stern, "no-nonsense" character (the verb *kuxofa* is to crush an insect or similar with force). He used to work on the mines (*emayini*) in Johannesburg in the 1950s, which is where he learned to play the concertina.[87] He described how, when he was younger, he would play it and get emotional, to the point of tears. During his second working stint in Johannesburg, he became a born-again Christian at which point he stopped playing *inkhositina* and describes how he felt he had to give his instrument away. After a period without making music, he decided to start again and returned to Johannesburg to buy a new *inkhositina*. On the overcast day when we met, he confided that he wants to play in a way that leaves some type of legacy for the instrument – so that members of his community will say, "This *mkhulu* used to play…". Mxofololo also plays *makhweyane* though less confidently. He started to play a *makhweyane* piece with no sung parts, which is uncommon, striking his bow hard so it emitted rich harmonic material. The dense spectral formation of this improvised performance, the relatively loud series of harmonics created from the struck pattern, can be seen below (M. Dlamini, interview, eMphini, 26 August 2014).[88]

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[87] Philemon "Mxofololo" Dlamini used to work at what he called the "*Stit-mayela*" mine. It is unclear whether this was in the surrounding areas of Johannesburg or Stilfontein in the North-West province of South Africa (M. Dlamini, interview, eMphini, 26 August 2014).

[88] An audio recording of this performance is supplied with this dissertation.
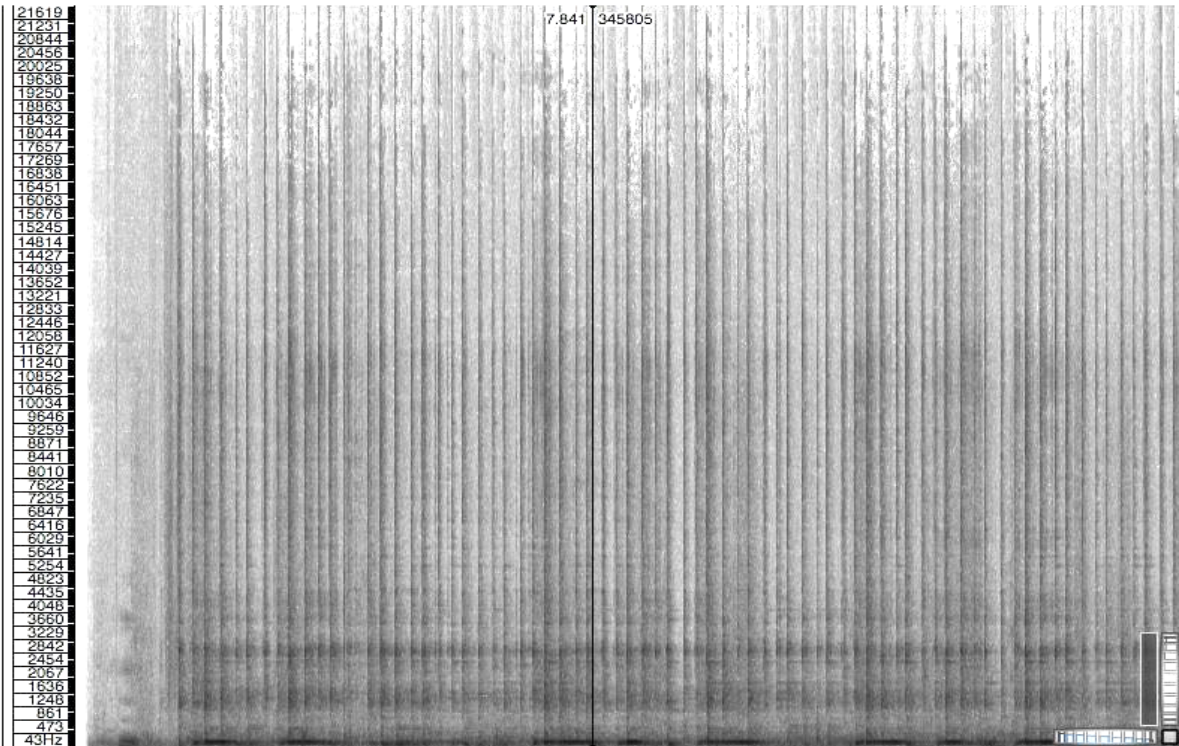
Figure 22 Mxofololo Dlamini plays solo makhweyane.
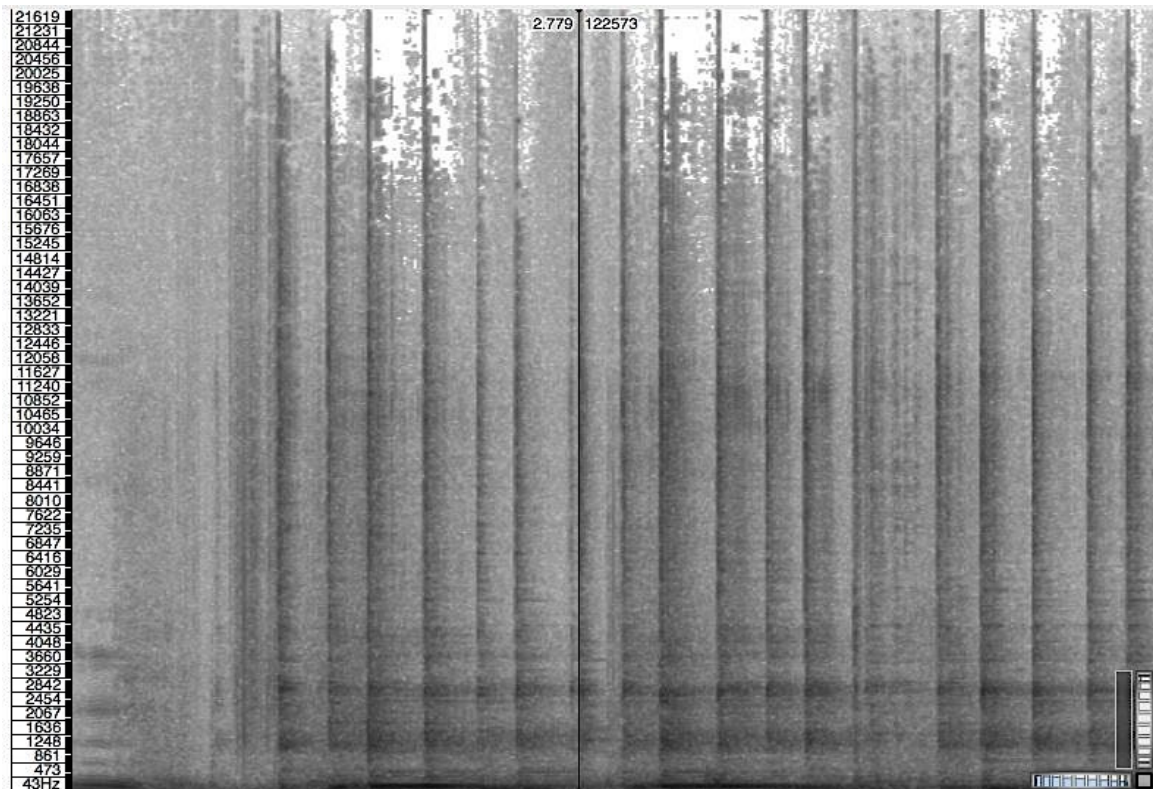
Figure 23 Mxofololo Dlamini plays solo makhweyane *(detail).*

Conclusion

Having placed the *makhweyane* within its broader national cultural environment in Chapter Two, this chapter has explored the materiality and identity of the instrument. It reviewed the historical and more recent writings on the *makhweyane* bow and other closely related instruments, such as the Mozambican *xitende*, the Swazi *ligubhu*, and the isiZulu *umakhweyana*.

Drawing on fieldwork interviews with active *makhweyane* players, this chapter outlined how a *makhweyane* is constructed, tuned, played, and learned (in particularly amongst the older generation of performers). It explored the learning processes experienced by many of these older players in their teenage years as they learned from older relations whilst looking after livestock. Amongst these older musicians, the veld or the field then became a site for learning and transmission in this music, in the grass as the wind blows and the cattle graze. This experience was extended as some musicians took their newly garnered skill back home to experiment and develop alone.

CHAPTER FOUR

Balozi (talking spirits): The *makhweyane* as 'radio', radio broadcasts and recordings as transmissive strategies

Introduction

The previous chapter investigated how the *makhweyane* is made, learned and played. It examined the ways in which performance techniques and repertory were transmitted over generations, as told to me by the research participants in my study. A large proportion of the musicians interviewed in this research are elderly players and their mode of learning was in the fields whilst taking care of livestock. This process, linked to peers, livestock and often open spaces, is not shared by younger, urban performers. This chapter extends this exploration to understand how transmission processes have transformed going into the twenty-first century, with the younger generation, and how technology speaks to the experiences of young and old performers alike through recordings and radio. It explores how the *makhweyane* has functioned as a tool for storytelling, a 'radio', and a tool for research amongst musicians, but also how radio and recorded sound have served as a tool for repertory transmission and sonic inspiration.

In siSwati, the term *balozi* can be translated as 'talking spirits'.[89] The term *balozi* is used on SBIS radio (Swaziland Broadcasting and Information Service or Swazi national radio) to describe pre-recorded, acousmatic, audio material (anything that is not live on air).[90] Radio or *iwayilese* (wireless) plays an important role in Swaziland today as a cultural medium, a symbol of connectivity and age-old modernity, and as the ultimate performance platform for older, active *makhweyane* players. In an early interview with the musician Khokhiwe Mphila, she described the contexts for performing on *makhweyane*: how people would travel with their instruments as an *iwayilese* to keep up their speed and to keep them company (as radio often does in the rural areas) (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014).

The varied manifestations of radio, its contribution to community, and its fluidity on the African continent have been of interest to scholars for some time. In 1965, writing about the French occupation of Algeria and subsequent violent conflict, Franz Fanon stated: "Having a radio meant paying one's taxes to the nation, buying the right of entry into the

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[89] In siSwati, *balozi* refers to spirits who can be sent to do the bidding of *tinyanga* or prophets. This term should not be confused with the respect and hierarchy attributed to ancestors in Swazi religious beliefs. The siSwati term for ancestors is *emadloti* or *labalele* (Those who are sleeping) (V. Sibandze, interview, Malkerns, 20 October 2016).

[90] Here I understand the term "acousmatic" as sound divorced from its source (Schaeffer 1966).

struggle of an assembled people" (1965:84).[91] Gunner, Ligaga and Moyo describe the importance and vibrancy of radio in Africa as due to: "the ordinariness and the power of the local that sits alongside the capacity for enacted cultural memory with a wider reach" (2011:4). This chapter discusses radio as symbol and technology. It then broadens this formulation of broadcast sound to consider the use of recordings in the practice of *makhweyane* players.

This chapter continues to explore how *makhweyane* music and playing techniques have been transmitted over time but additionally investigates how the instrument serves as a "radio": transmitting the messages of rural players and serving as an important channel for the expressions of men's and women's experiences in Swaziland. I posit the *makhweyane* itself as technology and medium, as tool and pastime.

The *makhweyane* as "radio": Broadcasts of personal history and movement

Earlier case studies have shown that *makhweyane* songs often serve to broadcast a moral message but in times of strife or reflection, composer-players can also write music that expresses the challenges they are facing in their lives. Songs can also be demonstrations of active citizenry like Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula's song about a common problem in his community: when roaming cattle destroy other people's crops. When describing composing the song, Magagula speaks of putting it out for broadcast, speaking about *emsakatweni* – a term that refers to the place of broadcasting. Of that particular song of complaint, he said:

> *Le lengikhuluma ngayo ikhuluma ngalelive letfu. Sesifile ngetinkhomo. Tinkhomo ticedza emabele etfu. Siyalima silimela tinkhomo. Siyalima silimela tinkhomo. Nanyalo naku. Tishaye ticotfulile umbila naku umbila ngiwetfule emanti nankhu. Inhhi-inhhi make ngitsatsa laphoke lengoma ngifaka lamsakatweni. Ngifuna batoyiva lengoma lokutsi laNyakatfo lelive kute. Kute, kute, mtfwanami.*

> The one I am talking about is about being destroyed by cattle. Cattle finish our sorghum fields. We plough for them. We plough for them. [*emphasis = We plough and they come destroy everything*]. Even now here. They are everything, I had to harvest the maize unripe [*to save it*]. Yes, mother, that is where I took this song from and put it on the radio station [the place of broadcasting]. I want them to hear this song about what is happening the place of eNyakatfo. Nothing, nothing, my child. (B. Magagula, interview, eBuhleni, 6 May 2014)

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[91] He further stated: "The technical instrument is rooted in the colonial situation where, as we know, the negative and positive coefficients always exist in a very accentuated way" (1965:73).

This quote demonstrates how Magagula believes that song can inform and incentivise action and problem-solving, even from his marginal position in rural eNyakatfo. Personal stories and complaint can be set to music in order to stimulate agency in others – to solve local problems.

Beyond songs of complaint and community reporting, many *makhweyane* songs broadcast personal stories. The following two case studies demonstrate how oral history is woven into the fabric of lyrical text in *makhweyane* music. Further, these examples show how sonic and lyrical symbols or cues can be used to relay personal histories and how movement and space feature in the lives of two different rural bow players.

Acoustic cues and signals are aural reminders and temporal nods to the rhythms of daily life; they help define an area spatially, temporally, socially and culturally. An acoustic community is thus linked and defined by such sounds that signify not only daily and seasonal cycles, but also the shared activities, rituals and dominant institutions of the area (Schine n.d.). During the past century in Swaziland, movement and place have shaped men's and women's lives differently along gender lines. Though tropes of migrancy are commonplace when considering the lives of Swazi men on the South African mines, I propose that movement and internal displacement shaped and continues to shape the lives of Swazi women too through common life-cycle events and now, urbanisation.

In this section, these alternate expressions of place and agency are demonstrated in two different songs: an archival recording made by Rycroft of the male performer, Sitandi Mabuza, and one contemporary recording of a female player and instrument-maker, Khokhiwe Mphila. Both of these songs make thematic and poetic use of the notorious *Mbhilibhi* bus that travelled through the town of Piggs Peak for many years.

The majority of *makhweyane* players in Swaziland today live in the rural areas and are grandparents. Most have lost or been separated from their spouses. The majority have dependent grandchildren living with them. In rare cases, the musicians are alone, having lost their relatives to illnesses such as HIV/AIDS, or to the lights of "town". Despite most of the musicians living in the far-flung corners of Swaziland, all have travelled extensively across the country during their lives. The male musicians, like most Swazi men in the last century, have travelled at least once to South Africa for paid work, usually on what is called a *joyina* short-term contract on the mines.

The female musicians have enjoyed equally mobile lives, usually consisting of a rural upbringing in one location, and then after marriage, relocation to another part of the country to their marital home (*ekhakhakho*). Life-cycle events (like age-regiment activities, *Umhlanga* practices and routes, and marriage) can be plotted across the hills and valleys of the countryside. Many of the older female *makhweyane* players speak of an idyllic childhood of livestock herding and chores in the surrounding area of their familial home. They also speak

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of a new life and space associated with their husband's family, and then the regular and time-consuming travel common to rural dwellers (no matter their age) to nearby towns to sell agricultural produce. As a result, rural life for these grandmothers and grandfathers has been and is one of continual mobility and spatial "operations" (de Certeau 1984:93).

The following two *makhweyane* songs were composed and played by two different musicians decades apart but in the same region of Swaziland (the north-west Hhohho province). In these case studies, a crucial symbol of movement and connection for rural dwellers, a bus, is used as a poetical symbol and acoustic vehicle, a "soundmark". Derived from the term "landmark", Schafer described a "soundmark" as "a community sound which is unique or possesses qualities which make it specially regarded or noticed by the people in that community" ([1978]1994:10). The *Mbhilibhi* bus used to travel from the country's capital, Mbabane, to the northern town of Piggs Peak and onwards through the Bulembu border to South Africa. In these songs, this bus acts as a sonic marker and an important lyrical symbol for the Hhohho area in these two different stories (Truax 2001).

Sitandi Mabuza appears to have been recorded by Rycroft on at least four occasions between 1972 and 1975. Surveying the recorded songs on which Mabuza can be heard, he appears a versatile and engaging performer, singing clearly even as his voice ages over the years, occasionally making use of a clear and expressive falsetto, and playing the *makhweyane* as well as the *sikelekehle* friction bow. Of the thirty-one recordings assigned to Mabuza, numerous songs are about travelling as a migrant labourer to the South African mines by bus and by foot. He sings "*Wakhwela ibhasi wahamba*" (He climbed on the bus and went) and "*Ngiyawulala kabani?*" (At whose place will I sleep?). The lyrics for Mabuza's bow song '*Umbiliphi*' can be seen below:[92]

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[92] The David Rycroft South Africa Collection in the British Library sound archive uses this incorrect spelling (*umbiliphi*) of the word *Mbhilibhi*.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">***Umbiliphi***[93]

Sitandi Mabuza

1972/3</td></tr>
<tr>
<td>

Ngitsatse, Mbhilibhi
Yelele make, yelele make
Ngihamba ngaMbhilibhi
Yele make
Bengiye eSipiki
Yelele make, yelele ma
Ngitsetfwe nguMbhilibhi
Yelele make, yelele make
Ngihamba ngaMbhilibhi
Yelele make
Ngatsatfwa ngaMbhilibhi
Yelele mama, yelele mama
Yelele mama
Bengiye eSipiki
Bengiye eMntsoli
Ngashiywa ngumBhilibhi (x2)
Yelele mama, yelele ma (x2)
Yelele mama, yelele mama
Yelele mama (x3)
Ngatsatfwa nguMbhilibhi
Yelele mama, yelele mama

</td>
<td>

I took it, Mbhilibhi
[*vocables*] mother
I'm going by Mbhilibhi
[*vocables*] mother
I was going to Piggs Peak
[*vocables*] mother
I was taken by Mbhilibhi
[*vocables*] mother
I'm going by Mbhilibhi
[*vocables*] mother
I was taken by Mbhilibhi
[*vocables*] mother
[*vocables*] mother
I've been to Piggs Peak
I was going to Mntsoli[94]
I was left by Mbhilibhi
[*vocables*] mother
[*vocables*] mother
[*vocables*] mother
I was taken by Mbhilibhi
[*vocables*] mother

</td>
</tr>
</table>

This recording dates from 1972 or 1973, and is one of a series of songs and short interview clips of Mabuza made by Rycroft. Mabuza begins to play this uptempo *makhweyane* groove, setting up the rhythm. He stops and corrects himself, "no, no, no", then restarts. He emphasises the forward inevitability and speed of the mighty *Mbhilibhi* bus with this static but energised struck bow pattern. His confidence builds as he plays and his vocal projection increases throughout the song. He sings to us "*ngitsatse mbhilibhi*" (I took it, *Mbhilibhi*), and marks every new line of sung text with the vocable praise: "*yelele make, yelele, ma*". Repetition in the lyrics and the constant refrain in the name of "his mother" give a sense of longing but also spatial rootedness behind his repeated worded and wordless lyrics. This poetic inertia is also revealed in the slow progression of time shown in the lyrics: first, Mabuza is states that he took the *Mbhilibhi* bus to the Mntsoli mine in South Africa; then he "is going by *Mbhilibhi*", then he sings that *Mbhilibhi* "took" him, and then that he was "left"

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[93] David Rycroft did the siSwati transcription of this song. The translation of these siSwati lyrics presented here is by Vusi Sibandze. An audio recording of this song, recorded by David Rycroft, is supplied with this dissertation.
[94] Mntsoli was a small mine near the town of Barberton in South Africa, just beyond the Swazi border.

by Mbhlibhi. Each stage of this symbolic journey is marked out in a new line of lyric, and the simple words could be seen to reiterate the often-hard reality of leaving behind one's home for long periods of time.

Gogo Khokhiwe Mphila also composed a song about the *Mbhilibhi* bus when she was a young girl but this composition makes use of a different narrative and differing structural attributes.

Mbhilibhi [excerpt][95]

Khokhiwe Mphila

16 August 2014

Ma ma mamama ma ma ma	[vocables]
Ngagibela Mbhilibhi	I boarded the Mbhilibhi bus
Ngamgibela eSipiki ma x2	I boarded it at Piggs Peak
Ye LaMbhilibhi ulonkhobenkhobe ma x2	That Mbhilibhi bus wastes no time!
Ngagibela Mbhilibhi	I boarded the Mbhilibhi bus
Ngamgibela eSipiki ma	I boarded it at Piggs Peak
Wang'beke Mbabane ma x2	She [the bus] put me down in Mbabane
Ye laMbhilibhi ulonkhobenkhobe ma	That Mbhilibhi bus wastes no time!
TIBONGO (in isiZulu):	PRAISE:
Nalo libelebele lebafazi namadoda lokadze balubelezela ziyakuzonda izinjinga ziyakuzonda izimphuya. Bafati bangakhela umhlangano ka Mosango hha!	Here comes that nagging person for women and men, the one they have been longing to see. They hate you, the rich. They hate you, the poor. Women schemed against me at Mosango [Mphila's marital home].
Ma ma mamama ma ma ma x2	[vocables]
Lentfombi seyinjani iganile x3	The girl, how is she? She is in love.

Driving along the road to Gogo's home in eNsangwini takes you past some of the most notable sights of Hhohho province in the northwest of Swaziland. Once you have moved past the grassy hills of high-altitude Hawane and Malolotja, you veer down the escarpment and cross the large Maguga dam. Along the road, one passes prime examples of the *lugagane* tree (or *Acacia ataxacantha*) and the temperature and humidity start to rise. eNsangwini is a mountainous region of Hhohho famous for its deep river gorges, clogged with granite boulders and whose fertile and steep valley slopes are perfect for the growing of marijuana (*eNsangwini* translates as 'the place of marijuana'). Gogo's marital home is found

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[95] An audio recording of this song is supplied with this dissertation.

many kilometres off the main road and is a neatly set-out homestead of grey square-davels[96] and cleared outdoor spaces under lush avocado trees. Gogo appears to be in her early seventies, a widow, and, as is common with older people in rural Swaziland, she is the guardian of numerous grand-children and other orphans from her extended family.

I first met Gogo Mphila in 2009. At that first meeting, she performed numerous songs but the two, which seem to be her most confident favourites, I heard and recorded on numerous occasions. '*Mbhilibhi'* is one of these songs and the first time she played it, she described how as a young child, she and her siblings had run along the road with her uncle as he left home to catch the *Mbhilibhi* bus to work in South Africa. They had offered to help him with his luggage, some of which was crushed maize or *lukhotse* that he could snack on during his long trip.[97] They carried the bags, running alongside barefoot. When he wasn't watching, they would eat the food and so, lighten their load. Eventually, he realised and beat the children for their naughtiness, Mphila recounted to me laughing whilst remembering (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014).

Figure 24 Gogo Khokhiwe Mphila at her neighbour Moses "Phayinaphu" Mncina's home in eNsangwini.

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[96] A square rondavel building common in rural Swaziland.
[97] *Lukhotse* is a snack of maize kernels, roasted peanuts, and brown sugar crushed into a powder and consumed by hand or teaspoon.

Gogo favours autobiographical, memory-based material in her song lyrics. In our meetings, her songs blend perfectly into the narrative of her notable past experiences, reflections and life in general. Mphila's playing and compositional style is an interesting fusion of fixed compositions with structural improvisation. When she performs a song, it has a fixed lyrical skeleton but self-praise (in the form of *tibongo*) and in-the-moment anecdotal reflections can be woven into this structure as sung or spoken text. The fixed phrases themselves can be reorganised. As mentioned in Chapter Three, she is one of the few *makhweyane* players interviewed who incorporates *tibongo* or fast, spoken praises – a type of verbal art (Bauman 1975) – into her songs structures.

The tonality of the song is one common to Gogo's general sound. Her *makhweyane* is usually tuned a tone or a minor third apart and she favours intervals of approximately a major third and minor third between her three fundamental tones. Again, Gogo uses vocables in the song structure and it should be noted that these help in warming up the voice and easing the performer into the song but also frame the usually minimal text of a *makhweyane* song. As one can see in the lyrics, Gogo sings about riding the *Mbhilibhi* bus to and from the nearby town *eSipiki* or Piggs Peak. She sings: "*laMbhilibhi ulonkobenkobe ye ma*" which loosely translates as 'the *Mbhilibhi* bus takes no bribes/wastes no time'. This line of text is a good example of the deep poeticism routinely used in *makhweyane* songs. *Tinkobe* refers to uncrushed maize which people salt and keep in their houses to snack on. When a visitor comes to visit, *tinkobe* is offered around. There is a saying in siSwati: "*Ngitawufika lapho ngingasadli nkobe zamuntu*" which means 'I'll be so angry that I won't take any *nkobe* when at your house'. i.e. no distractions, no negotiations. Gogo is using this symbolism to refer to the speed and fierceness with which the *Mbhilibhi* bus used to drive along its dusty roads (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014).

In the short *tibongo* (praise) section of the song, Gogo now talks directly about herself. She describes herself as the one that men and women have been waiting to see, and follows that up by implying that rich and poor people hate her. This type of overt, almost theatrical, egotism is common in *tibongo*. The *tibongo* ends with her stating that the women in her marital home schemed against her. In her interviews, Gogo spoke about her marriage being troubled and her song '*Lutsandvo luphelile*' (The love is gone or finished) is another text that speaks to that (discussed in Chapter Three). '*Mbhilibhi*' ends with Gogo repeating the text: "*lentfombi seyinjani iganile*" (The girl, how is she now, she is in love). This text seems to refer to her courtship and early marital years, when she was young and in love.

Though the narrative of the song lyrics may seem disjointed, '*Mbhilibhi*' displays a common structure used by Gogo Mphila in her songs. Minimal text is emphasised by repetition, and micro and macro examples of poeticism can be read into the lyrics. Though it may seem that the *Mbhilibhi* bus is an unusual thread with which this song is held together, it

is possible that this fierce bus could be interpreted as Gogo's physical journey between different spaces in her life and possibly a symbol of her own personal agency. Mphila's song is representative of contemporary *makhweyane* repertory in her use of metaphor and signifies a complex of stories about a woman's life, movements, and resilience in rural Swaziland.

Both of these '*Mbhilibhi*' songs demonstrate the capacity for *makhweyane* music to broadcast personal stories. They both show differing structural choices made by two *makhweyane* composers, using the *Mbhilibhi* bus as an identifying symbol and "soundmark". Sitandi Mabuza's song portrays the common narrative about a man leaving his home to travel to the mines in South Africa. The bus represents the imperative and ability to earn money. Gogo Mphila's song is freer in construction and narrative and, again, uses the symbol of the *Mbhilibhi* bus to connect seemingly disparate moments in her life story. The bus connects her to the outside world and is something she chooses to ride. Both narratives engage mobility and place, but broadcast from different perspectives and with differing artistic outcomes.

"*Delisa amasoka*" (tough girl): *Makhweyane* bearing witness to women's lives

Magowan and Wrazen write: "Music making is thus not just about being male or female but it is also about becoming men or women and understanding their spheres of participation and senses of belonging in the world" (2013:2). In its capacity to broadcast and channel personal stories, *makhweyane* music speaks particularly to women's experiences in that the *makhweyane* is often perceived as a female instrument. Smiles Makama describes the conflict he felt in playing *makhweyane*:

> I did try to put propaganda to myself: am I really a woman in a man's body? Why do I love the instrument? […] I did struggle with those issues, traditionally. But working, as an art form, I didn't really have any problems. I would tell people on the stage, ladies and gentlemen, this is my mother's instrument. I love my mom, I love the music, so I am going to play the music from my mother. (S. Makama, interview, Msunduza, 7 October 2016).

The historiography of gender and musical bows in southern Africa has been established primarily in the writings of David Rycroft (1975; 1976), Elizabeth Gunner (1979) and Rosemary Joseph (1983; 1987). Their respective writings address the role of musical bows in women's lives, as songs bear witness to the passing trials and tribulations for rural women. Kirby stated: "Married women in Swaziland do not play *umakweyana*. I was told that they believe that the child of a married woman who does play it will grow up 'wild'", and indeed, during my field research, some female players mentioned the stigma that was

attached to women who played *makhweyane* after marriage ([1934, 1965] 2013:277). Gogo Sonile Sifundza explained the circumstances in which she tried to continue playing after marrying her husband: for some time after her marriage, she would play to herself at night indoors so that the disapproving neighbours would not hear her. After a time of periodic solo, nocturnal performing, she decided to stop (S. Sifundza, interview, eBuhleni, 13 June 2014).

Despite the negative perception of married women playing as they got older, a large proportion of contemporary female players continued to play and compose after marriage. Make Tfobhi Shongwe, who was crippled as a child by illness, has played her whole life and is considered a gifted singer and *makhweyane* player. Her ability to continue playing throughout her life perhaps speaks to her physical disability limiting the chores she was able to do in her youth. Shongwe speaks about how she has used her compositions as a tool throughout difficulties in her life.

Coming back to Gogo Mphila, she described how the *makhweyane* is particularly important for women as a means of expression, a tool for lamenting the trials in their lives. As she was growing up, Mphila was referred to as "*delisa amasoka*" – loosely translated as a 'hard-to-get' girl, a 'tough girl'. She describes how girls used to share livestock herding and minding duties and that to pass the time in the field, the boys and girls used to practice stick fighting. Mphila spoke about how it was common to find tough girls during her youth, not like "you girls" she said to me, "who just stay in the house" (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014)

The following song is an original composition by Mphila and served as a tool for self-expression during a painful personal experience. In this song, she sings about seeing her husband feeding the food she cooked for him to their dogs. She describes how one might be cooking food for the family and one's mischievous husband is quietly removing firewood from the fire to sabotage the meal: "*Indlela yekushiya letintfo ngekubhala nekuhlabela ingoma*" (The only way you get rid of these things is to write a song and sing the song) (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014).

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">Ngipheka kudla kakhokho tinkhuni [excerpt][98]
Gogo Khokhiwe Mphila
8 May 2014</td></tr>
<tr>
<td>

Yemaye maye maye (x2)
Sengipheka kudla bakhokho tinkhuni

Yemaye (x 2)
Sengiletse emanti ungitsele emehlweni
Yemaye (x2)
Yemaye maye maye
Sengipheka kudla
Sengiphakela kudla unika tinja takho (x2)
Sengigceba tingubo ubuke eLubondzeni

Yemaye (x2)
Yemaye maye maye (x2)
Ngito wubika bani lendzaba langaka (x2)
Sengipheka kudla unika tinja takho

Yema (x2)
Sengiletse emanti ungitsela
emehlweni yana! (x2)
Yemake kwami angisiye make
Angisenababe angisiye make
Ngitawubikela bami lendzaba lengaka

</td>
<td>

[vocables]
I had already cooked food when they were taking out the firewood (from under the food)

[vocables]
I had fetched water and he had poured it in the eyes
[vocables]
I had already cooked food
I had already dished up food and he gave it to your dogs
I had already laid out the blankets, he looked at eLubondzeni

[vocables]
[vocables]
I will report who and on this big matter
I had already dished up food and he gave it to your dogs

[vocables]
I had fetched water and he had poured it in the eyes

My mother, I am not a mother
I don't have a father, I don't have a mother
Who will I report on this big matter to?

</td>
</tr>
</table>

Often Mphila's *tibongo* praise expressions talk about her being a tough young woman (as seen in her song '*Mbhilibhi*' discussed earlier in this chapter). In the *tibongo* for the above song, she describes herself as the girl who men were too intimidated to approach. This affirmation of her strength is interspersed with the difficulty of the situation with her husband. A further example of this perception of her is in her earlier composition '*Lutsandvo luphelile*' (described in Chapter Three). In this song, she expresses her heartache when a suitor decided not to be in a relationship with her due to her strong character (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014).

Despite the gendered nature of *makhweyane* performance, there are some aspects of gendered identity that complicate the common narratives of female courtship, grief, and prohibitive responsibility in bow playing cited by Joseph and Rycroft. The first point to note is that, in Swaziland, men and women of the same generation – elderly musicians – both play *makhweyane* and ensemble meetings have provided no evidence of any perceptible stigma

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[98] An audio recording of this song is supplied with this dissertation.

towards female players (whatever their age or marital status). This is the case even though some musicians spoke about it being more of a female instrument than male. When members of this older generation were learning to play *makhweyane*, males and females learned in a similar environment: as teenagers from peers or older relatives whilst minding livestock. Further, both men and women are instrument makers (the prime examples being Khokhiwe Mphila, Bhemani Magagula, John Mahlalela, Tfobhi Shongwe, and Katherine Magagula). The two most highly respected instrument makers represent both sexes. This said, life experiences and cultural expectations for men and women in Swaziland are largely different and *makhweyane* songs, in their capacity as "radio", speak to those gendered, collective and personal stories.

SBIS: National radio in Swaziland

> … radio has been such an important site of musical practice. Its soundscapes teach us not only how to listen (or just as easily how not to listen), but also how to use music to make sense of our personal and social locations. (Berland 1998:142)

Having considered the *makhweyane* as a tool of expression, a broadcaster of tales and experiences, this investigation now turns to the role of radio within the community of *makhweyane* players in Swaziland. In the siSwati language, *kutsebula* translates as 'to record' (audio and audio-visual material). Before recording technology came to Swaziland, *kutsebula* had very different connotations: meaning to kill someone and make use of her or him in the spiritual world. The word *balozi* referred to these 'talking spirits' after they had been killed and as mentioned before, this term is used on radio today to refer to pre-recorded radio material. When considering important cultural agents in Swaziland, the 'talking spirits' of radio are paramount. This section explores the role of radio within the *makhweyane* music and broader traditional music community as made evident through my field research.

Emsakatweni is the siSwati term for radio (the 'place of broadcasting', coming from the verb *kusakata* to broadcast sorghum or agricultural seed). As mentioned in earlier chapters, SBIS is the common acronym for the Swaziland Broadcasting and Information Services: the national radio broadcasters of Swaziland. National radio has separate siSwati and English language stations and has always played a crucial role in cultural and musical dissemination across Swaziland. *Makhweyane* player, Smiles Makama, describes his hearing of the *makhweyane* on radio as a child:

When they were going to do lessons on radio, education lessons, they would play this *makhweyane* music, you know… I had the feeling that it was clearing up the kids, you know, so they can catch the lesson. I've always felt it. This instrument gives me something, I can't describe it. And when I heard it opening kid's lessons, I thought this is good. I can go to schools and play. Sometimes, I would have these fantasies (S. Makama, interview, Msunduza, 7 October 2016)

Contemporary Swazi national radio allocates airtime to locally-produced music on what was the "*Takho takho Ngwane*" (Yours/for you, yours, Swaziland) and "*Tingoma letingagugi*" (The Songs that don't age) weekly shows, but also the "*Isicathamiya/ Umbholoho*" and "*Kuhlephuka tintwane*" shows (literally translated as 'the toes are twitching').[99] The "*Kuhlephuka tintwane*" show, which airs at 10pm on Friday evenings, often favours South African retro dance music such as Mahlathini and the Mahotella queens, instead of local Swazi content, with an emphasis on music that makes you dance. Quotas for local content are often filled with local gospel and choral music, such as in the show titled "*Ntyilo ntyilo*" (named after the Miriam Makeba hit song written by Alan Silinga).

Numerous *makhweyane* players and other instrumentalists stated that they find musical inspiration in the songs that are shared on the siSwati language radio broadcasts and especially on Edward Morosi Mthethwa's local music show "*Takho takho Ngwane*" when it aired. Mthethwa recently retired and so his show does not exist anymore but it was well known to the extent that Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula often shouts interjections using the words "*Takho takho takho takho takaNgwane*" when performing on his *makhweyane*. His particular regard for radio can also be seen in his frequent spoken praise words (or *tibongo*): "*Asihambe siyochacha tinkinga emsakatweni*" (Let's go solve problems on radio). These words, spoken during the performance of different songs, tie into his sense of music and media as tools for communicating and resolving troubles (as discussed earlier in this chapter and in Chapter Three).

Edward Mthethwa, before his retirement, was the host of the popular "*Takho takho Ngwane*" show. Mthethwa, the son of a Chief and the governor of the Zombodza Royal Kraal, trained as a teacher but left his teaching career to join the Swazi national radio service (SBIS) in 1981. After interning in different capacities across the radio stations, Mthethwa was attached to Gideon Vilakazi, a broadcaster with an interest in local music. Together they instituted a program whereby local artists would come to the SBIS facilities in Mbabane to record their music. In exchange, SBIS would hold the copyright on the recorded music and would promote the musician on air. In this way, SBIS developed a large recorded archive of

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[99] At the time of writing, without "Takho takho Ngwane", there is no radio show dedicated to Swazi traditional (and instrumental) music.

active musicians from across Swaziland though these recordings are not accessible to the public currently.[100]

After Vilakazi's passing, Mthethwa proposed a weekly show dedicated to local music and 'traditional' Swazi music and presented this show until his recent retirement. Mthethwa was also involved in organising a tour of numerous Swazi musicians to Lesotho, along with the Queen Mother, the then Prime Minister and Prince Sobandla (E. Mthethwa, interview, Mbabane, 5 August 2014).[101] Mthethwa told me with pride how the musicians performed for the Queen Mother of Lesotho on this occasion and that it was his idea that they all play Miriam Makeba's '*Imbube*' on their traditional instruments[102]:

> … because it is a familiar song for the Lesotho people. The tune was also familiar. They ended up joining us. We sang that song: '*wimbube, wimbube, wimbube*' [he sings], with *makhweyane*: 'tah tah tah tah'. And then the violin, and the … all the things going like that. So it was a really nice song. Even Her Majesty, the Majesties, they came in and danced with us. (E. Mthethwa, interview, Mbabane, 5 August 2014).

Building on the long history of recording at Swazi Radio, Mthethwa (along with other radio presenters) applied for funds to build a new recording studio at the SBIS premises. The application was approved by government and ten million *emalangeni* [R10 million, $716500] was granted for the renovation of the SBIS studios. Though the studio has now been built and furnished, Mthethwa admitted that his call for a set of regulations regarding how the studio is used have fallen on deaf ears. Much of the recording hours are dedicated to bigger gospel and vocal groups from around Swaziland, and in our interview, Mthethwa claimed to have been side-lined by the popular gospel agents, regarding the running of the studio (E. Mthethwa, interview, Mbabane, 5 August 2014).

Despite this, in 2014, Mthethwa was enthusiastic about recording some of the older *makhweyane* players again and offered the musicians who form the basis of this research a day to record. With the help of Vusi Sibandze, I organised for as many musicians as possible to come to Mbabane to have a chance to record a song in the newly-completed SBIS studios on 24 July 2014. For some musicians, this was the first time their music was being recorded, and for others, such as Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula (who was first recorded by Gideon Vilakazi and Edward Mthethwa in the 1970s), this would be a welcome return to SBIS. All

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[100] These tape recordings are currently stored in offices at SBIS. At the time of writing, they had yet to be processed and restored.
[101] It is unclear who was the Prime Minister at the time of this trip, as Mthethwa did not specify when this trip took place. It is likely to have been either Sishayi Nxumalo or the current Prime Ministers Barnabas Sibusiso Dlamini.
[102] The song '*Imbube*' was in fact composed by the South African musician Solomon Linda and not Miriam Makeba, as stated by Edward Mthethwa in this interview (E. Mthethwa, interview, Mbabane, 5 August, 2014).

the musicians who partook in this SBIS recording went on to be a part of the *Bashayi Bengoma* ensemble and for many this was the first occasion where their music was shared with the group. The fieldnote excerpt below describes the experience of recording at SBIS on the 24th of July 2014 (drawn from the fieldnote entitled "SBIS Recording Sessions: SBIS, Mbabane 24 July 2014").

24 July 2014

I found everyone in Studio 1, which was an enormous rectangular studio, clean and well maintained. From what I could see, Gogo Mphila was playing into a microphone, facing the side of the room. Inside, (once she had finished), I found Edward and a young helper had positioned three mics in a row and everyone else had settled on the floor at various points, with water bottles, handbags and naartjies [citrus fruit] I had purchased to keep them going. At some point in the proceedings, Vusi and I started chatting to a lady who works at Swazi Radio and seemed to present a children's radio show. Vusi knew her and they were having some type of argument. She included me in the conversation without introducing herself and said that hearing the bow players on radio for kids was really important. She explained how she is part of the Lutsango *(women's regiment) with the Queen Mother, and that she does charity work as well. She talked about how, in terms of skills training and unemployment, children needed to realise that music could be a career too. She walked off to speak in siSwati to the musicians who were all sitting in a line and was encouraging them, stating that they must play at national festivals. She walked past me explaining in English that they needed to perform more and she ended with: "but for free of course, there is no money!" and turned on her heel to leave.*

Figure 25 Bhemani Magagula (in traditional attire), Khokhiwe Mphila, and Sonile Sifundza waiting to start recording at SBIS (24 July 2014).

Figure 26 Sonile Sifundza plays makhweyane during the SBIS recording session. Mkhulu Bhemani is seated behind her (24 July 2014).

[…] Once in the studio, everyone got a chance to play two or three songs and though it was uncomfortable at times, everyone played well and it seemed to be a good experience. Gogo Sifundza, who has only started playing again recently, played and sang really well. Make Shongwe sang beautifully and plays the loudest but at some point turned her head away from the mic and seemed to just start singing to herself as she would in her little room, back in eMsahweni. Mkhulu Magagula continually broke off his playing and started

> *talking as he usually does (Mkhulu also kept saying rude words and things Vusi and the engineers told me were not appropriate for radio), complaining about how he was running out of breath and how he is too old. No one really smiled whilst playing and I felt concerned that this experience was nerve-wracking for most, but in the car on the way back home, Gogo Mphila, Make Shongwe and Mkhulu Magagula chatted about how they were thankful this day had happened and I felt sad about how the engineers had not allowed us to listen to back to the recordings due to the lack of time available for everyone to play in the studio. When we dropped Gogo Sifundza at her home in eBuhleni, she got out of the back of the car singing a newly composed* makhweyane *song which she had worked out on the journey home, about how she could die she was so happy, as she had gone to record at Swazi radio.*

The field-note vignette above highlights many themes in the power relations between individual instrumentalists and bigger cultural 'players' and institutions, like SBIS national radio. The unnamed woman in conversation with Sibandze before the recording began, I was told in retrospect, was high up within the women's regiments, close to the Queen Mother. She stated that it was important for young people to understand the career and earning potential in the arts and yet followed this with a firm statement that these traditional musicians cannot expect payment for their craft. These contradictory statements have since been mirrored by other cultural bureaucrats and politicians in passing conversations and in the press, showing a distinct lack of understanding and empathy towards working musicians, amongst both the older and younger generations.

This vignette also gives insight into the performance-related and technical realities when bringing elderly musicians with no or little recording experience into studio: musicians turned away from microphones while singing, started and stopped playing informally, and when not recording, chatted whilst sitting around the edge of the large studio room. That said, the formality and importance of performing at Swazi radio and the act of recording at this hallowed institution was not lost on the players. For someone like Sonile Sifundza, who had only recently restarted playing *makhweyane,* to have the opportunity to play at SBIS was an important creative milestone which she commemorated by composing a new *makhweyane* song documenting and reflecting on the experience as mentioned above.

After this session, the recorded songs were scheduled to be played on air during Mthethwa's weekly radio show the following Thursday. All the musicians present were informed of this and were reminded by Mthethwa, Sibandze and myself in advance to tune in to hear themselves play. After the first Thursday show (when their music was not broadcast),

I contacted Mthethwa to find out what had happened to our agreement and he informed me that the hard drive upon which all the recording session stems had been saved seemed to have been corrupted immediately afterwards. He assured me that the problem was being solved and sadly, two years later, at the time of writing, there have been no further developments. Surprisingly, the musicians' initial excitement at having performed at SBIS was only slightly dampened by the loss of a full day's recordings and not hearing themselves broadcast on radio.

Despite the frustrations that arise when large bureaucratic organisms meet individual creative practitioners, Swazi national radio holds a prominent place in the aural environments of people in Swaziland (especially those in rural areas without television access). As the global North rediscovers the value of radio broadcast through new and diverse forums and podcasts, radio in Swaziland has maintained its integral position in homes across the country and in society broadly. With regards *makhweyane* players, radio has provided musical inspiration, with many musicians arranging local popular or religious songs, disseminated via radio, for performance on their instruments. An example of this would be the traditional wedding song '*Akuna'nkomo*' (There are no cattle) or the popular religious song '*Nase Manzini Abilayo*' (both favoured by Gogo Khokhiwe Mphila and Mkhulu Moses "Phayinaphu" Mncina in their duo configuration). Another way in which radio has stimulated and contributed to musical praxis amongst *makhweyane* players was seen when the large group of traditional instrumentalists came together to organise a performance for the annual Bushfire International Arts Festival. The assembled musicians were able to collaborate due to shared known repertory such as the songs mentioned before, Lutsango regimental songs and simpler songs such as Mncina's '*Sengiyahamba Mfana*' (discussed in Chapter Two).

Whilst radio holds this prime position in the homes, ears and imaginations of these musicians, SBIS remains a large, struggling, bureaucratic institution. As an arm of the state, it contributes to community, performing the nation, through language, content and sounds, and yet, it can trip up if one examines the back-end of its infrastructure: amidst lost digital sessions and neglected, dusty tapes. Fanon describes radio as a technical instrument situated amidst the accentuated "negative and positive coefficients" of colonialism (1965:73). These field experiences of SBIS within the lives of *makhweyane* musicians and as an instrument engaging these musicians demonstrate the complex, inefficiency and simultaneous fragile success of this enacted cultural technology in its nationalist, broadcasting and archiving project.

Recordings as transmissive strategies in contemporary urban practice

Having considered how the *makhweyane* functions as accompaniment ('radio') physically and metaphorically through the lives of players and how the technology of radio does the same, I now ask how recordings feature in the lives of contemporary musicians. When investigating the nature of *makhweyane* music and the place held by this instrument in contemporary Swaziland, common discursive tropes have become apparent. These are evident in conversations with musicians, Arts and Culture council representatives, government policy, and in the occasional portrayal of this music by the media in Swaziland. *Makhweyane* music is considered to be rare and vulnerable, and in need of support. It is considered to be a woman's music, and is seen as part of a rural cultural archetype.

Looking at the cases of two young bow players in particular, this section focuses on how, amidst other performative and creative action, the use of recordings can disrupt tropes of dwindling interest and slim cultural transmission. I explore the spaces in which perceptions of the *makhweyane* arise: as a traditional, rural exemplar; and as a vulnerable cultural practice. Using testimonial reflections and anecdotes from two of the rare young *makhweyane* players, I ask how, in Swaziland, with few remaining players left, young musicians are learning to play but also, how one might subvert common discourses surrounding this instrument by using recordings and "*sandla sakho*" – one's own hand in composing and playing. Both Thobile "Makhoyane" Magagula and Temalangeni Dlamini (two younger generation *makhweyane* musicians) are doing this, each in her own way.

Figure 27 Temalangeni Dlamini playing a makhweyane *made by Bhemani Magagula at her family home in Mbabane (7 December 2015).*

Temalangeni Dlamini is a young *makhweyane* player who started learning to play recently. Dlamini is a teenage student at the Bahai High School just outside Mbabane and began her musical studies by learning the guitar. She likes pop singers like Taylor Swift and before she started to play *makhweyane* under the guidance of her teacher (my colleague and fellow acting coordinator of the Swaziland Traditional Music Association) Vusi Sibandze, she had never heard the instrument played before. Due to her being based in Mbabane and without being able to travel to the elderly *makhweyane* players in the rural areas, Dlamini's education has, so far, involved learning *makhweyane* songs, with her teacher Vusi Sibandze, off historic recordings, adapting them to match her ability. The following is a transcription of the original version of the lyrics of '*Bashiye balele*' (I left them sleeping) recorded by David Rycroft in between 1972 and 1973.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">***Bashiye Balele***[103]
Unknown composer
1972/3</td></tr>
<tr><td>

Ngibashiye balele, maye Silolo
Ngibashiye balele, ntsanga yetfu
Ngibashiye balele, maye Silolo
Ngibashiye balele, bontsanga yetfu
Ngidunduzeleni, ye nine bandunduzi
Ngidunduzeleni, yela Silolo
Ngendza ngimncane, maye bobabe
Mine ngendze ngimncane, bontsanga yetfu
Mine ngendze ngimncane, maye bobabe
Mine ngendze ngimncane, bontsanga yetfu
Ngiwadla akangeni emabele kaboJalam

Ngiwadla akangeni kabontsanga yetfu
Ngiwadla akangeni emabele kaboJalam
Ngiwadla akangeni kabontsanga yetfu
Ngibashiye balele maye Silolo
Ngidunduzeleni maye Silolo
Ngidunduzeleni yeLasukati

</td><td>

I left them sleeping, Silolo
I left them sleeping, my age-mate
I left them sleeping, Silolo
I left them sleeping, my age-mate
Lull me to sleep, supporters
Lull me to sleep, Silolo
I got married so young, my fathers
Me, I got married so young, my age-mates
I got married so young, my fathers
Me, I got married so young, my age-mates
I eat sorghum at Jajam's [husband's] place but I am thinning
I eat but it doesn't enter, at my age-mates' place
I eat but it doesn't enter, at Jalam's place
I eat but it doesn't enter, at my age-mates' place
I left them sleeping, Silolo
Lull me to sleep, Silolo
Lull me to sleep, Lasukati [one of the helpers]

</td></tr>
</table>

'*Bashiye Balele*' is a composition by an unnamed musician recorded by David Rycroft during his fieldwork in Swaziland in 1972 and 1973. The lyrics of this song speak of a young girl who was married at a very young age, leaving her age mates "sleeping" – the implication being that she is now a married woman and working hard at her marital home while her friends continue with their lives. In this song, the transition has not been easy for the

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[103] An audio recording of this song, recorded by David Rycroft, is supplied with this dissertation.

protagonist: the stress of her new predicament has meant she is losing weight as signified by the text *"Ngiwadla akangeni emabele kaboJalam"* ('*kaboJalam*' refers to the young girl's new husband). Dlamini's arrangement of "Bashiye Balele" using a simplified *makhweyane* struck pattern but in a 10/8 time signature is shown in Figure 28 below, whilst the original, performed by an unknown musician and recorded by Rycroft, weaves a more intricate rhythmic motif upon which the lyrics sit. The below transcriptions show both the original version of this song and Dlamini's modified version.[104]

Bashiye balele [excerpt] – performer unknown
(recorded by David Rycroft)

Figure 28 'Bashiye balele' *excerpt, performer unknown. The quality of this recording makes the overtone engagement of this performance difficult to hear.*

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[104] For all the staff notation transcriptions within this dissertation, I have chosen to present the *makhweyane* music in the closest approximate key. I have done this to show the variety of tunings that contemporary performers use.

'*Bashiye balele*' [excerpt] – Temalengeni Dlamini[105]

Figure 29 'Bashiye balele' *arrangement by Temalangeni Dlamini, performed on 7 December 2015.*

The most common perception of the *makhweyane* and other traditional instruments (such as *sitolotolo*, the concertina, *sitontolo* mouthbow) is that this music is "from the past" and this rhetoric has been discussed in earlier chapters. This formulation has two aspects to it: the musicians who play are always elderly, but they also perform a static 'traditional' canon with little new composition. Dlamini describes walking around town with the *makhweyane* in hand on some occasions:

> Whenever I had to walk with it in town sometimes you find people asking you, 'do you play this?' You're like 'Yes I play' and they'd be like, 'No, it's for old people' and I was like, 'No, no, no, no. I like it'. […] …they are always shocked, 'Ah, you are young but you play this instrument. Can you play for us? Do you know how to play?' Sometimes I even have to hide the stick because when I walk around with it people will always stop me and they'll want me to play so sometimes I have to hide the stick and say, 'Ah, no, I left the stick at home'. (T. Dlamini, interview, Mbabane, 7 December 2015)

Despite queries and bemusement from her classmates and passers-by, Dlamini states that she is interested in learning as much as she can about the *makhweyane*. The relative lack of young players and the pervasive rhetoric (sometimes contradictory) in Swaziland that "older" culture is important, has resulted in numerous advantageous performance opportunities for this young player and more resultant airtime for the instrument. Dlamini has performed at siSwati language and culture celebration days and at

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[105] An audio recording of this song is supplied with this dissertation.

various venues in Mbabane and Ezulwini (T. Dlamini, interview, Mbabane, 7 December 2015).

Thobile "Makhoyane" Magagula is from the generation above Temalangeni and is in her thirties. She is one part of the duo *Spirits Indigenous* with poet and singer Bongiwe Dlamini. Thobile grew up between Piggs Peak and Luve and states that she was born to perform. She describes how her obsession with dancing and music began at an early age:

> There was, in Piggs Peak, there was a shop, yaBhozo. […] It was a record bar there. Every time they sent me to the shop, if I am alone, not with my sister or not with anybody, I'll just take my time out and dance. I used to feel good when everyone is just there, watching me and clapping and I would just go down. I think I was about six… (T. Magagula, interview, eMpolonjeni, 7 December 2015)

Magagula honed her stage skills in the People's Education Theatre (PET) in Mbabane and in various local bands. She grew up idolising the music of South Africa songstress Brenda Fassie, and American R&B singers like Aaliyah, and R. Kelly. In the case of both Tema Dlamini and Thobile Magagula, existing recordings of the *makhweyane* have been educational triggers. Whilst Dlamini has learned from listening to historic field recordings of *makhweyane* music, Magagula has her first encounter with the sounds of the *makhweyane* listening to the music of the eclectic Swazi musician, Smiles Makama, (specifically his album *The Source*).

Smiles Makama is a multi-instrumentalist and innovative instrument maker who, until recently, was based in Amsterdam.[106] Though born in Mozambique, Makama grew up in Swaziland and is a Swazi national. He began his musical life playing drums and guitar. He describes his initial musical experiences:

> Because my father, here at home, before they built this kind of house, he had a big mud house and he used to have festivals of all these medicine people but they would only play drums. I was really afraid of drums. They used to scare me. I would hide in my bed, and my mother would say, what is my father doing now! But moving from there, I became a real drummer. But to play seriously, my first instrument was the guitar. I used to listen to all kinds of music from all over the world. Seriously play? The start of high school. We had dreams of playing the best North African, African music. Then we went to school, some went to university – we split up. The ones that remained, we started to design this traditional African music. We learned how to make marimbas. We learned how to make all these *makhweyane*, flutes. We'd get

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[106] Makama plays the *makhweyane*, *mbira*, guitar, bass, saxophone, and flute.

some traditional dances and we learned so many songs in Swaziland that you could pick up and play with a band. It was fun. We did just that – pick up songs, from the medicine people, songs from the Sibhaca dancers, songs from the reed dances, from the old ladies… We just taught ourselves. It was easy to draw from what we know, from rock and roll, pop, African music and draw from everything, and use a traditional instrument to say what it wants to say. But Swaziland was a really great source, especially in terms of *makhweyane*, it was a rich resource. Like, the education was free. […]

Having heard one of the most notable performer-researchers in southern African research, Andrew Tracey (son of Hugh Tracey), play music, the young musician, Makama, was inspired:

Do you know the Andrew Tracey family? So I saw Andrew, it was at the Bushfire place. The parents of Jiggs, invited me there. So, they asked us to come and open for them because we were playing a bit of marimba, *makhweyane*. They said, come and open for this great band. …. They started, I said, my god, you see, this is confirming my idea because if we don't do this, they are going to do it. We are going to listen to African music played by white people! I was so provoked. And they played beautiful instruments, it was so powerful that first time. I was by the window when they were practicing, completely traumatized. Then they played a little bit and I kept on watching and I was blown away. I never forgot Andrew Tracey. So he was my big inspiration. He showed me. I saw him in Amsterdam and he said, "Yeah, where is your instrument?" That was the last time I saw him…

A founding member of the Swaziland Musicians Association (SWAMA) in his youth, Makama moved to Johannesburg where he co-founded the marimba ensemble, Azuma, in Soweto. He then moved to the Netherlands where he worked different jobs whilst playing and recording music. He recorded his album *The Source* during this time but had recorded before this period with the Azuma and Calabash outfits.[107] In an interview he described how the album came into being:

So, *The Source* is not released in Africa. It is a very big disadvantage because it belongs here. My family in England say, "Oh Smiles, your album is very expensive!" I don't even get a cent from it. Did I handle business wrong? The guy who did it found me playing in a market. I was new in Europe, I had no work. I was trying to advertise myself around so that if people liked it, they liked it. This guy had a studio, but he changed… he wanted to take it all for

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[107] The band Calabash featured Smiles Makama and Kyks Shongwe (with studio contributions by Loyd Ross). The band's "Zanka" album was produced by Ian Osrin (Osrin n.d.).

himself […] I stopped recording, I was disappointed because I trusted him. […] He tried to go get international distribution for it. The African recording companies were confused because they had never heard *makhweyane* recorded in that way. When they heard this, they didn't know what they were hearing. They were just blown away and they didn't know what it was. How could they classify it? Finally, they told him, no, this is not African music. So the new age companies said, "no, this is new age music". So they took the music, they said to the man, go and find the artist, we will give you so much, thousands, this is for the artist to get himself ready for a tour. [laughs] The guy ate all the money. So *The Source* was produced. They said they didn't know what it was. […] The music could not be indentified as African, it was mystic. I used to make a joke, maybe I was thousands of years forward. Nobody understood me. I am too much in the future. But I could not accept that this was an ancient instrument, belonging to the past. Because it produces sounds and rhythms, that appeal to today's world. But I said, let it be heard. (S. Makama, interview, Msunduza, 7 October)

Smiles has, since, returned to Swaziland with his musical ideas and his innovative *makhweyane*-derived "Smilerphone" instrument (also featured on The Source and in other recordings). The "Smilerphone" consists of a series of *makhweyane* tuned to different notes, and fitted vertically on a bamboo frame creating a diatonic *makhweyane* "harp" (discussed in detail in Chapter Five). When Thobile Magagula described her first hearing of Makama's *makhweyane* playing on *The Source*, she stated:

I have never heard the sound sounding like that and I remember that I wanted to play that instrument just for me to have that sound…. To keep that sound close to me. (T. Magagula, interview, eMpolonjeni, 7 December 2015)

Thobile Magagula's song '*Kubindvwa kobonwa*' (To be silent is to see/ Act like there is nothing wrong) draws upon the overtone-rich sparsity of Makama's music in this original composition. She described this song as emerging from a time where she was more of an "angry artist", frustrated with the lack of opportunity and poor organisation within the creative scene in Swaziland (T. Magagula, interview, eMpolonjeni, 7 December 2015). The lyrics draw on a common siSwati idiom and describe how one has to act as if there is nothing wrong when you are troubled by the actions of others.

Figure 30 Thobile Magagula at her home in eMpolonjeni (7 December 2015) (Photo credit: Vusi Sibandze).

She bought her first instrument at the market in Manzini but was unable to reproduce the sounds Smiles Makama had made. On that album, he performed on his own invented instrument, the "Smilerphone", constructed out of numerous *makhweyane* instruments, tuned differently and placed above each other on a wooden frame. Having heard rumours that two *makhweyane* players sometimes passed through Mbabane, Magagula used to carry her *makhweyane* purposefully around the centre of town in order to lure out these musicians – crossing the same physical terrain as Temalangeni Dlamini, bow in hand; treading the same paths across the dusty bus rank and busy vegetable markets – looking to learn more. She stated:

> And at that time, even the one who introduced me to Smiles' music was away now overseas so I couldn't go to her. And then, I was always carrying this instrument because I heard someone say there is an old woman who is around town and another old man sometimes around town, they are always carrying these instruments and they can teach me. So I was… sometimes I would take it and go to town. In case I see them because I didn't know when they are coming, hoping that I would just get time to play with them. (T. Magagula, interview, eMpolonjeni, 7 December 2015)

Magagula's quest to learn how to play *makhweyane* took her to the hills of Envuma (Hhohho province), where she had learned that Sidumo Tsela was a practising musician who she might learn from. This interview excerpt describes the experience of befriending Tsela in order to hear him play *makhweyane*.

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In the rurals, there is this home that you know there [are] people gathering buying *umcombotsi* [home-brewed beer] there, maybe the whole day. So, me, I saw a guy carrying a *makhweyane*, an old man… I went in. Ay, he was giving me attitude. I remember he just didn't feel me, you know? So I bought *umcombotsi*… *sikali*. And then I just sat there next to him. I said I want to share with him. He said, "Why?"…. like, giving me attitude, "Why?" I said "because I like, I want you to play". Because I asked him to, to… if I can touch. He said no. I said, "Okay… Old man's giving me attitude". He is being cheeky. He started telling me "Do I know where you were sleeping? Now you want to touch my instrument. I don't even know who you were sleeping with." In siSwati, he was very rude, you know. [...] Putting me in my place. And it made me feel like, uh… okay. But I was like, "Ey, but if I could get him to play." Because when we were coming, he was playing but then he stopped when we arrived there. I don't know. There was also just too much attention also, unnecessary attention, because me, I wanted him and then when I sat there, I bought *s'kali* [alcohol]. When I got *s'kali* and then, ha! He got… he started to get interested – where am I staying here, where am I from… drinking with me and then I kept buying and I wanted him to play more because me, I was still learning and then mine broke [wire] while I was still finding the sound you know. So, I wanted to hear except because it was my second time to be hearing it except from the recording… so I wanted to hear another version, you know. I wanted to hear if it was the same as the Smiles one. It was not, hey? [*laughs*] It was not but it was also special… his. He played and I kept buying *umcombotsi* for us to just chill and he acquainted me. We were good buddies and he gave me the instrument, you know… but he said if I want it, I must make sure I buy him [a drink] before I leave, I buy him another *s'kali* and then he just gave [it to] me. [...] Yeah, I brought it to Mbabane and it was nice and tight [...] and I was very careful with it after that until today. (T. Magagula, interview, eMpolonjeni, 7 December 2015)

Magagula's experience of enticing sound and knowledge out of this older musician draws on numerous themes: the resourcefulness of younger players in developing their *makhweyane* playing, her position as an unfamiliar woman in a local drinking venue and in relation to this older man, and Tsela's protectiveness and self-awareness of the value of his art. In 2014 before interviewing Magagula, I went in search of Sidumo Tsela, having also heard rumours of a *makhweyane* player in the Envuma area but was disappointed to learn that he had passed away some years before, leaving his widow (unwell and destitute when I met her) and a sole grandchild.

Once Magagula had a functioning instrument, she began to experiment with creating sound on the *makhweyane* herself in a holicipatory fashion. She describes her first experiences of creating sound:

> Then I started to play. The sound was there and then I started to hear that there is many sounds coming from this thing. I'm hitting this thing but … because me, I was just playing. I knew… and then, I knew that there were more. I saw, I saw… um, Mkhulu moving but because I was used to just playing the sound was there and then I was like, "ah, by the way he was moving, like…". And when I did that, I was like, "ah…so many sounds here. Wow. What is this that I am carrying?" [...] And I would go… every night, when everyone is asleep and everything is still, then I am at peace also with myself, I would just take it…. Because at night it sounds… even today, it sounds very different, the *makhweyane*. I can play it for hours at night, especially if there are no neighbours. [...] You just go with the sound because it is so beautiful. I think it is because everything is quiet and it is not mic-ed and it is just authentic as it is. (T. Magagula, interview, eMpolonjeni, 7 December 2015)

Years later, Magagula had gained some repute but was still a self-taught musician. She found herself at a performance with three older *makhweyane* players and turned to Mkhulu Sagila Matse who was present. She asked him how she could improve her playing technique after years of playing to herself (as a holicipator). His advice to her was to trust "her hand" – to keep using her ear and to avoid learning from others whilst developing her own creative voice:

> Mkhulu Sagila said to me, "You know what, if you want to start, taking, taking, fetching there… you are going to kill your talent. He said, "You're going to kill your…"– he made it like "*sandla sakho*" [your hand] – "*Utobulala sandla sakho*" [you will kill your hand]. (T. Magagula, interview, eMpolonjeni, 7 December 2015)

Conclusion

Radio and recording, and the idea of music as accompaniment are integral themes amongst *makhweyane* musicians today. From the desire to record albums and songs, and to hear these on SBIS national radio, to the quiet moments when a musician craves company, the *makhweyane* continually engages as and with technology and its surrounding implications. Recordings remain of crucial interest to musicians as a mode of income-generation, creative expression, education, and cultural preservation. Smiles Makama stated: "The most

important thing to do now is record. Because we are going to be forgotten. The world will forget guys like me. So, we have to record. For the future. Music is getting lost." (S. Makama, interview, Msunduza, 7 October 2016).

Through song case studies and field experiences, this chapter serves to outline the ways in which radio, transmission and iterative feedback interact through the sound (and recorded sound) of this instrument and the actions of these musicians. In the short history of documented Swazi bow music and mirrored in the Makama quote above, ideas of musical bows being vulnerable instruments, usually rooted in the rural areas, on the verge of extinction are common. David Rycroft writes about one of the unnamed singers whom he recorded during his fieldwork:

> The young woman who performed these two songs was at that time living and working in the town of Mbabane, a long way from her home. But she had brought her instrument with her and still enjoyed playing it, although musical bows are seldom used in town. Her songs are not primarily intended as entertainment for other people. She sings quietly to herself about her family and friends far away, interspersed with phrases, which commonly occur in songs of this kind, such as: "O for the fresh breeze on yonder hills! O for the wide open plains!" (Rycroft 1976:180).

The two younger *makhweyane* musicians, Temalangeni and Thobile, walking across town years apart, represent two alternative transmissive modes of creative praxis. On the one hand, Temalangeni learns this instrument through her educational institution – not through any devised syllabus but through her teacher, Vusi Sibandze (current acting coordinator of the Swaziland Traditional Music Association, and long-time agent and helper of musicians) who has a particular interest in traditional instruments. Through this mode of learning, Tema has to transcribe and workshop lyrics and bow patterns from historic recordings, and then arrange the song to match her own ability. Thobile, on the other hand, inspired by the captured sounds of the Smiles Makama's *The Source*, was moved to possess this sound for herself. This listening moment captivated and then guided her as she played to and for herself, developing her own creative "hand".

This chapter came to a close exploring how the younger generation have utilised sound recordings to inform their own practice in different ways. The musical paths of these two new generation bow players show that alternative transmissive strategies for urban musicians are already being devised, and coupled with the matrix of this 'Swazi culture', could easily encourage more young musicians to find their own "hand" with this musical bow.

Like the valued cultural technology that is radio, the *makhweyane* provides a platform and medium for expression and sonic companionship; carrying the sound of the *balozi* or the "talking spirits" in different ways for its players and any listeners.

CHAPTER FIVE

Composing, music-making, and the creative voice in *makhweyane* music

Introduction

When looking at bow-related studies from the rest of the world and specifically southern Africa, there are few studies on musicians as innovators and diverse artistic agents of change within their respective traditions. In most cases there is so little information available on these instruments that the emphasis for researchers is often on codifying the musical craft, and curating the information from these slender sources so that we might appreciate these so-called vulnerable musical practices. As mentioned in Chapter One, this dissertation argues for reframing bow music research with a focus on individual musicians and the artistic decisions they make in their music.

Earlier chapters have sketched out the national, cultural context of the *makhweyane* and the processes by which musicians learn to play and create stories around and with the instrument. This chapter examines composition, the use of variation, and innovation in *makhweyane* music-making with cognisance of the dichotomy between 'tradition' and the individual. It asks how players approach and reflect upon their compositional processes and how they create music on the *makhweyane* bow.

In his book *May it fill up your soul: Experiencing Bulgarian music*, Timothy Rice describes the musicians in his research as follows:

> Caught between forces of tradition and modernity, individuals negotiated meanings and practices for themselves, simultaneously acknowledging the authority of the Party while maintaining, adjusting, and questioning their relationship to their heritage. (1994:19)

Though critiqued for using his study of only two musicians to understand broader characteristics of Bulgarian music, it is exactly from this position that Rice argues for the importance of dynamism and individualism in the music of these players.

In Swaziland, due to the peripheral position of *makhweyane* music and the small group of musicians who play this instrument, the players are similarly situated precariously between the individual and the social (Rice and Ruskin 2012:300). Though cultural essentialism has been reproached in recent ethnomusicological thought, when resources are scarce and musicians few, a delicate position is unveiled. Scholars strive to achieve a balance between bringing musical and social information to light while retaining the particulars of the individual musical approaches studied and this is what this dissertation has aimed to do.

As discussed at the close of Chapter Four, Mkhulu Sagile Matse advised the young *makhweyane* player, Thobile "Makhoyane" Magagula, to find her "own hand" musically. By examining differing approaches to form, function, and sound, this chapter investigates how *makhweyane* players have developed their "*sandla sakho*" (their 'own hand'). With an instrument of such rudimentary construction, the invisible criteria by which these composers create and their personalised artistic stimuli made this inquiry into the music-making amongst *makhweyane* players in Swaziland challenging.

This chapter investigates how music-making, composition and experimentation are engaged in the performance of *makhweyane* music in contemporary Swaziland. It opens by contextualising composition and innovation within southern African ethnomusicological enquiry. It goes on to examine the dialectic of the individual holicipator in bow music and the formation of creative paradigms. I outline the musical considerations inherited from David Rycroft's analysis of *makhweyane* music and extend this to consider how contemporary composers of this music employ textual variation, improvisation, arranging, aspects of rhythm, melodic overtone design and the voice in their music. This chapter ends with a discussion of the "compositional conversations" conducted as part of my fieldwork, where I composed my own *makhweyane* songs and played a *makhweyane* song of my own for musicians and interviewees as a method of generating conversation around musical characteristics and preferences in this music.

Holicipation, composition and the individual

> *Makhweyane* you can play alone. It's such a powerful instrument, you can
> play a whole concert alone, with one string and the chest.
> (S. Makama, interview, Msunduza, 7 October 2016)

Having contextualised *makhweyane* players within the broader national cultural conversation, historic and more recent modes of learning in earlier chapters, this chapter turns inward to the compositional processes and outcomes of individuals in *makhweyane* music today. It is this very "inwardness" and musical intimacy that has drawn me to these instruments as a performer and is an important part of this research inquiry. Here this study moves away from notions that "the weight of the past predetermines individual behaviour and limits the areas of choice" (Mbembe 2001:10), and rather continues to uncover the individual in this music, beyond any easy "universal grammars" (ibid.:9).

In 2006 Andrew Killick called for further investigation into individual music-making within ethnomusicology. He describes his term 'holicipation':

Solitary music-making for personal satisfaction is a widespread form of musical behaviour that has hitherto been neglected by ethnomusicologists and other students of music. By analogy with "participation" (taking part), this activity might be termed "holicipation" (taking the whole), in that, as the only performer and listener involved, the solitary music-maker personally experiences the whole of the musical event. (Killick 2006:273)

Kramer (1995) describes the "self-pleasuring performer" as a social institution but argues that music-making, in this way, can also serve as an entrance to private spaces, "in contrast to social" spaces (1995:232). "Self-delectative" musical practice has often been referred to in historic southern African musical research, as viewed in this early (and controversial) mention of it in Hugh Tracey's article 'The Social Role of African Music' (1954):

…There are undoubtedly temperamental differences between the tribes which are clearly reflected in their music. The more contemplative types play and sing a high proportion of self-delectative music; the more aggressive are inclined to be noisy and bombastic. (1954a:238)

This dated and prejudiced statement spawns the notion of "self-delectative" music-making in southern African music studies and it can be traced through the works of subsequent researchers. Percival Kirby describes young Zulu boys playing the *umtshingo* reed flute with reference to their solitary practice, and alluding to the intersection between musician, livestock, and space already discussed in Chapter Three:

Among the Zulu the *imitshingo* are played by the cattle-herds, who play to their cattle, and also signal to each other from hill to hill. The cattle recognize their herd's call and follow him, since cattle are led, not driven. The people formerly believed that the cattle would graze better when the *umtshingo* was played. (Kirby [1934, 1965] 2013:165)

Even in describing the early development of musical bows, Kirby posits the possible solitary nature of bow performance:

This practice has been observed among the Kalahari Bushmen. A hunter, after having made a kill, would, to pass the time while waiting for his companions to come up to him, lightly tap his bow-string with an arrow. (Kirby [1934, 1965] 2013:260)

In his broader writing on music across the continent, A. M. Jones in "African Music" highlights musical bows as "private instruments for personal enjoyment" (1943:16). The nostalgic pastoral imagery engaged in these texts signify the dated and simplistic modes of description characteristic of the patronising colonial gaze: tropes of young (usually) boys in the field playing whistles or flutes to themselves, with instruments that appear never to contribute to communal festivities, religious or community events – irresponsive musical

practices functioning within boundaries. Decades later, in arguing for a new focus, Killick's thinking also draws upon trope of the "herdsman" with a quotation from Christopher Small's *Musicking* (1998:201) describing a fictitious holicipatory scenario:

> A herdsman is playing his flute as he guards his flock in the African night. Alone with his flock, playing his flute with no one but himself and his animals to hear him, what relationships could he possibly be conjuring up, where there is no-one within earshot to whom he might be relating? Surely, there is nothing there but his own solitariness? (Killick 2006:296)

This quote is evidence of the entrenchment of this image across spheres and years when considering self-delectative musical performance. Yet, this imagery aside, Killick encourages us delve into the rich and diverse practice of holicipation by expanding the term, emphasizing that even holicipation is dependent on social and cultural conditions.

Heeding his call and despite its taint, I posit that although holicipation shares formal resonance with Hugh Tracey's "self-delectative" practice, it is time to revalue solitary musical practice and its complexities beyond simplistic, pre- and postcolonial-era, pastoral nostalgia. This chapter and indeed this dissertation aim to reframe "holicipation", in Swazi *makhweyane* music, as one of several important modes in which musicians learn, listen, play and compose in cities and fields, backyards and recording studios.

As discussed in Chapter Three, much of the musical transmission within *makhweyane* music amongst the older musicians occurred whilst taking care of livestock. Many players spend their lives playing to themselves (and occasionally their close neighbours) but this holicipation seems to in no way limit their responsiveness and ability to take part in communal musicking when the opportunity arises (as shown in the *Bashayi Bengoma* communal rehearsals and performances, Gogo Mphila's duo playing with Mkhulu Mncina and Thobile "Makhoyane" Magagula's collaboration with poets and live bands). The musicians in this study have spoken of and displayed much adaptability in different musical and performance scenarios and I argue that holicipation is an act that many of these musicians engage in regularly as well. This solitary creative practice takes numerous forms as players sing away heartache, play to the past, and compose for the present and future.

Before examining the diverse and innovative techniques and approaches that musicians have integrated into their playing, the term 'composition' bears some contemplation. Coming from the southern portion of Africa, the historiography of the term 'composition' has been rooted in racial divides, cultural hierarchies, and more recently has buoyed between different waves of musical thought. In her discussion of past perceptions of black South African choral music, Christine Lucia states:

> This is largely because the misinterpretations are tied to notions of composition that stem from the academy, rather than from the music in

question and its contexts. The move to classicise choral music in the post-Apartheid era - calling it '[s]erious music in an African context' (Khumalo, 2003/4 and 2005/6:13) - does historicise it in new ways, which is to be welcomed but this also brings with it the dangers of a formalist analytical discourse being applied in order to prove this music's (new) status as art music. (Lucia 2008:13)

The danger in using a loaded term such as 'composition' to denote the creation of music in a southern African context is, as Lucia warns, an invitation to read the creative expression through foreign (Western) musical paradigms. In siSwati, the term for composing (beyond the borrowed English term *kukhompasa*) is *kucamba* (in its infinitive form). *Kucamba* refers to creating something anew, innovating, as one would create or invent a new mathematical equation (V. Sibandze, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014) and this verb was used interchangeably with *kukhompasa* during my fieldwork.

In David Rycroft's 1968 LP liner notes, accompanying the recording "Swazi Vocal Music", he stated:

The composer of a song is praised but there are no professional song-makers. The names of composers who have contributed to the traditional repertoire are seldom remembered. (1968:2)

As with many 'folk' traditions, historic texts tell us that composers of songs are rarely remembered – the repertory swallows the work of individuals over time and songs are then considered 'traditional'. In the case of Swazi *makhweyane* music, the term 'traditional', always used when describing the musicians themselves as "*ema*-traditional artists", was attached to *makhweyane* songs during my interviews, but this term was heavily weighted towards the vocal music of the age-regiments, wedding music, or *Umhlanga* songs. When asked about the provenance of songs, the vast majority of players stated that they played their own original material. When they performed music they had not composed, it was either original songs taught to them by a relative (who was the composer) or an arrangement they had made of so-called 'traditional' or gospel songs from other contexts (*Umhlanga*, weddings, etc).

The term 'composition' is also largely associated with the interests of western musicology and classical music research, where the composer is lauded as a unique individual, a master. As Nettl states: "In the world of classical music, the act of creation, the person of the music's creator are the most important things that happen in addition to the existence of the canon" (Nettl 1995:19). Rice and Ruskin (2012) in their writing on the "individual" within musical ethnography outline the numerous but distinct frames employed by scholars when writing about individuals in music: as innovators, key figures, and to a lesser extent as average musicians or audience members. Decades ago, Mark Slobin wrote:

"We are all individual music cultures" (1993:ix) but southern African musical bow research has been slow to centre around the study of creative anomaly, versus accepted normative praxis, and this is perhaps related to dated salvage preoccupations.[108]

Ethnomusicology has long been interested in regularities (Nettl 2005:288). Here again in Western classical musicology, the idea of the canon alternately questions and compliments that of individual invention. Marcia Citron states: "Even though ideological values represented by a canon can be fairly static, individual members can change often" (2000:21). Within the field of ethnomusicology, the discussion often centres around authenticity and its construction. Bruno Nettl talks to ethnomusicological anomaly in his discussion of ordinary and exceptional musicians:

> Historians of Western music seem (at least on the surface) to be occupied
> principally with the work of individual musicians, their roles and contributions
> as persons, while ethnomusicologists have tended, though with a few notable
> exceptions, to be drawn to the anonymous. (2005:172)

In her 2008 article, Beverly L. Parker adjusts James Clifford's semiotic square pitting "art" with and against "culture" to fit the South African musical landscape. She states: "authentic artefacts [as opposed to masterpieces] [...] tend to be labelled and studied in relation to their anthropological, rather than aesthetic value: we see them as representative of cultural traditions..." (2008:61).[109] In an attempt to address this concern, Nettl's assertion that ethnomusicology can use biographical study to define types (and their variations) within a musical culture is useful but remains underdeveloped.

This "ethnomusicology of the individual" often neglects the study of how these "exceptional" musicians move beyond their respective canonical boundaries (Nettl 2005:174; Killick 2006:277) but what happens when there is such a limited number of players of an instrument that the title "exceptional" loses currency? What remains is a small community of creative practitioners making music in their own ways for their own enjoyment.

Compositional structures in contemporary *makhweyane* music

In this section, I explore the musical techniques, structures, and "conceptual spaces" at play in contemporary *makhweyane* music (Boden 2004:3). Drawing upon performances and recordings from my fieldwork, I trace the various musical articulations in this music through

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[108] When looking at musical bows, early writings about Princess Magogo and Nofinishi Dwyili frame these women as important female composers (Rycroft 1975/6, Dargie 1988, 2010). Dargie problematizes the concept of the 'composer' within isiXhosa music but describes Dywili as "one of the myriad of isiXhosa creators of music down the centuries" (Dargie 2010).

[109] I discuss Parker's use of Clifford's model in my Masters thesis titled 'Canon, authenticity and anomaly: Making sense of the sounds of the isiXhosa *umrhubhe* mouthbow' (Stacey 2012 – SOAS, University of London).

the themes of textual variation, improvisation, overtone engagement, rhythmic explorations, the use of voice, and organology in *makhweyane* songs. *Makhweyane* songs are not written down by their composers but are rather imbibed, or as Memory Biwa describes in her writing on embodied sound in the Dammann sound archive in Namibia: "The performers were therefore rendering something that they had recorded before in their bodies" (Biwa 2014). The body is engaged on numerous levels throughout the musicking process here and although there is little 'ethnotheoretical' terminology used to describe the compositional process, *makhweyane* musicians construct, memorise, develop, and embody their songs and sounds for performance (Feld et al. 2004:329).

Before engaging with the compositional and improvisational practices of said musicians, it is worth recalling what we know about the technical processes in *makhweyane* music. As mentioned in earlier chapters, *makhweyane* music is created from a struck rhythmic pattern on the bow, usually alternating the high and low open notes (fundamentals) created by the braced wire. Occasionally the third, stopped, fundamental is also used in this underlying rhythmic framework for variation. Whilst the hands are engaged in this more percussive musical act, the player moves the open mouth of the calabash resonator towards and away from the breast or chest to highlight and engage certain overtones created by the struck pattern. The overtone melody created by the calabash opening can mimic the vocal melody sung by the performer, or can provide an alternate, answering melodic phrase in between or in counterpoint with the foregrounded vocal melody. The performer usually sings above these instrumental textures, often leaving space for the bow to 'sing' in select moments.

David Rycroft's (1954, 1967) studies on Swazi and isiZulu music are built on the ethnomusicological models of the time. One gets little sense of the individual musician in his transcriptions and analyses, and there is more focus on tuning, tonality, and the sound production particular to the bow. In his 1954 article 'Tribal Style and Free Expression', Rycroft describes the Tonga [sic] bow songs (studied from a Gallotone recording) in terms of scales and mode, structure, melodic resolution, and phrase displacement. It is in this article that we first see his circular graphic representations of bow song structure (1954:19) which, though hard to navigate, bring to the fore the cyclical nature of the struck bow patterns and sung refrains in *makhweyane* music.
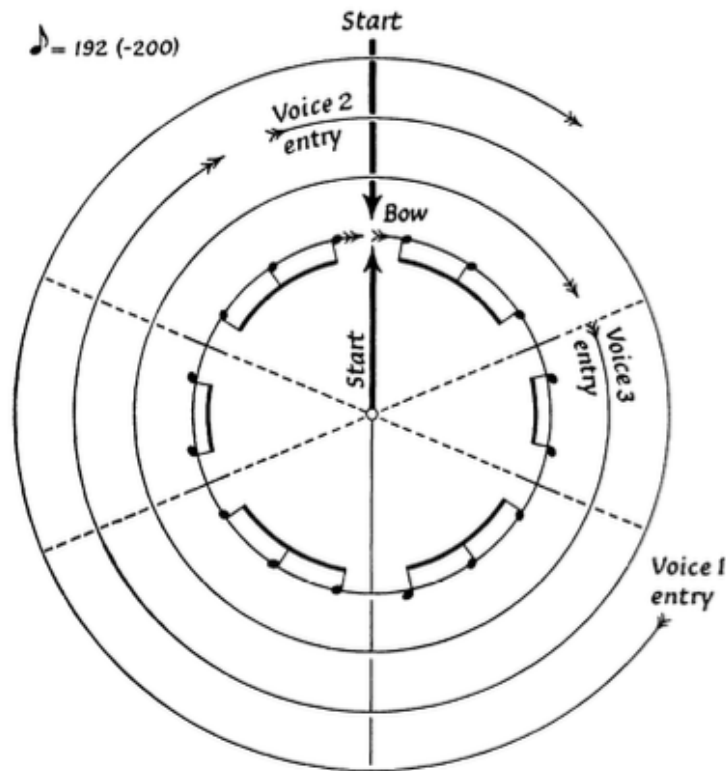
Figure 31 An example of David Rycroft's circular bow notation[110]

From his writings, we learn that *makhweyane* music is based around three tonal roots and "triadic chording", which he posits may have influenced the tonality of Swazi vocal polyphony (1976:3). Compositionally, he notes the importance of the final tone in the melodo-harmonic material of the six bow songs analysed in his 1954 article (1954:19). Elsewhere, his analysis of this vocal music highlights the importance of the "portamento" (sliding from one note to another) about which he states: "it is attributable largely to inherent gliding speech tones in the text, and to the pitch-lowering effect of voiced consonants which is prominent in all Nguni languages" (ibid). He states that in Swazi singing, there may be additional chromaticism, with singers occasionally alternating and emphasizing the difference between the major and minor third in any given context (1976:3). A good example of this chromaticism can be seen in the *Incwala* song '*Incaba kaNcofula*', discussed in Chapter Two (page 46).

In order to comprehend the musical decisions made by these musicians in the creation of their sounds and songs, I include transcriptions of this music (or excerpts thereof). These appear in staff notation but also as abstracted spectrograms (developed by myself as a performer) which place further importance on the overtone content, calabash practice but also the embodied memory-based aspects of the song. A spectrogram is defined as: "a visual representation of the concentrations of acoustic energy in a spoken or

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[110] This circular notation appears in Rycroft's article titled 'Nguni Vocal Polyphony' (Rycroft 1967:97).

sung utterance, from the lowest to the highest harmonic resonances" (Feld et al. 2004:335).[111] Though conventional acoustic spectrograms give us a sense of the rich resonance in bow music, their detailed visual representation is hard to decipher and so, less useful for performers. For this reason and in an attempt to contribute to the conversation about transcription for musical bows, I include my own system of transcription which forefronts the action of the calabash and the overtones whilst playing, whilst simultaneously acknowledging this music as memory-based with bodily experience at its core. In this way, these representations foreground the role that overtones and embodied practice serve in the playing and listening practices of this music. In my notation, the spectral, overtone engagement is depicted on the x-axis of this representation along with the calabash positioning (1st partial, 2nd partial, and so forth). Time (rhythmic considerations) are laid out on the y-axis. Only one or two struck-pattern cycles are represented in this system as performers play from memory. These abstracted spectrograms indicate the fundamental and overtone content of a bow song but are not intended to be read within the framework of a western "work" (with notation from start to end).

Using these graphic examples and other descriptions, I outline the heterogeneous compositional methods and creative techniques involved in constructing and performing *makhweyane* music. For the purpose of this argument, I explore musical practices in the following six subsections: improvisation and textual variation, arrangements, rhythmic devices, function and figurative language, overtone engagement and the voice, and organological experimentation.

1. *Improvisation and textual variation*

The musicians in this study demonstrated fluidity in their musical practice. This can be seen in the functions of songs, and how they feature in their everyday lives and in their pasts, and also in how the music is held together structurally. One such way in which variety can be viewed is in the differing forms used in contemporary *makhweyane* music: from lengthy, through-composed narratives, to verse-chorus structures and minimal textual and textural cycles. Some songs, such as Gogo Sonile Sifundza's candid song '*Etjeni lembube*' (The rock of the lion), contain only two lyrical lines which are repeated numerous times:

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[111] In his transcriptions of isiXhosa bow songs, David Dargie used modified western notation: with vertically stacked staff notation. Each system contained represented the fundamental (struck bow) pattern on a staff, with overtone melodies on parallel staffs above, and various vocal melodies at the top. Although he used staff notation, the dense vertical layout of his notation mirrors a spectrogram in some ways and depicts the rich overlapping frequencies of any moment in a bow song. An example of this can be seen in his transcription of the *uhadi* bow song '*Nontyolo*' (1988:80).

Etjeni lembube, ngiyawulala nabani?

Walile wakami, ngiyawulala nabani?

At the rock of the lion, who will I sleep with?

My husband refused me, who will I sleep with?[112]

In understanding how improvisation and variation can be used in *makhweyane* music, I draw upon the writing of Juniper Hill (2012) and Nick Gray (2011) in their discussions around creation and innovation. Hill, in her discussion of improvisation and oral composition amongst Finnish folk musicians, describes three categories of compositional techniques: "playing with patterns (used in melodic improvisation, variation, and oral composition); playing with tools (used in arranging and ensemble improvisation); and playing with limits (used in the exploration, transcendence, and transformation of musical systems)" (2012:104-105). Drawing on Gray's study of improvisation and composition in Gendér Wayang music in Bali, and the song performances heard during my field research, I propose that different *makhweyane* musicians make use of the following structural preferences with regard to form, improvisation, and the varying connection between lyrical content and the struck-bow rhythmic bed of the music. In the following formulation, I borrow the terms "malleable units" and "spontaneous variation" from categories used in Nick Gray's analysis (2011:95).

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[112] Gogo Sonile Sifundza's song '*Etjeni lembube*' was performed and recorded at eBuhleni on 17 July 2014.

1 Fixed compositions/ arrangements	2 Minimal text cycles	3 Malleable units	4 Spontaneous variation	5 Free improvisation
Compositions performed in set structure, minimal variation of any kind.	Minimal text, some melodic variation and ornamentation in later repeats, strong relation between lyrical song and struck-bow pattern	Recombining of existing lyrical cells, over set struck-bow pattern, strong relation between lyrical song and struck-bow pattern	Improvised lyrics that draw upon set phrases to varying degrees, limited relation between lyrical song and struck-bow pattern	Solo bow improvisations, played freely in terms of rhythm; and with varying overtone engagement
T. Shongwe: '*Kuguga sengigugile*', '*Ncobile sathane*' K. Mphila & M. Mncina: '*Nasemanzini abilayo*'	S. Sifundza: '*Etjeni lembube*' (The rock of the lion), '*Encenceni ulamalindane*' M. Magagula; '*Umoya wami, uyathokoza*' Y. Dladla: '*Siyakhala ngamawomb*''	K. Mphila: '*Lutsandvo luphelile*', '*Mbhilibhi*' N. Lukhele: '*Ngiphekeletele*'	B. Magagula: '*Ang'nankhomo*', '*Inkinga eNyakatfo*' T. Magagula: '*Kubindvwa kobonwa*'	M. Dlamini: untitled improvisation (26 August 2014) S. Makama: untitled improvisation (7 October 2016)

Figure 32 Musical and lyrical structural characteristics used by makhweyane *players.*

In her study, Hill witnessed numerous modes of "pattern-based creativity" and this concept is useful in considering the music of key *makhweyane* players (2012:88). Make Tfobhi Shongwe of eMsahweni spoke of composing fixed songs and performing them as static works but this appeared to be Shongwe's particular approach. This rigidity was not shared by her peers (T. Shongwe, interview, eMsahweni, 4 July 2014). Beyond her, many musicians make use of Hill's idea of "recycling and recombining" of existing patterns (2012:88). This can be viewed in the music of Gogo Khokhiwe Mphila, whose renditions of songs like '*Lutsandvo luphelile*' (The love is gone) and '*Mbhilibhi*' demonstrate her free ordering of lyrical cells within a fixed song, although the lyrics themselves remain largely

unchanged. Further fluidity in Mphila's process is also related to her ability to sing *tibongo* or praises. As discussed before, these praises are improvised and performed in between lyrical cells if and when the performer feels inspired. Their positioning within the song structure can differ between songs and performances of the same song. Overall, Mphila's composed melodic and lyrical phrases remained fixed but the order in which she sings the cells varied with each performance.

When asked how he composes, Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula stated that all his songs come from his head: "*Tonkhe letingoma tisuku enhloko yami, bantfwabami. Eh, besikushaya sisebasha.* [...] *Tonkhe letingoma lengitishayako tisuka la*" [All the songs come from my head. We used to play when we were young. [pointing at his head] All the songs start from my head] (B. Magagula, interview, eBuhleni, 6 May 2014)*.* Magagula stated that he sometimes receives musical ideas through dreams but not regularly. Just before our initial meeting in 2014, Magagula had dreamed of the concertina or *inkhositina* and then had borrowed one from a nearby player to experiment on it himself, in this way learning to play it.

When creating new music, Magagula explained that he usually starts with the *makhweyane* struck pattern and then composes the lyrics to fit this (B. Magagula, interview, eBuhleni, 6 May 2014). When composing, he told me, he "thinks about things". Sometimes he will hear a song, performed by others or played on the radio, and then a new song comes to mind. He finds inspiration through other musicians' performances (be they *Sibhaca* dancers, or singers) (B. Magagula, interview, eBuhleni, 31 May 2014).[113]

Magagula writes songs about what is happening around him, such as the compositions discussed in earlier chapters ('*Inkinga eNyakatfo*' and '*Gocota siphila ngekhondomu*' – discussed later in this chapter). After my initial lessons, he had composed a new piece for me with the lyrics: "*Ntomb'emhlophe, shaya makhweyane*" (White girl, play *makhweyane*) (B. Magagula, interview, eBuhleni, 31 May 2014) which he went on to perform on numerous occasions for me and others (the last performance being on stage for a large audience at the inaugural International Bow Music Conference in Durban, February 2016).[114] He writes music addressing concerns he has about his area, like livestock running loose and destroying people's fields but he also sings about and for the new generation, advising the youth on moral issues. When asked about this, he mentioned his concern that women were

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[113] *Sibhaca* is a popular style of dance seen as 'traditional' in Swaziland. Sibhaca dance is discussed in Chapters One and Two.

[114] Magagula here uses the isiZulu spelling of this phrase. In siSwati, this would be "*Ntfombi lemhlophe*" but it is common amongst people of his generation to interchange siSwati and isiZulu pronunciations and orthographies. During his youth, much of the educational material used in Swazi schools was isiZulu language material, such as the reader *Igoda* (1962), before the large-scale printing of siSwati material and literature (V. Sibandze, interview, Malkerns, 20 October 2016). Mkhulu Bhemani did not go to school but is influenced by this phenomenon.

marrying too young and then committing adultery (B. Magagula, interview, eBuhleni, 31 May 2014). This moralistic cautioning is often woven into the lyrics of his songs.

After hearing numerous performances of Magagula's recent compositions, it became apparent that, unlike other musicians, he composed a song framework and then improvised greatly around this in each performance setting (more so than Gogo Khokhiwe Mphila). In his discussion of verbal arts, Richard Bauman describes the characteristics for performance: special codes, reserved for and diagnostic of performance, special formulae that signal performance, figurative language such as metaphor, etc (1975:295). In the case of Mkhulu Magagula and his performances, these special codes or indicators are only partially engaged as the boundary between a song performance and conversation, for instance, can be fluid. On stage, Magagula often spoke freely to his audience (whether amongst friends at home or on stage in front of strangers) before playing and let his songs dissolve or end abruptly with him stating: "I am too old, I have no breath" [to continue singing]. Whilst Gogo Mphila and others, such as Mkhulu Mxofololo, vary the order of lyrical cells in her otherwise established compositions, Bhemani Magagula often begins with a composed structure and then varies the text substantially – in some cases even weaving lyrics from other songs into the song he is performing. This involves melodic and rhythmic flexibility, as he moulds the siSwati lyrics to his differing struck patterns.

In the preceding text, I have proposed numerous differing personal approaches to form in *makhweyane* songs. I now put forward a case study of spontaneous and continual variation to show how this is articulated. The following example consists of two performances of Magagula's composition '*Ang'nankhomo*' (I have no cattle). Whilst some *makhweyane* songs can be created from one or two lines of text, '*Ang'nankhomo*' is a longer-form composition, which has, woven into its fabric, cyclical repetition (minimal text cycles), malleable units (seen in the movable leader's text), and other improvisatory aspects.

Below is a transcription of the lyrics of this song performed to me on [February 2011] with accompanying vocals sung by his (now deceased) wife. The mournful lyrics of this song describe the troubles associated with living in the Lowveld, with no wealth and no cattle to one's name. Magagula repeats the words "*Umhlab'uhlangene*" which translates as 'United Nations' or the 'the world is united'. The narrative function of this is unclear but perhaps he is calling people of the world to unite or beckoning all in the world to witness his troubles.

Ang'nankhomo [excerpt][115]		
Bhemani Magagula		
February 2011		

Leader:	Respondent:	
Ye bantfu baphelile ehlandzeni *Saphela sive*	*Ye bantfu baphelile ehlandzeni* *Saphela sive* *Umhlab'uhlangene*	People are finished in the Lowveld; The nation is perishing The world is united
Ngibuya eMbabane *Anginamali x3*		I am from Mbabane I have no money x3
	Ang'nankhomo *Ngisebentel' ubala ihlasele* *Ang'nankhomo* *Umhlab'uhlangene*	*Repeated response:* I have no cattle I work for nothing I have no cattle The world is united
Umhlab'uhlangene, *Hha hha hha*	*Ang'nankhomo* *Ngisebentel' ubala ihlasele* *Ang'nankhomo* *Umhlab'uhlangene*	The world is united. [vocables] [response]
Hlabela Goje *Anginamali*	*Ang'nankhomo* *Ngisebentel' ubala ihlasele* *Ang'nankhomo* *Umhlab'uhlangene*	Sing Goje I have no money [response]
INSTRUMENTAL CYCLE		
Anginankhomo	*Ang'nankhomo* *Ngisebentel' ubala ihlasele* *Ang'nankhomo* *Umhlab uhlangene*	I have no cattle [response]
Inkhosi ikhulile, hha hha *Mswati ukhulile, Nkhosi Yakitsi,* *Nkulunkulu,* *Umhlab' uhlangene*	*Ang'nankhomo* *Ngisebentel' ubala ihlasele* *Ang'nankhomo* *Umhlab'uhlangene*	The king has grown [vocables] Mswati has grown God The world is united [response]
Ngibuye eKhimbali *Anginamali*	*Ang'nankhomo* *Ngisebentel' ubala ihlasele* *Ang'nankhomo* *Umhlab'uhlangene*	I am from Kimberley I have no money [response]

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[115] An audio recording of this song is supplied with this dissertation.

Ngibuye eKhimbali		I am from Kimberley
Anginamali	*Ang'nankhomo*	I have no money
	Ngisebentel' ubala ihlasele	[response]
	Ang'nankhomo	
	Umhlab'uhlangene	
Ngibuye eKhimbali		I am from Kimberley
Anginamali	*Ang'nankhomo*	I have no money
Ngiyabonga Goje wami	*Ngisebentel' ubala ihlasele*	Thank you, my Goje
Goje wami, Goje wami	*Ang'nankhomo*	My Goje, my Goje
	Umhlab'uhlangene	[response]
Goje wami		My Goje,
Ngiybonga Goje (spoken)	*Ang'nankhomo*	Thank you, Goje
	Ngisebentel' ubala ihlasele	[response]
	Ang'nankhomo	
	Umhlab'uhlangene	
Ngibuya eMbabane		I am from Mbabane
Anginamali	*Ang'nankhomo*	I have no money
	Ngisebentel' ubala ihlasele	[response]
	Ang'nankhomo	
	Umhlab'uhlangene	
Hha hha hha		[vocables]
	Ang'nankhomo	[response]
	Ngisebentel' ubala ihlasele	
	Ang'nankhomo	
	Umhlab'uhlangene	
Ubuya eKhimbali		He is from Kimberley
	Ang'nankhomo	[response]
	Ngisebentel' ubala ihlasele	
	Ang'nankhomo	
	Umhlab'uhlangene	
Umhlab'uhlangene		The world is united
Anginamali	*Ang'nankhomo*	I have no money
	Ngisebentel' ubala ihlasele	[response]
	Ang'nankhomo	
	Umhlab'uhlangene	
Ngibuye eKhimbali		I am from Kimberley
YeBantfu baphelile ehlandzeni	*Ang'nankhomo*	People are finished in the Lowveld
	Ngisebentel' ubala ihlasele	
	Ang'nankhomo	[response]
	Umhlab'uhlangene	
Siphe -, siphelile		We are finished
Hha hha hha	*Ang'nankhomo*	[vocables]
	Ngisebentelu ubala ihlasele	[response]
	Ang'nankhomo	
	Umhlab'uhlangene	
[Cycle continues]		

Some of the lyrical idiosyncrasies of this song require explanation. Magagula's reference to *eKhimbali* is related to the South African mining town, Kimberley. This appears to be a reference to the time that Magagula spent working on a mine at Bulembu, in eastern Swaziland. "*Goje*" is the praise name of Vusi Sibandze, who was with me during this 2011 visit to Magagula's house and initially introduced me to Magagula on this trip. During this performance, Magagula thanked Sibandze, addressing him by his praise name at numerous points throughout the song and encouraging him to sing the response along with Gogo Magagula.

The excerpted musical transcription of the rendition of '*Ang'nankhomo*' below indicates how two voices interact within this composition.[116] 'Voice 1' is the transcription of Magagula's vocal line which serves as a more free, leading part. His wife ("Voice 2") responds with a cyclical part that forms a melodic bed: a cyclical melody and short phrase of text above which Magagula improvises, calls out and improvises. A similar vocal counterpoint can be heard in the historic recording of the song '*E Bambulele*' (discussed later in this chapter), where the accompanying voice sustains what Rycroft would have notated in his cyclical staffs, whilst the leader voice brings in verse material and strays from the structure if desired. Interestingly, both of these songs have higher range accompanying voices, with a leader singing a melody that is lower in pitch. In *ummiso* songs and other polyphonic vocal repertory, the leader's melody is often higher in pitch.[117] This is likely due to the need for the leader to be heard above a chorus of voices but with the quietness of the *makhweyane*, there is no such requirement.

The musical transcription below provides evidence of the melodic contours of the overtone countermelody in this song and its close relationship with the supporting vocal melody ('Voice 2'). It demonstrates the fluidity of the lead vocal part: Magagula spearheads text that is then heard in the response and supports Gogo Magagula in parallel harmony on occasion but he is also free to speak and modify his lyrics as he chooses while the foundational, lyrical message is held by 'Voice 2'. In this transcription, the overtone melody is demarcated with diamond note-heads (above the *makhweyane* struck pattern (the lowest staff). As an added indicator, I use a cross (x) above struck notes to show when the calabash resonator is held closed at the chest, and a small circle (°) to show when the calabash is opened to enhance the overtone melodies.

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[116] In discussing vocal polyphony, Barz draws upon Rycroft. Barz states: "In both Zulu and Swazi songs there are more than two offset parts. Since the voices do not begin or end phrases together, there is no sense of what might be considered resolution or cadence. There also seems to be a direct relationship between the the performance of bow-songs, in which sung parts are extemporized to the accompaniment of ostinato patterns played on the bow, and that of choral songs". (Barz 2016)

[117] *Ummiso* songs are choral dance songs sung by young girls.

'Ang'nankhomo' [extract] – Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula

Performed by Mkhulu Magagula and his wife Gogo Magagula, February 2011.

Figure 33 Extract from Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula's 'Ang'nankhomo'.

4

The diagram below is an abstracted spectrographic representation which I have devised in order to better understand the overtone engagement and the physical calabash movement in *makheyane* songs. This transcription displays the notes and partials on the y-axis and time on the x-axis. The fundamental tones (struck notes) are represented by short vertical lines that correspond with the tones played. We can deduce the regularity and rhythm of these struck notes from this representation. Above this is an approximation of the overtones created by the calabash as the struck pattern is performed. Below the x-axis, is a representation of the calabash movement away from the chest (related obviously with the overtone engagement created by these movements). The following transcription is of the February 2011 performance of '*Ang'nankhomo'* by Magagula.
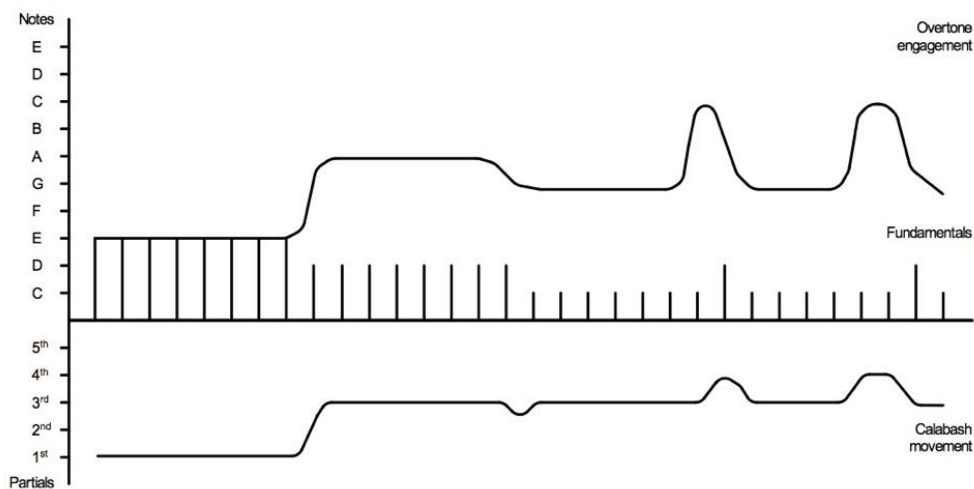
Figure 34 Transcription of 'Ang'nankhomo' *bow extract.*

Knowing that I particularly liked '*Ang'nankhomo*', Magagula performed it on numerous occasions and I had the opportunity to perform it with him, singing the second vocal part. On one occasion, he performed the song for a group gathered at his neighbour's house, that of the Sifundza family, on 26 June 2014. Everyone was seated in the yard listening to each other sing songs and play on different instruments. Whilst making use of the same struck and overtone melodies and broad thematic content, this more recent performance, like others, showed great variation in the lyrical text: closer to Gray's conception of "spontaneous variation" (2011:95). I have divided the lyrics of this performance into five sections or lyrical cells: the first and last drawing heavily on the afore-mentioned, earlier rendition of the lyrics (the skeletal structure of the song for the purpose of this discussion), and framing three new thematic cells.

Ang'nankhomo

Bhemani Magagula

26 June 2014

1

Ngibuya eMbabane	I am from Mbabane
Ngiyosebentela inkhosi lehlandzeni	I will work for the king in the Lowveld
Anginankhomo	I have no cattle
Ngibuyekimbali	I am from Kimberley
Anginankhomo	I have no cattle
Ngasebenta ehlandzeni, ehlandzeni	I worked in the Lowveld, in the Lowveld
Anginankhomo	I have no cattle
Umhlaba uhlangene	United nations
Umhlab' uhlangene	United nations
Wo bantfu baphelile kaMagolide	People are finished at Magolide
Baphela bantfu	People are finished
Bantfu baphelile, anginamali	People are finished, I have no money
Ye ngasebenta ehlandzeni, ehlandzeni	Yes, I've worked in the Lowveld, in the Lowveld
Anginamali, umhlab' uhlangene	I have no money, united nations
Umhlab' uhlangene	United nations

2

Wo bantfu baphelile kamaGolide	Wo, people are finished at Magolide
Abakulaphi	They don't heal it
Batsi abakulaphi kuguga	They say they don't heal the aging
Maye bangibulele kaMagolide	Oh my, they have killed me at Magolide
NakaMazini Gogo bambulele	Even at Manzini they have, grandmother
Hha hha hha	[vocables]
Bambulele, bambulele	They have killed her, they have killed her

3

Ngibuya eKhimbali, anginamanga	I am from Kimberly, I have no lies
Anginamanga, umhlab'uhlangene	I have no lies, united nations
Tinkhomo tisibulele	The cattle have destroyed us
Ye tinkhomo tisibulele lehlandzeni	Yes, cows have destroyed us in the Lowveld
Sigay' indengane	We are grinding wet porridge
Sigay' indengane	We are grinding wet porridge
Hha hha hha	[vocables]
Sigay' indengane leNyakatfo	We grind wet porridge at Nyakatfo
Indengane	Wet porridge
Siyawugaye mshinini	We will grind in the mill
Ye bantfu baphelile lehlandzeni	Yes, people are finished in the Lowveld
Ubohlabela mzala!	You must sing, cousin!
Umhlab' uhlangene	United nations
Umhlab' uhlangene	United nations
Anginamali, umhlab' uhlangene	I have no money, united nations

|	
4	
Ntomb'emhlophe	The white girl
Yashaya makhweyane, intomb'emhlophe	She played *makhweyane*, the white girl
Ya Mkhulu	Hey grandfather
Ngimbonile untomb'emhlophe	I have seen the white girl
Ngibuye kimbali, anginamanga	I am from Kimberley, I've got no lies
Ngabuye Botswana nalogogo	I am from Botswana with this grandmother
	(the Queen Mother)
Sabuye Botswana	We were from Botswana
Sehla kuMatsapha	We landed at Matsapha
Sehla kuMatsapha neNkhosi	We land at Mastapha with the King
Yakitsi, sabuya ngendiza	We returned by the plane
Maye ngibabonile	I have seen them
5	
Mm mm mm	[hummed vocables]
Khula Nkhosi, khula Mlisa	Grow King, grow King
Umlisa ukhulile	The King has grown
Uchacha tinkinga lenkhosini kagogo	He is solving his problems at grandmother's place
Ngibuye eKhimbali, anginamanga	I am from Kimberley, I have no lies
Ungalaleli leti shewu	Don't listen to my gaps
Tinkhomo tiphelile	The cattle are finished
Netinkhukhu tiphelile lehlandzeni	Even the chickens are finished in the Lowveld
Kwaphela tinkhukhu	Even the chickens
Nkhomo Tiphelile	The cattle are finished
Ye nkhomo tiphelile kaMapula	The cattle are finished at Mapula
Kwaphela tinkhomo	The cattle are finished
Live lifile, anginamanga na	The country is dead, I have no lies
Anginamanga leHlandzeni	I have no lies in the Lowveld
Anginamanga, umhlab'uhlangene	I have no lies, united nations
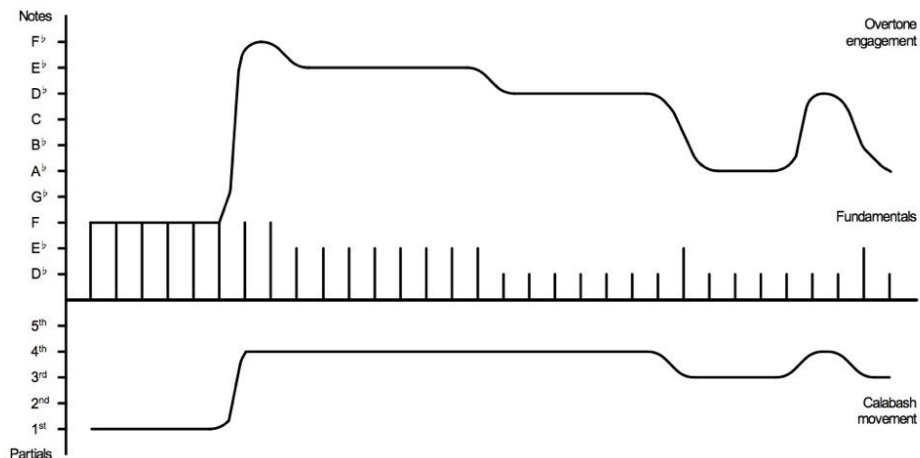
Figure 35 Transcription of 'Ang'nankhomo' by Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula (26 June 2014 performance).

The above version of the song shows many departures from the earlier rendition. A clearer translation of the refrain "*Anginamanga*" is 'I am not a liar'. Magagula is emphasising his role as witness to the troubles he is relaying in this song. Magagula often makes use of humour in his stories and lyrics and in this song (and others) he sings "*Ulalele lomakhweyane, ungalaleli letishewu tami*" which translates as 'Listen to the *makhweyane*, don't listen to my gaps', making reference to his missing front teeth.[118] In both versions of this song, lyrical cells talking about having no cattle, and the hardships of life in the Lowveld are present. In this more recent performance, Magagula integrates lyrics from another composition into the second cell: here he woefully sings about going to a hospital where he was turned away and denied medication due to his age. Here, Magagula integrates another song (which in other performances, was sung to a different rhythmic bow pattern entirely) seamlessly into '*Ang'nankhomo*'. By doing this, he displays his fluid connection between lyrical songs and the particular bow patterns created to support these. On frequent occasions, he told the story of how the nurses at the hospital had told him they had to keep medicinal pills for the young. The second lyrical cell responds to my presence in Magagula's life during my field research period. Firstly, he sings about me ('the white girl') playing *makhweyane* with him at his home and secondly, he recounts a story about his travels with the Queen Mother as part of a cultural entourage that we had spoken about in various interviews. Magagula easily weaves these strands of story into an existing compositional framework of his. A similar fluidity was viewed in performances of his other songs. In siSwati, the term *kugucugucuka* translates as 'to change continually', 'to improvise', and it is this

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[118] This can be heard in his '*Gocota siphila ngemakhondomu*' song, described in Chapter Three.

concept that can be seen in the above two performances of Magagula's song (within each song and between the two).

Simon Frith describes the musical 'work' as "the score, the song, the beat" (2003:109). When surveying the *makhweyane* songs created by contemporary players, one can see varied individual preferences with regard to structure and improvisation (the differing positions on Nettl's (1974) continuum from composition to improvisation): from through-composed narratives, to movable lyrical cells, and minimal textual and textural cycles (Gray 2011:11, 96).

2. *Arrangements*

Another strategy used by contemporary *makhweyane* players in their music-making is arrangement: the process of modifying existing musical material for different instrumental forces and combinations. Many Christian musicians have felt inspired to arrange religious or gospel songs onto their instruments (*makhweyane*, *umtshingosi* flute, etc). Tfobhi Shongwe, of eMsahweni, plays both secular (*lutsango* regimental songs and original compositions) and religious repertory on her *makhweyane*. During our communal events, namely the recording at Swazi Radio and the *Bashayi Bengoma* concerts, I noticed that she is well-respected amongst the other older players and that she is a confident performer. In our interviews, she talked about her devout Christianity and how she likes to adapt gospel songs to the *makhweyane*. She noted the importance of "*ema-chorus*" (choruses) in creating a good arrangement or song. When tuning her instrument, Shongwe described how she would sometimes lower the brace of her calabash (by sliding the whole brace loop downwards on the wooden stave) depending on "how a song is sung" or lower the pitch of the sung melody. When composing a new song, she begins with a story and writes down what she would like to sing about, working out the lyrics before creating music on the *makhweyane* to support this (T. Shongwe, interview, eMsahweni, 4 July 2014).

As discussed earlier, Gogo Khokhiwe Mphila and Mkhulu Moses Mncina, perform in a duo together and through this outfit, provide numerous examples of how arranging can generate new musical material for the *makhweyane* and other instruments. Mphila, in her own music, makes use of different compositional strategies, sometimes imagining the lyrics before picking up the *makhweyane* as she did with the song '*Mbhilibhi*', as discussed in Chapter Four (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014). When discussing the writing of this song, though it was written a long time ago during her youth, she described how she had the feeling that she must sing, and spoke about how the instrument had to fit in with the song she had conceptualised (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014).

Lokutsi ngakhe lengoma kwaba ngulamagama ngobe bese bangishayele kutsi ngidle lolukhotse. Angitsi watsi yena ngijakele Mbhilibhi nyalo sengihleti ngemuva.

The reason I wrote this song, the words came first because they had already been beaten me because I had eaten the *lukhotse.* And he said I am rushing to catch up with *Mbhilibhi* now you are sitting behind (eating my food) (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014).[119]

In their duo configuration, Mphila and Mncina perform an arrangement of the common religious song: '*Nasemanzini abilayo*' (Even in boiling water). Their other arrangement projects have involved creating a *makhweyane* pattern for *umtshingosi* flute compositions that Mkhulu Mncina had composed so that they can perform together, as well as adding *umtshingosi* flute lines to her original *makhweyane* compositions. Mphila described how it was easy to create a *makhweyane* struck pattern to a melody if she knew that melody well or could sing it (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014). Due to the tuning differences between Mphila's large *makhweyane* bow and Mncina's *umtshingosi* flutes, these arrangements emerge often as rhythmically cohesive, bitonal creations (Mkhulu Mncina's flute is in F sharp and Mphila's tuning varies). '*Nasemanzini abilayo*' is an example of this. The original melody and lyrics can be seen below.[120]

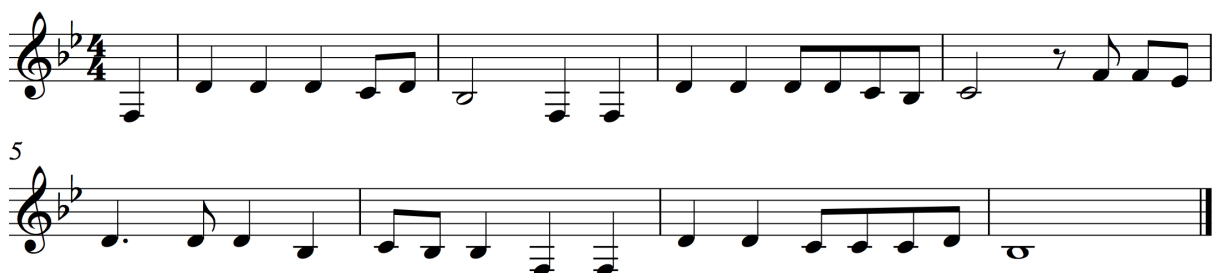|	
Nasemanzini abilayo	Even in boiling water
Nasemanzini abilayo	Even in boiling water
Ngiyawuhlala ngingedvwa ngilendele uJesu	I will sit alone waiting for the Lord
Nasemanzini abilayo	Even in boiling water

*Figure 36 Original melody for '*Nasemanzini abilayo*'.*

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[119] *Lukhotse* is mentioned in Chapter Four along with the discussion of Mphila's song '*Mbhilibhi*'. It is an edible powder made of ground roasted maise, peanuts, and sugar, used to keep up energy on long journeys.
[120] An audio recording of this arrangement is supplied with this dissertation.

Mphila's adaption of this melody on to *makhweyane* (with overtone engagement) can be seen below beneath the original melody.

Figure 37 Original melody and makhweyane *arrangement for 'Nasemanzini abilayo' (23 August 2014).*

The above example shows how a *makhweyane* player can navigate a major key tonality with the tuning restrictions of a musical bow. Rhythmic characteristics are easily mimicked but some of the tones are not possible to articulate clearly with the available harmonics. This is one of numerous examples of musicians hearing music they want to play and adapting it to the instrument at hand by ear, creating fresh, tonally varied musical pieces.

3. Rhythmic devices

The *makhweyane* is an instrument with complex acoustical principles that derive from a struck rhythmic pattern. These struck patterns can be fast and dense (generating louder overtones), heard in the music of Gogo Sonile Sifundza and Make Tfobhi Shongwe. They can also be slow, with space for carefully expressed overtone effects (such as vibrato, slides, etc). In this section, I highlight two aspects of rhythmic practice amongst particular contemporary musicians. The first important rhythmic consideration resides within the struck pattern itself and sounds like an irregular, 'swinging' feel. What Rycroft notated as an equal triplet motif sounds more like an asymmetrical compound figure in tripleted semiquavers (3 – 1 – 2). Like in so many musics, here staff notation falls short of accurately representing this sound. This rhythmic characteristic can be heard in Rycroft's historic recordings such as '*Ngile ebaleni yebakithi*' performed by Mazinyo Mavuso but also in the composition below by

contemporary player, Gogo Sonile Sifundza. The excerpt below comes from her song '*Etjeni lembube*' (The rock of the lion) mentioned earlier in this chapter.[121]
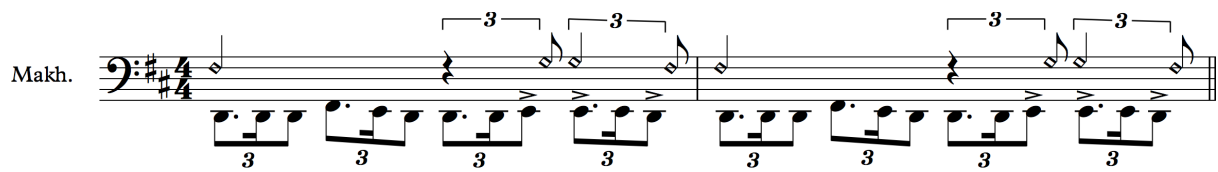
Figure 38 Excerpt from Gogo Sonile Sifundza's composition 'Etjeni lembube', performed at her home in eBuhleni on 26 June 2014.
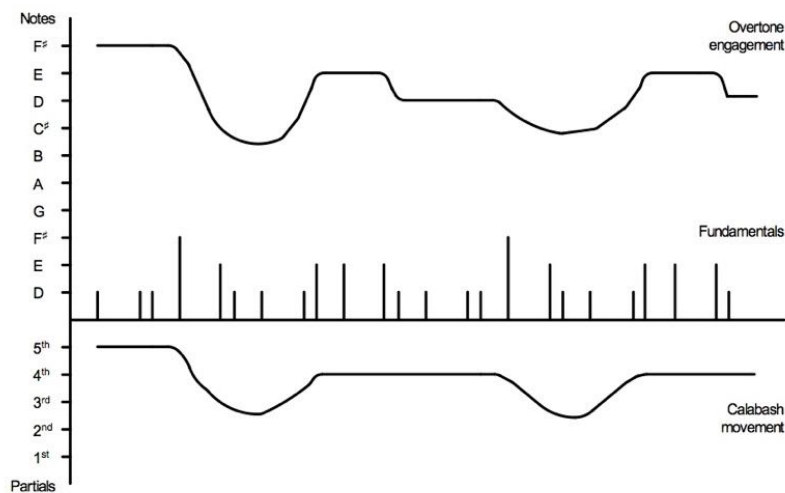
Figure 39 Transcription of Gogo Sonile Sifundza's song 'Etjeni lembube'.

The second, notable rhythmic occurrence heard and viewed during my fieldwork was that of variable density within the struck *makhweyane* patterns of contemporary songs. Many existent bow song transcriptions (by Rycroft, Dargie and others) from Swaziland and beyond denote a regular and often dense rhythmic construction upon which musicians sing. An example of Shongwe's dense struck pattern can be heard in her composition '*Kuguga sengigugile*' (To become old, I am already old)[122]:

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[121] An audio recording of this song is supplied with this dissertation.
[122] An audio recording of this song is supplied with this dissertation.
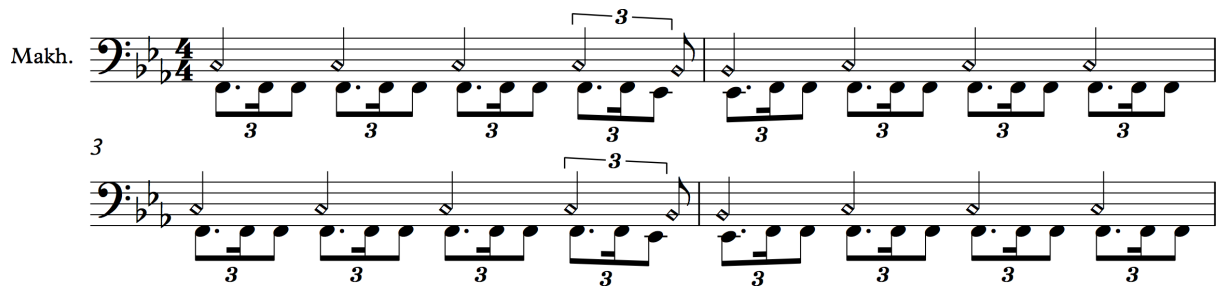
Figure 40 An excerpt of the struck bow pattern from Make Tfobhi Shongwe's composition 'Kuguga sengigugile' *(4 July 2014).*
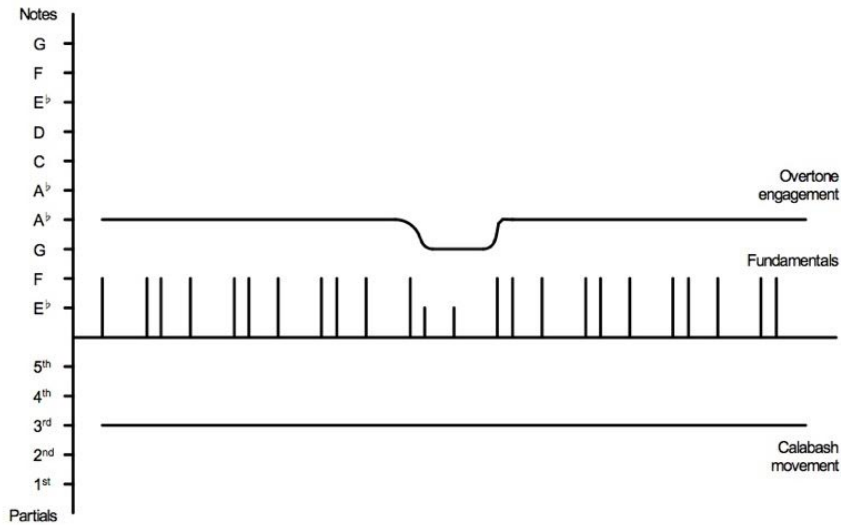
Figure 41 Transcription of Make Tfobhi Shongwe's song 'Kuguga sengigugile'.

In my research, a sparser style of playing became apparent in the work of certain musicians. This sparcity and space can be seen in the music of Gogo Ncola Lukhele, from Shewula, and Thobile "Makhoyane" Magagula (one of the younger players highlighted in Chapter Four). As mentioned before, Magagula is an experienced improviser and collaborates with other amplified instrumentalists, as well as the poet and vocalist Bongiwe Dlamini. In her performances, Magagula favours sparse struck patterns above which she can improvise vocally. The space created between struck fundamental tones allows for concentrated overtone manipulation and decay (like an exaggerated vibrato). An example of these textures can be seen in the excerpted transcription below of a free improvisation by Magagula above which she went on to sing words from the song '*Kubindvwa kobonwa*' (To be silent is to see) (discussed in Chapter Four).[123]

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[123] An audio recording of this performance is supplied with this dissertation.

Figure 42 Opening section of a free improvisation by Thobile "Makhoyane" Magagula. The transcription is drawn from a recording made of Magagula on 7th December 2015 at her house in Mpolonjeni. The jagged line symbol above some notes represents a vibrato effect created by the quick opening and closing of the calabash over one struck note. The acoustic result is one of quick, oscillating overtones.

Gogo Lukhele's song 'Uyakhala' demonstrates a similar minimalism and space in terms of the *makhweyane* struck pattern.[124] In this example, the *makhweyane* struck notes serve to punctuate the ends of the vocal melodic phrases. By doing this, the space between the notes takes a more prominent position within the music.

The transcription below shows how Lukhele uses the *makhweyane* struck pattern to punctuate her sung and vocalised text phrases. In this song she sings the isiZulu lyrics: "*Uyakhala ngamawombe, izintombi zakaZulu zingwababane*" (She is crying about the conflict, the girls of the Zulu place are prostitutes), a complaint about Zulu girls. In the transcription below, the overtone engagement is shown with diamond noteheads. In this cyclical and short overtone melody, the high A note is almost imperceptible in the recording.

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[124] An audio recording of this song is supplied with this dissertation.

‘Uyakhala’ [excerpt] – Gogo Ncola Lukhele

Figure 43 'Uyakhala' *by Gogo Ncola Lukhele of the Shewula area. Performed on 18 August 2014.*

Often in translating *lutsango* regimental songs for *makhweyane* or other dance songs, players might incorporate some of the foot stamps that define the rhythmic profile of the original material (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 16 August 2014). This and the examples above serve to demonstrate some of the rhythmic variation that can be expressed by these composers and this instrument. Depending on the composers' objectives and musical strengths, density, space and rhythmic complexity are utilised in this music with differing results.

4. *Function and figurative language in* makhweyane *music*

> Songs exist not simply as entire 'texts' but as funds of knowledge to be deployed in segments, allusions and unframed social expression, in order to communicate and instantiate identities and political positioning. (Gunner 2009:35)

From the earliest stages of this research, it became apparent that the text that forms the fabric of *makhweyane* music is of utmost importance. Like with the general use of the siSwati language, *makhweyane* lyrics are a loose knit of shifting meanings and figurative language. In Liz Gunner's 2009 article on Jacob Zuma and the song '*Mshini Wami*' (My machine gun), she emphasises the "instability of song", its "unruliness and uncontrollability" (2009:28). An evocative and energetic example of isiZulu praise-singing can be heard when the South African president Jacob Zuma opens parliament annually and his praises are sung. An early reference to the importance of lyrical content in the hierarchy of any performance, Kirby describes braced bow music thus: "The performer sings as he plays; the time is kept good, the melody very slight, merely an accompaniment to the voice" ([1934, 1965] 2013:273). Song lyrics in *makhweyane* music point not only to the highly layered meta-strata of meaning in siSwati itself but also speak to the numerous functions these songs can take on.

In *makhweyane* music, there are two types of text: sung lyrics, and with some performers, in praise singing or *tibongo*. Praise singing or poetry takes the form of heightened and fast poetic speech boastfully describing the performer or another individual, airing a concern. Gunner describes the isiZulu equivalent of *tibongo*, *izibongo* as evidence of: "a robust realism, an uncompromising, shrewd, and even harsh appraisal of appearance, personality, and action" (1979:239) Khokhiwe Mphila is one of two contemporary *makhweyane* players who makes use of *tibongo* or praise-singing within the structure of her songs, the other being Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula. She describes this as a special feeling, something emotional that she improvises when she feels it:

> *Kusho kutsi nje mawushaya lentfo kushokutsi ngatsi lusinga lwakho nje lokuti khomba kutsi ngikhule ngaba lentfombi. Ngigugile kodvwa wena ungatsi kuhlabela intfombi lencane kantsi kuhlabela salukati ngoba intfombi ngayidlala lentfo yangingena.*
>
> That means just, when you play the thing, that means, it's like, your climax, your special talent to show, I grew and became a girl. I am old now but you can think it is a girl that is singing but it is an old woman. I was a girl, I played this and it got into me. (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014).

Whilst other bow traditions might have titled categories of song types (such as the *amaculo othando* or love songs, *amaculo osizi* or 'songs of deep sorrow' in isiZulu *umakhweyana* music), contemporary *makhweyane* players in Swaziland do not appear to organise song repertory into genres (Impey 1983:2). Few musicians formally title their songs though they exist as distinct 'works'. Rather, the listener is assumed to understand the content of the song by lyrics and this serves as differentiation (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014). Make Tfobhi Shongwe, of eMsahweni, was the only musician interviewed who assigned titles to her compositions (T. Shongwe, interview, eMsahweni, 4 July 2014). This fluid conceptualisation of repertory distinctions (love songs, protest songs, etc) speaks to the numerous ways in which a song is realised and how improvisation meets composition. Shongwe creates songs as relatively formal entities and rarely varies structural or lyrical content whereas a musician such as Bhemani Magagula often extends an existing structural outline to respond lyrically to the specific performance environment (discussed earlier in this chapter).

SiSwati is a deeply figurative and idiomatic language. Conversations are often filled with florid sayings such as: "*Utatatela njengelichegu liganiwe*" (You are trying to impress (overly so) like an old man in love) and "*Ngibhala njengemholeli*" (I write badly like a bus conductor). The latter refers to bus drivers in the old days who would write tickets by hand while driving and whose untidy scrawl was always indecipherable. The word for a computer is *ngcondvomshini*, which translates as 'the understanding machine'. If you wanted to insult someone, you could state: "*Ungijikela esiswini njengetjwala*" (You make my stomach turn like alcohol"), and when someone has died, you can say, "*Ushonile*" ('He/ She has set', as the sun and moon would). Considering the layered and metaphorical quality of the language, it follows that *makhweyane* song lyrics are extraordinarily ornate and idiomatic. Elizabeth Gunner (2009:33) describes this type of poeticism as being part of a recognised "social language" within the isiZulu language in South Africa and the same can be said for siSwati. This descriptive "social language" was apparent in the *makhweyane* songs heard and learned during my field research.

As discussed in earlier chapters, many *makhweyane* songs have an underlying moral message and as performers become older in years, there is a sense of responsibility in advising and protecting the youth. An example of this is Gogo Khokhiwe Mphila's song about the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Swaziland. In it, her lyrics urge the youth to take care of themselves and to be responsible, otherwise AIDS will kill them. Mphila's poetic lyrics talk about *intsango*, the room where girls would sleep in a traditional Swazi homestead. She warns young women to "close the door" of their house (K. Mphila, interview, Nsanwgini, 23 July 2011). Mkhulu Mxofololo Dlamini, who plays other people's music but also creates his own prolifically, described what he performs as "from his head". He described how he starts

composing "in his head" then transfers his ideas on to his *makhweyane*. If he wants to arrange a song, he described how he listens when someone is singing and then converts the melody to his instrument. Dlamini described how he chooses the lyrical content for his songs:

> *Mangicamba ngibuka lesimo ngibuke lokutsi intfoyentanjani. Okay, besangiyahlala ngicabangi. Ngitawufuna kucamba ingoma letsini. Hlezi awungitsandzi wena, ehhe. Uyangenyanya Sibandze. Uyanginyanya Sibandze. Uyakubona loku? [points to concertina buttons] Ehhe. Nome ungangibulala angeke utfole lutfo. Konkhe kwami lenginako kutawutfolwa bantfwa bami. Ngifakala [points to his instruments].*
>
> When I compose, I look at the situation, look how it happens. Okay, then I sit down to think. I will want to compose a certain song. Maybe you don't like me, ehhe. [Vusi] Sibandze hates me. Sibandze hates me. Do you see this? *Ehhe*. Even if you kill me, you won't get anything from me. All that I have will go to my children. I put it in [pointing to his instruments]. (M. Dlamini, interview, eMphini, 26 July 2014)

Bhemani Magagula's recently composed song advocating the use of condoms is another example of the moral function of *makhweyane* music. Swaziland's high HIV/AIDS infection rate has had a devastating effect on many families across the country, especially during the late 1990s and early 2000s, and Magagula uses this song to remind people to protect themselves. He intersperses praise singing between sung lyrics and modifies the song's foundational infrastructure to add in-the-moment responses to the performance environment. He thanks Vusi Sibandze by his praise name (*Goje* – Sibandze was present at this performance) for walking slowly as we often did when walking with Magagula – he is frail and walks slowly. Towards the end of the song, the important message of condom use has been repeated enough and he informs his listeners that he will not sing anymore – we must now listen to the *makhweyane*: "*Ulalele lomakhweyane*!" (B. Magagula, interview, eBuhleni, 6 May 2014).

Gocota siphila ngekhondomu[125]

Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula

6 May 2014

Ohh mhm! Ohh mo-mo-mhh!	[vocables]
Siphila ngekhondomu lapha kaNgwane x2	We live by the condoms here in Swaziland
Hho! Tsats' emakhondomu	Hho! Take condoms
Siphila ngekhondomu	We live by the condoms
Tsats' emakhondomu	Take condoms
Siphila ngekhondomu	We live by the condoms
Halala! Sanibonani maSswati	Halala. I greet you, Swazis
Sanibonani eSwatini	I greet you in Swaziland
TIBONGO:	PRAISE:
Ulalele lomakhweyane.	You must listen to the *makhweyane*.
Ungataleli leti shewu tami.	Don't listen to my gaps [between my teeth]
Sesiphila ngekhondomu (x4)	We live by the condom
Lapha kaNgwane	Here in Swaziland
Tsats' emakhondomu	Take condoms
Lapha eSwatini	Here in Swaziland
Khulumi mantombazana	Talk ladies
Sambe siyeMbabane siyochacha tinkinga	Let's go to Mbabane to solve problems
Sekunenkenanankana lapha eSwati	There is a problem here in Swaziland
Siyotsats' emakhondomu	We are going to take condoms
Siyotsats' emakhondomu lapha eSwatini	We are going to take condoms here in Swaziland
Sesiyovikela ngekhondomu (x2)	We are going to prevent by the condoms
NalaMagagula	With my wife LaMagagula
Siyovikela ngekhondomu nalaMagagula	We are going to prevent by the condoms with my wife
Ohh! Sesivikela ngekhondomu (x3)	Oh! We are going to prevent by the condoms
Hhobh!	[vocables]
Nalena ikhala kumakhweyane	Even this one is crying from *makhweyane*
Takho, takho, takho, Ngwane	Yours, yours, yours, Swaziland
Sesivikela ngekhondomu (x3)	We are going to prevent by the condoms
Nato tingoma letinsha lesesiticambile	Here are the new songs which we have just composed
Yeh! Mhh! (x3)	[vocables]
Yeh! Momo mhh! (x3)	[vocables]
Siyawutsats' emakhondomu	We will take the condoms
Siyawugwinya emaphilisi	We will swallow the tablets
Siyawubonana ethendeni	We will see each other at the tent
Siya etibhedlela	We are going to the hospitals
Halala!	Do you hear the cry of the instrument?
Uyakuva kukhala kwetinsimbi?	I wonder where the old man got it
Ingabe lomuntfu lomdzala	
Wakutsatsaphi lentfo	

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[125] An audio recording of this song is supplied with this dissertation.

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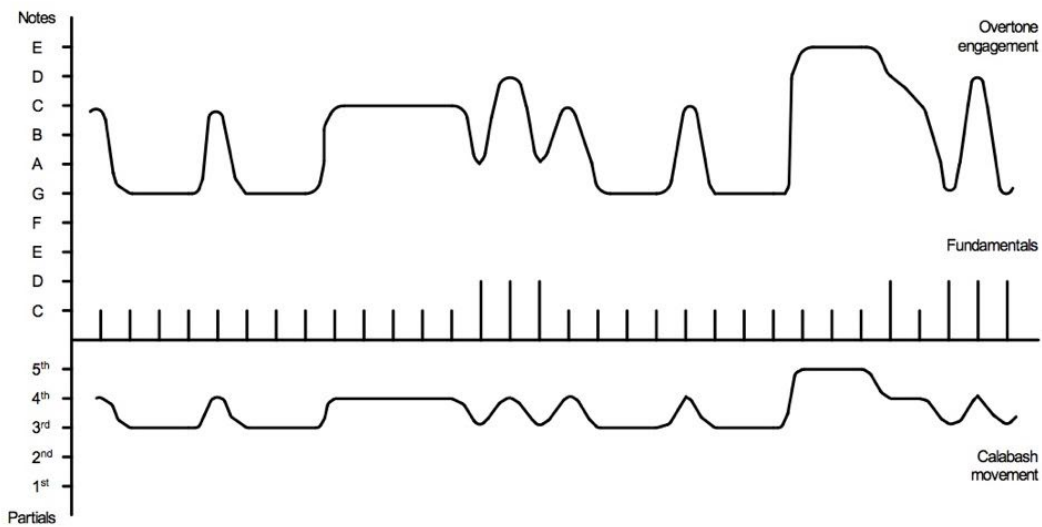|	
Ngiyabonga Gogo kuhamba kancane	Thank you, Gogo, for walking slow
Uhambisa kati ayobamba liguNdvwane	Like a cat trying to catch its prey
Ahh! Ngiyabonga, Goje	Thank you Goje
Sesitsatsa lipaka	We are taking a packet
Sesilifaka emlonyeni	We are putting it into our mouth
Sesitsatsa lipaka	We take the packet
Sesilifaka emlonyeni	We put it in our mouth
Sesiyawutsats' emakhondomu	We are going to take the condoms
Sesiwuhlangana ekhemisi	We are going to meet at the pharmacy
Sesiyawutsats' emakhondomu	We will take the condoms
Sesiyawuhlangana ekhemisi	We will meet at the pharmacy
TIBONGO:	PRAISE:
Khala makhweyane!	Cry/Sound *makhweyane*!
Asambe siyeMbabane	Let's go to solve problems in Mbabane
Halala!	[vocables]
Sanibonani MaSwati	I greet you, Mswati
Sanibonani Eswatini (x2)	I greet you in Swaziland
Buganu bufikile lapha eSwatini	Marula beer has arrived here in Swaziland
Buganu bufikile lapha kaNgwane	Marula has arrived here in Swaziland
Halala! (x2)	[vocables]
Sewutawulalela makhweyane	Now you will listen to the *makhweyane*
Angisahlabeli	I am not singing anymore
Sesi vikela ngekhondomu (x7)	Now we are preventing by a condom

Figure 44 Transcription of Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula's song 'Gocota ngekhondomu'.

Makhweyane songs also have numerous functions and considering the importance of religion in the lives of many in Swaziland, this music intersects with spirituality in different ways.[126] Kasenene, in his text on Swazi traditional religion, states: "Religion is the mother of Swazi cultural values. [...] The sacred/secular dichotomy which is emphasized in Western societies is non-existent in Swazi society" (1993:26). Spiritual belief, whether in ancestral spirits, bad spirits or Christianity play an important role in the lives of all the *makhweyane* players interviewed. Make Tfobhi Shongwe, of eMsahweni, is a devout Christian and enjoys singing religious songs on her *makhweyane*. She described a time when she was being troubled by "bad spirits". She would pray to dispel the spirits and in one of these moments, was led into composing a song. She described the process:

> *Ngacala kucamba tami tingoma lekubo-1975. Ngaloku sengize ngihlabele tekukholwa. Eh!! Nginato tonkhe nje tekukholwa naletami. Nguleyekukholwa, Leyekukholwake nanginenkinga lekuhlaseleko. Ngingakhoni kulala kahle angitsi nje kukhandza utsi kuye kungalaleki kahle. Ngase ngiyayicamba ngemthandazo nasekukhweshile ngasengiyasho kutsi Sathane sengimncobile.*

> I started to compose my own songs around 1975. Now I sing even gospel. I have all the types [of song] as well as religious. It's [this song] the one for belief. With the Christian song, I had a problem with sleepless nights. I was unable to sleep. Sometimes you find that you just can't sleep at night. Then I compose this song through prayer. After that the moment of sleeplessness left then I said I have conquered the devil. (T. Shongwe, interview, eMsahweni, 4 July 2014)

After that, she described how every time the bad spirit would come, she would pray and start singing the song and it would protect her. The lyrical refrain of the song repeats: "I've conquered the devil/evil" (T. Shongwe, interview, eMsahweni, 4 July 2014).[127]

Many musicians have adapted popular gospel songs heard on the radio to *makhweyane* and other instruments. When assembled together, it became apparent that the communal songs that everyone could sing or play were either regimental songs (ceremonial, 'traditional' repertory) or gospel songs that were frequently played on SBIS radio. An earlier example of this arrangement function was Mother Adelia Dlamini, mentioned earlier in this chapter and recorded by David Dargie, who adapted Catholic musical material adding

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[126] This is seen primarily through the music of Mother Adelia Dlamini (the Catholic *makhweyane* player recorded by David Dargie) but also in the music of Make Tfobhi Shongwe which I have discussed elsewhere in this dissertation.

[127] Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula has also spoken about the effects of bad spirits on his personal life. He had a leg injury since he was a child which he believes was caused by witchcraft over an inheritance dispute. He described how seven bones were removed from the large wound on his leg as part of the bewitchment (B. Magagula, interview, eBuhleni, 31 May 2014).

makhweyane accompaniment. Of her songs, Dargie stated: "The powerful beat of traditional songs turns into dignified, stately rhythms in her church songs" (Dargie 2005).

The *ligubhu* bow song 'E Bambulele umntfwanami' (They have killed her, my child) performed by Bhekinganwa Nkhabindze (and recorded by David Rycroft) is an example of the multi-layered connection between language, spirituality, experience, and music. Though a *ligubhu* song, it is an example of the potency of spiritual beliefs and how these can be woven poetically into bow song lyrics.[128]

Sebambulele umntfwanami

Yelele babe, hhayi ebaleni

Sewufile mtfwanami

nayelele babe, Utang' lahle ebubini

Abamnike timphaka adliwe tindlume

Abamnike izimpaka, Hhayi ebaleni

They have killed her, my child

Oh my father, exposed in the yard/open

My child is dead

Oh my father, you will leave me in evil

Let her be given evil and be eaten by snakes (that eat snakes)

They must give her to evil, not to expose her in the open yard[129]

Due to the symbolic and poetic nature of siSwati and *makhweyane* lyrics, the process of translating these texts was often multi-layered with numerous queries and setbacks. The excerpt below highlights the onomatopoeic nature of some siSwati words but also how minimal text and metaphor can signify and stimulate layers of story and meaning. In the transcribed conversation below, Vusi Sibandze and I discuss the translation of the *ummiso* (choral dance) song 'Tsine Sambamb'uZulu' (transcribed by David Rycroft). The

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[128] The *ligubhu* bow is not currently played in Swaziland. More information on this musical bow can be found in Chapters One and Three.

[129] This song is constructed as a vocal duet for low and high female voices, with an asymmetrical foundational *ligubhu* struck pattern. This song describes a sorrowful scene: a child has been killed and his or her body lies exposed in the open (*ebaleni* refers to the open space in between houses in a traditional Swazi home). After some confusion about what *tindlume* might mean, a conversation with Mkhulu Mncina's parents at their home in eNsangwini shone light on the matter: *tindlume* was the name for a now-extinct snake that ate other snakes. In the past, people would refer to murderers by this term: *indlume* or *tindlume* meaning 'humans that kill their brothers or sisters' (M. Mncina, interview, eNsangwini, 16 August 2014). Swaziland National Trust Commission's reptile database holds no such snake in their records but does call a *Lamprophis fuliginosus* or common house snake an *indlume* in siSwati ('Swaziland reptile database' n.d.).

performance of this song was heard at *Umhlanga* in 2014 and lyrics can be viewed on page 44.

VS: In this song it was during the time of Senzangakhona and Nandi. The Zulu king, he wanted to fight King Mswati, King Mswati the First, and Nandi told him not to fight the Swazi king because he had super powers.[130] There is a way she said it – she said, "Mswati is a king. He is more than what you see. His clan can be small but he is huge". Meaning that you cannot defeat him. There are powers that will make you fail.

CS: And this is what the song is talking about?

VS: Yeah, because they lost the battle in here [the song]. And because in the song, itsi, "*Tsine, sambamb' uZulu, sesaba kwaliwa netikhulu takaNgwane*", that is "*manya-manya*" meaning that… you see when there is heavy rain? When there is lightning?

CS: Yes.

VS: It translates as "lightning, lightning, and it strikes". They lost that battle. It was next to Lubuya River because in Swaziland there were some clans responsible for war. The Mambas were rainmakers. They would create rain to strike the enemy. That was what was done to the Zulus. In the song, it says "*manya-manya* and it strikes" – the lightning. The Mambas were hitting the Zulu warriors [with lightning]. [...] The lightning was reducing the army. Heavy storm – reducing the army, hitting them – up until they realised "I am not being beaten by these guys" but that is what Nandi said. "*Wo Zul'utsayihlome lomnyaka*" means that the Zulus are saying "Let it war this year".

CS: It's the Zulus in the story saying it?

VS: The Zulus are saying, "Let it be war this year, we are fighting". Direct translation is "Yeah, Zulu is saying it is war time this year". "*Sesaba kwaliwa tikhulu takaNgwane*". "We are afraid of being rejected by the Swazi chiefs". It's poetic in here [the song].

CS: So in the first phrase, it is like a Zulu person is saying this to other Zulus? "It's time for war"

VS: It's like… You are a Swazi and I am the Zulu. You are singing the song. In the song you are reporting, "Vusi is saying it is a fight".

CS: Yeah, "Vusi is saying let's go outside".

VS: "Let's go outside!". Then "*Wo, latsi manya-manya lawu phos' umban*". It's saying "flash, flash, flash and it strikes". Then it is saying that "*phati-phati*" meaning the flashing… meaning that, you see when you are having a toothache? That sharp pain

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[130] Here Sibandze is making reference to Nandi, the mother of the Zulu king Shaka (c.1787-1828) (1991:135).

that strikes once? "*Phati - phati - phati*"! That's how the lightning is defined in siSwati because it's scary when it is too vicious.

CS: The shock?

VS: Yeah, the shock, the pain. So it is defined in that way. When you are having that tooth-ache pain that goes "*tsah - tsah - tsah*". "*Phati-phati*" - the feeling of a very sharp tooth pain.

CS: So "*Wo, latsi phati-phati bek' umbane*"...

VS: "*Bek' umban*" meaning that it lay. Because "*beka*", you know, is when you put. It is now given a gentle word. Because when you put it is something that is placed but when you throw it is hard. "*phati-phati bek' umbane*" meaning that it is set somewhere. *Umbane* in siSwati – there is a special bird that comes in and leaves an egg during the lightning strike and leaves. In siSwati they will tell you that once lightning strikes a tree it will strike again so the belief is that there is a special bird. When it comes down it leaves an egg and then it will come take it another day during another heavy storm. When it comes back to take the egg, lightning will strike again. In siSwati they call it *inkhosatana* – the princess. Like Sikhanyiso [the current princess in Swaziland], we call her *inkhosatana*. Same name. It's called a princess because the heavy storm, they call is the "Queen of the sea", like the tornado.[131] So this special bird is the baby of the storm that will come visiting and laying eggs.

CS: So in the song, is it the pain that is getting put down or the warriors?

VS: It's the same as the previous phrase but they are putting it in a slightly different way. Saying the same thing in a different way. The first phrase is direct and then the second is about pain and gentleness – it is more poetic in this way. (V. Sibandze, interview, Ezulwini, 1 August 2016)

This transcribed conversation brings transparency to the process of translating *makhweyane* and other siSwati songs. Throughout this research, my initial translations of songs were checked by and discussed at length with Vusi Sibandze.[132] Only in rare cases are the lyrics to these songs simple and easily comprehended. Instead, each lyrical text employs numerous aspects of historical story, local anecdote, and deep siSwati poeticism. The importance of the lyrical content and strategy of *makhweyane* songs and siSwati as a language inform much of the function of this instrument and its music.

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[131] The "Queen of the sea" refers to a supreme supernatural being within Swazi religious beliefs (V. Sibandzwe, interview, Malkerns, 20 October 2016).
[132] Song lyrics and their English translations, as well as all other siSwati, were subsequently checked by Siphiwo Mhlaba and Dr. Annie Smyth.

5. Organological experiments

Elsewhere I have discussed the connection between playing the *makhweyane* and making the instrument. Many players learn to craft their own instrument at the same time that they learn to play. Smaller organological experiments have been described, such as Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula's use of stiff wire for his beaters (*lutsi lwekushaya*). Mkhulu John Mahlalela is an enthusiastic creator of smaller *makhweyane* instruments but also of oil-can/guitar fusions and his own interpretation of the *sikelekehle* monochord bow.

With regards to *makhweyane* organological innovation, however, Smiles Makama has contributed the most. Makama inspired Thobile "Makhoyane" Magagula to start to play *makhweyane* and his entry into music and instrument-making is a further example of innovative versatility amongst contemporary *makhweyane* players.

As discussed in Chapter Four, Makama was born in Mozambique but grew up in Swaziland. He began playing music as a young teenager, playing in bands and finally becoming interested in 'traditional' African music. He was interested in building instruments from this early stage and described being inspired by innovative *berimbau* musician Nana Vasconcelos:

> I was still in South Africa, before I went to Europe. I discovered that this instrument is played in South America. Then when I got to Europe, I found the South Americans really played this thing! I am talking about live, skilled South Americans. Brazilians are mad about *makhweyane*, but theirs, they call it *berimbau*. I was quite surprised. I listened to a guy called Nana Vasconcelos. And I was like, ah, this guy is crazy. He was doing all sorts of things that I hadn't even imagined you could with *berimbau*, *makhweyane*. (S. Makama, interview, Msunduza, 7 October 2016)

Once he had moved to Amsterdam, Makama had the idea to build instruments to sell in order to support himself. He built numerous *makhweyane* for this purpose but when they were complete, he decided to keep them. The idea he had next led to the birth of his innovative, *makhweyane*-derived instrument, the "Smilerphone" (also known as the "Msunduza Moog"):

> I thought let me get some bamboo and mount them up, you know. And see what will happen when I have access to seven notes on the *makhweyane*. Direct access, you know. And I mounted them, it was like some spirit was guiding me…. What materials I needed to build it. The car tire… the elastic that they don't make anymore but you can still find them. The Bamboo… I know a lot of forests. I used to sell bamboo flutes. So I thought, okay, I can get that bamboo. I got the steel wire like that to put on top to connect, to join

them all. Then I looked at it and said, it is too high. [laughs] It is for a giant man. Then I realized, no, you can play the four lower ones if you are short. If you set them up, you still get the sounds. Or if you are sitting down, it is okay, because if you open it up [the bamboo frame], it flattens out. So, I thought I have got to tie the *makhweyanes* on to the bamboo. (S. Makama, interview, Msunduza, 7 October 2016)

Figure 45 Smiles Makama performing on his "Smilerphone" instrument (Photographer: unknown, source: Ralph Smit).

The combined *makhweyane* instruments that form the "Smilerphone" are made with the same materials and processes as the conventional single instrument.[133] Due to the differently-tuned *makhweyane*, stacked vertically, the player is able to play diatonic melodies. Makama describes some of the other benefits of this vertical stacking of bows:

> And then I started to play it, and I realized you can use one stick like the original *makhweyane*. You can also use two sticks like a drum. I realized because of my experience with all these musical notes, because you need a sound that goes "dah" [sings] and "dadadada" [sings same note]. But this one would go "drrrrrr". It's mathematics, I am making more notes with this. […] I was aware of it but then, because I had this traditional mind to preserve the sound of *makhweyane*, it must sound like *makhweyane*. And as I played, some of it sounded like rock-and-roll. And I said, okay, this is a good instrument, because I can play rock with it because now I have access to all the… I can manipulate all the sounds. I can do what I can do with what pitch arrangement… but with this, it is all there. The bass tones, everything. The scale was diatonic so it makes a song as you go down. It is up to you how you change the notes. (S. Makama, interview, Msunduza, 7 October 2016)

Like the conventional *makhweyane*, the "Smilerphone" is still a quiet instrument and difficulties arise when amplifying it for performances.[134] Makama relayed how the music that emerged from this instrument was hard to place. He described his artist vision:

> The music could not be identified as African, it was mystic. I used to make a joke, maybe I was thousands of years forward. Nobody understood me. I am too much in the future. But I could not accept that this was an ancient instrument, belonging to the past. Because it produces sounds and rhythms, that appeal to today's world. But I said, let it be heard. […] I have a problem. People are stuck on this traditional side of me. The one dimension. They don't realise there is another side. All *makhweyane* music can transform into a band. So that is what I do. My first instrument was guitar. I know how to change *makhweyane* chords on to guitar so that is what I do. I do what I like. (S. Makama, interview, Msunduza, 7 October 2016)

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[133] An audio recording featuring the "Smilerphone" instrument is supplied with this dissertation. The track is titled 'The Source' and is drawn from Makama's album of the same name.

[134] Makama described overcoming these acoustic challenges in studio when recording his album, *The Source*: "You can hear it because in the studio alone, the acoustics are good, excellent microphones, so you can hear it. I could hear my breath. They say when I was playing it, I was breathing like a horse. [laughs] And I said, okay, I am a horse, try taming a horse." (S. Makama, interview, Msunduza, 7 October 2016)

In interviews, Makama spoke about how, whilst playing in Europe, people commented on the spiritual nature and esoteric potential of the sound of the *makhweyane*. The above quote demonstrates Makama's embodiment of this idea of the sound as mystic whilst simultaneously positioning the inherent "Africanness" of the *makhweyane's* tones against futurist musical ideals. He ascribes versatility to *makhweyane* music, and affirms his ability to express himself on this paradoxically "ancient" and forward-looking bow.

Whilst valuing the conventional *makhweyane* (which he performs on regularly), Makama acknowledged that he was able to side-step societal constrictions in his artistic practice. He stated: "[I decided that] I am going to take it as a musical instrument, not a traditional instrument. That was the difference. We were not allowed – then I felt I could explore it more on my own" (S. Makama, interview, Msunduza, 7 October 2016). Makama's perception of himself as steeped in the project of modernity is in contrast with people's notion of him and African music by extension as traditional, primordial and unchanging.

Makama's creation of the "Smilerphone" (and the music he has performed on it) form one of numerous creative and innovative approaches to *makhweyane* playing. This section has outlined the many small and large contributions and responses in this musical practice by contemporary players, old and young. I now turn to the role of the body in *makhweyane* playing and research. I include a discussion of my own compositional experiments and their purpose within my ethnographic field research.

"*Ntomb'emhlophe*" (white girl): The somatic, the creative voice and compositional conversations

The historical approaches within ethnomusicology towards the study of singing style, the voice, and society have focused on the voice as a primary site for the "production of social and cultural being", "the embodied site of both musical and linguistic expressivity" (Feld et al. 2004:334, 340). In *makhweyane* music, the concept of the voice serves many uses: in the majority of *makhweyane* songs, the vocal lyrics are foregrounded, as musicians weave tales and messages with their singing. *Makhweyane* players, as seen in the previous section, have diverse artistic voices and practices. Furthering the formulation of holication as a musical act, I put forward the "inwardness" of this music and instrument and posit a strong connection between the individual, the body and creative processes in *makhweyane* music.

Targeting the physiological mechanics of playing, there are no restrictions in bodily actions whilst playing *makhweyane*: as mentioned in earlier chapters, a player could be walking, dancing, sitting, minding livestock or playing games while performing (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014). As a learner and performer myself, I have experienced the intriguing relationship between memory and movement when playing *makhweyane*: how

extended practice puts songs in the body – what Gunner describes as the "somatic energy" of the music (Gunner 2009:30).

The *makhweyane,* as a material instrument, favours the overtones created by its calabash which are often designated as 'whispers' or responsorial 'voices' within the musical fabric. Similar somatic mechanisms are engaged within the body whilst playing the bow, where the calabash lip meets the player's breast or chest cavity. Just as the tongue lifts and falls and the mouth seamlessly transforms in creating overtone "formants" in speaking, the *makhweyane* player's body is similarly connected to the instrument in creating its particular sonic moment (ibid.:334). Feld writes:

> The body acts as a resonating chamber in the performance of both speech and song. […] The subtle and naturalized control of lungs, diaphragm, larynx, pharynx, tongue, sinuses, lips, and teeth, in the production of sung or spoken vocalization, is the end result of conscious or unconscious discipline and socialization. The apparatus of phonation, especially the mouth and the vocal tract, are crucial bodily sites of hegemonic contestation over the indexical and iconic modalities of both language and music (speech and song). (Feld et al. 2004:333)

Feld and Fox (et al) in their discussion of vocal anthropology, highlight the common usage of phrases such as "giving voice", "taking voice", and "having voice" as being linked to "the politics of identity, the production of difference, the ability of the subaltern to speak, to the ability of indigeneity movements to ''talk back'', and for class, gender, and race politics to ''back talk'' the dominant" (2004:342). It is in this way that I now centralise the voice in my discussion of composition and innovation in *makhweyane* music, as musicians forge their own heterogeneous creative styles and further their musical practice: having a voice and reclaiming their experiences and identity in song.

Margaret Boden describes creativity as "the ability to come up with ideas or artefacts that are new, surprising, and valuable" (Boden 2004:1). She proposes three forms of creativity: the first being when one makes "unfamiliar combinations of familiar ideas", the second being the exploration of structured styles of thought or "conceptual spaces", and the final being the transformation of said spaces (ibid:3). Hill describes the first form as combinatory or associative and links this to the pattern-based improvisation and composition (as discussed earlier in this chapter). Hill goes on to extend the second and third types of creativity by referring them to what she terms a "system". A "system" could be a tonality, a musical genre or form, or any paradigmatic restrictions within which creativity and composition can take place. She states: "Each of these systems provides certain possibilities within a set of limitations" (Hill 2012:97). I take the term 'creativity' to represent divergent thinking and I argue that in their specific personal preferences (in structure, rhythm, lyrical

tools, organology), *makhweyane* players are continually transforming the "conceptual spaces" of this music (Boden 2004:3).

As a musician and composer, I attempted to write songs during my fieldwork. I did this as a way to familiarize myself with compositional processes in *makhweyane* music but also to create conversational tools that might extend my understanding of the sonic parameters of this music. When considering what has not been documented in historical research, I suggest that practice-based research and artistic endeavor can serve as tools to open up the potentialities of the archive. During my field research, I aimed to extend this thinking by actively using my creative efforts to create a space for discussion with my research participants and fellow musicians. Drawing from Sarah Pink's (2009) thinking on sensory ethnography and Tim Ingold's notion of "attentive engagement", I hoped to further my own experience of the sound of the instrument and its music in this way (Ingold 2000:354).

At the beginning of this research project, I aimed to have technical conversations about how one composes for the *makhweyane* with the musicians from whom I was learning. After a few months of field work, although so much had been said, experienced and performed, that particular information had not come to light beyond the detail relayed earlier in this chapter (as well as in Chapters Three and Four). I wanted to explore further how one creates music for this instrument. I had already been playing and learning with the musicians for some months (primarily Gogo Khokhiwe Mphila and Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula) and so, with holicipatory practices in mind, I attempted to compose my own music for the *makhweyane*.

From Conquergood's idea of "dialogical perfomance" (1985) and Feld's "dialogic editing", I termed the methodology for this part of the project "compositional conversations". Through this composition-based practice, I planned to compose a complete song based on the types of struck rhythmic patterns and formal qualities of *makhweyane* songs I had heard and learned so far. I planned to play my song for the musicians I worked with, in order to stimulate conversation surrounding the music, but also to further my ethnographic, coperformative witnessing by embarking on this holicipatory process. Through this experience and these "conversations", I hoped to better understand the sound production, aesthetic, and sensory aspects of playing the *makhweyane*.

In his writing on performance as a moral act, Dwight Conquergood tables the numerous ways in which this type of act can go awry. When identity, difference, commitment and detachment meet, he argues there is "genuine conversation" which he terms as "dialogical performance" (1985:5). Below, I report on my "compositional conversations" in three phases, exploring how this methodology served my research and what requires rethinking.

i.   *Composing*

The process of composing a *makhweyane* song was awkward at first. With little parametric information to go on, I began with what I knew from my isiXhosa bow playing experience: creating a relatively simple struck bow pattern, so I could focus on singing siSwati (the more difficult aspect of playing this music at that point). I titled this composition '*Sigwaca lesihle*'.[135] My siSwati at the time was functional but did not allow for me to compose lyrically (in terms of poetic language). Knowing this to be an important feature of this music, I drew from common idioms to help me. The lyrics I assembled finally took form:

Sigwaca lesihle ngulesishoshako
Lesindiza etulu sitfola sagila
Ubogawula ubheke, wena weKunene
Kulukhuni emhlabeni
The beautiful bird that creeps
When it flies high it finds a knobkerrie
Please be careful when chopping wood,
you [singular] of Kunene [of the Swazi Nation]
Life is hard

The following is a fieldnote extract describing the early processes of composing the song '*Sigwaca lesihle*'.

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21 June 2014

My first attempt at composing my own makhweyane *song. I wasn't sure where to start. When transcribing, translating and analysing bow song lyrics over the past two weeks, I had thought to myself that it might be worth setting composing exercises as one does when you study composition, a way of breaking the ice. What is intimidating is less the bow playing and patterns but rather the vocal/lyrical aspects, the language.*

I am currently using the song lyrics to learn about the language but as soon as I wrote/recorded this little songlet I realised that tone and intonation and inflection are really important in these songs… I feel like I sing out every syllable in a way that most siSwati singers wouldn't. And how can I learn that? I can play the recording for Vusi to get him to help me with inflection and pronunciation.

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[135] *Sigwaca* refers to a ground-based bird, the common quail (*Coturnix coturnix)* (SNTC Swaziland Birds database, n.d.).

So I wanted a simple bow pattern- simple enough that I can play it and sing over it, but not too simple. In my mind, I was thinking of a faster, quaver-based, pattern like 'Ang'nankhomo' or something like that. I played with the idea of a simple pattern where there is space to improvise or vary the rhythm slightly. Something that isn't fixed and I can feel free to modify without changing the tonal (fundamental) shifts when they come. I found something which I can play straight but also turn into dotted quavers and semiquavers and swing, etc... I recorded this (a rough take) and decided to use the recording on a loop, whilst I look at the words, sing over possible melody ideas. I came up with the "Sigwaca lesihle" higher refrain quite quickly and listening back, I immediately thought of a few harmonies to add underneath. I restrained myself (bearing in mind that this needs to be a live performance ultimately) and just added a low static pedal vocal line that rhythmically followed what I had first sung. I then left a little break for a cycle or two of the bow pattern to be heard (as a section break – like Mphila, Magagula, Sifundza, and Shongwe often do). After this I thought it would be a great idea to hear the full lyrical phrase sung together and also felt nervous about how to phrase this. As soon as I thought this was needed, I almost visually saw the song in different sections, with perhaps the opening vocal part coming back to punctuate other text phrases. Quite like the words in 'Lutsandvo Luphelile' where the "yini bo ma" text comes back in different sections (the 'Lutsandvo luphelile' text does this as well).

So I added a longer phrase that uses the full text "Sigwaca lesihle ngulesishoshako" and when listening to that a few times, I thought it would be good to add a harmony or response part. I added some higher parts and lower drone parts to thicken the texture but before putting them down, I had thought something more complex like the interaction between the caller and response in 'Bambulele umtfwanami'. It didn't come out that way – it started to sound a lot like the other vocal stuff I have recorded before in other contexts. Many chorus (harmony) parts without a clear soloist. When I listened back, I thought it is interesting that I hear vocal parts immediately – thinking along the themes of bow music being the source of choral Swazi music and that relationship which Rycroft had written about. The cycle (as a tool for composition and analysis) allows for many different parts to immediately be generated. I need to think of lace: a thin, beautiful, intertwining lace of voice and bow (perhaps even two voices and bow), or one voice and a couple of implied voices. That means I do need more text and I will have to come up with a good refrain to set in a contrapuntal way to fit in with the lyrics so far.

When listening back, this song sounds more like the kind of song Gogo Mphila would write. Perhaps one can tell that I've been learning 'Lutsandvo' and listening to and spending lots of time with Mphila. Her songs feel less lacy and more straight forward.

After composing the struck *makhweyane* pattern with basic overtone engagement, and the first two vocal lines (for the text: "*Sigwaca lesihle ngulesishoshako, lesindiza etulu sitfola sagila*"), I was unsure as to how to finish the song and what other text to use. It so happened that I was scheduled to visit Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula with Vusi Sibandze shortly afterwards and I used this opportunity to play my incomplete song for them, explaining that I was finding it difficult to finish the composition and asking for suggestions. The following is a field note extract from a visit to Magagula's house in eBuhleni from 17 July 2014.

17 July 2014

*I bucked up my courage and asked if I could play my bow composition ('*Sigwaca*') for him and if he would mind giving me feedback. Mkhulu graciously agreed and as I started to play, he said he needed to retune my bow… it is way too low. He tuned it a lot higher and when he returned it to me, I had a moment of not being able to adapt my carefully constructed melodies (especially the second line of text which was fresher in my head) to this new key. I started and repeated the different sections too many times as I grappled around for the comfort of the correct gradients in the melodies I had written. When I had finished singing through my text, Vusi contributed some vocable lines and added new melodies for me to sing for the third line of text which he had suggested ("Ubogawula ubheke wena weKunene; Kulukhuni emhlabeni – Please be careful when chopping wood, you of Kunene [of the Swazi Nation]; Life is hard"). Vusi explained that this is another common idiom in siSwati. It asks people to take care as life can be difficult through the metaphor of chopping firewood or a tree safely. The words sounded and felt good and I sang them over and over. Mkhulu said it was good but beyond that, he did not have much more feedback which I found quizzical. He played along with me on his* makhweyane*, watching my hands and picking up the simple struck pattern easily. We continued for a while and between Vusi, Magagula and I, we discussed how I had been holding the striking stick incorrectly – in a way that didn't allow for a stronger and louder sound to be emitted from my bow. Mkhulu felt strongly that I was not playing out or confidently enough. The new way of striking was good and more comfortable: with the stick firmly between second and third right hand fingers and the movement coming from the wrist rather than the whole forearm (as I had been doing it). When I had been playing '*Sigwaca*' before, the stick kept falling out of my hand and that led to a lot of the mistakes in what had already felt like an exposed, slightly nerve-wracking performance.*
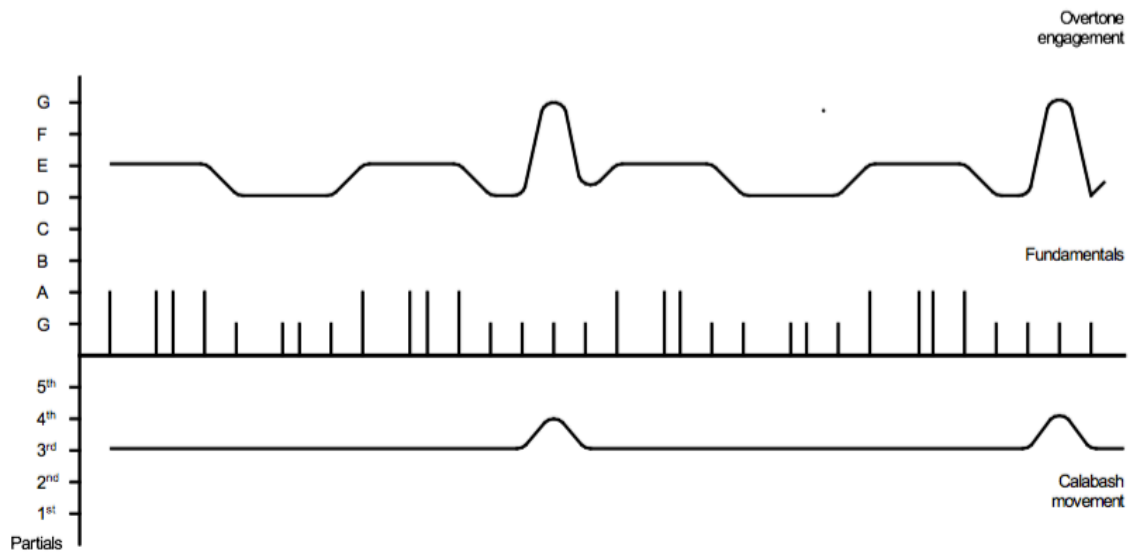
Figure 46 Transcription of 'Sigwaca Lesihle'.

So, the song '*Sigwaca'* continued to grow with technical and lyrical contributions from both Magagula and Sibandze but I had been perplexed by Magagula's comments about the composition. He had been positive and happy that I had attempted the task but had little in-depth feedback for me. After that day and with some of the new vocable material and the new text, I felt I had enough to complete the song and went on to practice and record it for myself.

iii.   Further conversations

I had the opportunity towards the end of my fieldwork, after many more lessons, interviews, and the concerts, to play my composition for more *makhweyane* musicians. The feedback I got during these sessions was largely laughter, clapping, ululation, mimesis, and generous positive reinforcement. Many musicians focused the song's lyrics and the common local variations of the idiom "*Sigwaca lesihle ngulesishoshako*". Gogo Sifundza suggested her local eBuhleni version: "*Sigwaca lesihle, lesishoshela phambili*" (The beautiful bird with the forward movement) (S. Sifundza, interview, eBuhleni, 10 December 2015). In the Shewula region, the local variant has a different interpretation: "the one that flies first is safe, the one that flies later will be hit by the knobkerrie". John Mahlalela explained how you could use that turn of phrase to describe the nearby Shewula Mountain Camp (a local eco-tourism project, the first of its kind, where the Shewula-based musicians often perform for tourists) as the first *sigwaca* of its kind (J. Mahlalela, interview, Shewula, 14 December 2015). He went on further to state that in doing my research, I was that initial *sigwaca* with whom he and others

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had built good relationships. Make Lomthandazo Nkomo agreed that the voice needed to be heard over the *makhweyane* – that the instrument should not be too loud when playing (L. Nkomo, interview, Shewula, 14 December 2015). John Mahlalela advised that I leave longer and more frequent gaps in between the song lyrics for the *makhweyane* to sing itself (J. Mahlalela, interview Shewula, 14 December 2015). Gogo Khokhiwe Mphila interpreted my 'S*igwaca'* lyrics as a dedication to the rural *makhweyane* musicians: I had to leave town and travel to the village, in order to learn and grow (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 11 December 2015).

A few musicians suggested that leg-shakers and additional instrumentation could be included to improve the song. Mphila and Mncina agreed that the upbeat *makhweyane* pattern I had created could be complimented by a regular, walking rhythm of leg-shakers (ibid., M. Mncina, interview, eNsangwini, 11 December 2015). After suggesting this, Mphila stated that she would not want to add too much else as it had to remain my song (ibid.). Numerous musicians also pointed out that my pronunciation of the '-*gwa'* sound in the word *sigwaca* was not toned low enough. Make Tfobhi Shongwe stated she wanted to add *ululation* and other sounds to the song, to bring more Swazi elements. She asked for a recording of '*Sigwaca lesihle'* so she could learn the song herself (T. Shongwe, interview, Msahweni, 11 December 2015). Both Make Cathrina Magagula and Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula suggested that they could create different, more complex, bow patterns that would fit with the vocal melody (C. Magagula, interview, Shewula, 14 December 2015; B. Magagula, interview, eBuhleni, 10 December 2015).

Overall, my experience of playing this composition for musicians around Swaziland resulted in encouragement, and of the constructive discussion that this dialogic tool created, much revolved around the lyrics and their possible improvement (including my pronunciation of the lyrics) and technical, performative issues regarding my playing of the *makhweyane*. There was little engagement with the structural and form-based issues of the song. This fieldwork tool was useful as it brought me closer to the creative experience of composing a *makhweyane* song but also allowed for numerous experiences where my own work was up for critique and deconstruction – a dynamic which was often skewed the other way in our earlier interviews and sessions.

Bourdieu, in his discussion of cultural production, describes a group of people bound by the production of a particular cultural product both maintaining and transforming the field, whilst guided by its requirements (1993:30, 471). Alexander M. Cannon's discussion of the musical "ruin" in Vietnamese music for diversion is a further elaboration on boundary maintenance within an artistic tradition. In Cannon's research, Vietnamese musicians rely on the "ruin" (unwrap it, rework it) and invoke it to "reel in and regulate authenticity" (Cannon 2016:148). But what happens when a musical scene is not emphatically policed in order to

aid sustainability? *Makhweyane* music in Swaziland as a scene or space is sparsely populated. Cannon writes: "The emergence of the ruin occurs at specific historical moments when the memories of artists clash with collective memories of the present" (2016:157), but how does this relate to a musical tradition where no clashes take place and there is so little scope for interaction and criticism? In the case of the cultural production of *makhweyane* music, the agents and sounds encased within this sonic community are so disparate that the parameters are invisible or porous at the least. What emerges is a creative environment in which musicians are free to create, experiment, and innovate to varying degrees, developing a personal style. That creative voice appears to be allowed to prosper with largely warm support from the community when it is assembled.

In this context a performance intervention can be fruitful. As is often the case within Performance Studies, one cannot predict the outcomes of research strategies or acts. However, what emerged as useful from my "compositional conversations" (beyond the interpersonal) were reflections related to the challenges I met when attempting to compose; improved listening to overtonal structures in *makhweyane* music and important structural and performative suggestions. As a tentative siSwati speaker and amateur *makhweyane* composer, I couldn't imbibe the notion of *kugucugucuka* (continual variation) in the creation of my song, I was still able to generate a musical artefact and a tool that simultaneously allowed me to experience the challenges of creating music on this instrument, and humble myself in front of musicians who continually made themselves vulnerable to me artistically and as friends. Although composers and musicians rarely outlined stylistic parameters for this music, these "compositional conversations" served to stimulate conversation about what players liked and thought was good practice.

Conclusion

After much contextualisation, this chapter served to focus on the craft of creating music for the *makhweyane*. It opened with a discussion of the individual and solitary music-making in southern African music. With greater interest in alternate modes of musicking and neglected fields of musical endeavour, Andrew Killick's response to this interest has been to coin the term "holicipation": solitary music-making where the performer serves also as the audience. Despite links to nostalgic and simplistic images of lone musicians penned by colonial and apartheid-era researchers, I posit that an enriched understanding of the fluidity and adaptability of these *makhweyane* players allows for us to appreciate them as holicipators as well as collaborative innovators. Because this instrument that is so closely tied to the body, in its pairing with the voice but also in its mechanics and acoustics, there is an inwardness to playing the *makhweyane* and this, linked with the internal processes of composing music

and creating anew, provides rich grounds for research, performed interventions, and further development.

I stretch this image of musicians playing alone to understand how these few musicians, often separated by age and distance, make music in an individualistic way. The material discussed in this chapter supports a framing of these musicians as both adaptive and responsive musicians and as composers engaged in creative heterophony: self-referential and each with their own personal practice and creative voice.

In this chapter, I asked how these musicians compose for the *makhweyane*. By tracing some of the formal qualities of the music made by contemporary *makhweyane* players, I asked how they are innovating and with what techniques are they developing their own creative voice. In an environment where it was often hard to have a conversation about the techniques and methods involved in making music, alternative strategies had to be imagined. In the case of understanding how to create *makhweyane* music, I endeavoured to compose my own songs and song sketches to workshop with and play for musicians to further our conversations. This practice served to deconstruct my liminal relationship with this music-making process as a performer and composer myself.

Having laid the foundational framework for the making, tuning and playing of the *makhweyane* in Chapters Three and Four, this chapter examined a further important facet of this music: its lyrical identity. Like the multi-layered sonics of the *makhweyane* (with subtle overtones, and layers of vocal, overtone, and instrumental melody lightly placed on top of one another), meaning is also layered in the siSwati words of these songs. The song examples highlighted in this chapter provide a foundational awareness of how lyrics can be structured, how in research and study repetition and language must be probed and peeled away to access a deeper understanding of any song's intent, expression and function.

The siSwati term *kugucugucuka* (to change continually) mentioned earlier in this chapter best describes this sonic community and *makhweyane* music in general. Bauman writes: "Emergent culture, though a basic element in human social life, has always lain outside the charter of folklore, perhaps in part for lack of a unified point of departure or frame of reference able to comprehend residual forms and items, contemporary practice, and emergent structures" (1975:306). From this sparse creative environment, contemporary *makhweyane* music resembles an emergent culture when one takes a detailed look. It is a creative space in which new and diverse sounds, practices, and experiences are created as musicians develop and value their own "*sandla sakho*" (their own hand) (Bauman 1975:306).

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

Kugucugucuka: Change that is continual

> The notion that musical cultures are fragmented and deterritorialized seems
> to drive the now common – indeed, practically unavoidable –
> ethnomusicological study of individuals. (Ruskin & Rice 2012:318)

Figure 47 Cathrina Magagula plays makhweyane *at Shewula (18 August 2014) (Photo credit: Claudia Ramos).*

This dissertation has been a story of individuals: from Vusi Sibandze, my research assistant and friend, to Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula and Make Tfobhi Shongwe, and to a lesser extent, my own purpose and playing during this research. The sparsity of this *makhweyane* musical "scene" provides an interesting environment for ethnomusicological research but also reflection on premise and methodology. This final chapter serves to conclude the dissertation, drawing together the aims and achievements of my doctoral project and highlighting avenues for further research within Swazi bow music, Swazi musical studies, and southern African bow-related ethnomusicology.

At the start of this dissertation, I stated that the aim of this project was to explore the music of the *makhweyane* musical bow in Swaziland: how it is played and learned and how music is created for it. Additionally, I wanted to examine the socio-cultural and political context within which this instrument is played. My research aimed to understand how music and culture function within contemporary Swaziland and how, if at all, the *makhweyane* and its layers feature in this construction. With a focus on performance, this research explored how Swaziland's cultural nationalism is performed (focusing in particular on 'traditional'

instrumentalists and *makhweyane* players within this) but also how individual musicians perform their histories, their citizenship and their identities as artists with this instrument. Opening with the King's call for new compositions to be created, this dissertation has been concerned with the *makhweyane* as a prism for Swaziness, for learning and storytelling, for the imagination, remembrance and for creation.

Music and culture in Swaziland

This dissertation opened with an exploration of the history of Swaziland and the current political state of the nation. Drawing from an intriguing and multi-faceted history of conflict, migration and political shenanigans, the contemporary state of Swaziland has forged itself in response to regional dynamics, colonialism, and more recently, what it may seek to erase: dissent. Though the country has moved through waves of more intense political factionalism and oppositional activism in recent decades, Swaziland's extreme inequality and the relative power of the ruling elite have led to marked public performances of dissension. Examples of these are numerous strike actions (between 1996 and 2016), continual student demonstrations over scholarship cuts (on-going), and at the time of writing, the *sibaya* (mass meetings with the king) walk-outs of 2016. I posit that as overt displays of resistance and objection have increased within civil society, any fluidity in the formulation of Swaziness appears to have been slowly erased through the concretizing of what is perceived as a homogenous 'Swazi culture'.[136]

A review of written and enacted texts on 'Swazi culture' show a highly codified construction involving personal and public rites of passage; courtship roles and responsibilities; tribute service to the king occurring annually during the *Umhlanga* and *Incwala* festivities; fashion; and creative arts and crafts. I asked how music, and the music of so-called 'traditional' musicians in particular, feature in this construction. This exploration brought me to the following conclusions. Firstly, music is an important indicator of Swaziness in the country today. This can be seen most clearly in the role of polyphonic choral music in mass-participatory events such as the *Umhlanga* and *Incwala* ceremonies, which serve as ritual markers between sub-events. It is evident in that music forms the primary accompaniment to the major dances and performed parades in both of these mass displays of 'Swazi culture'. Secondly, it appears that 'traditional' instruments (usually quiet and individualistic in their performance practice) have little place in these and other communal, nationalistic events and so are valued less highly within this cultural imaginary than other communal music-making traditions (*ummiso* dance-songs, *umgubho* ceremonial anthems, or

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[136] Examples of this can be seen in the late King Sobhuza II and his creation of a new governance system based on *Tinkhundla*, the Queen Regent Labotsibeni's involvement with the socialist early African National Congress in South Africa (Levin 2001:105).

songs associated with the *emabutfo* or *lutsango* age-regiments discussed in earlier chapters). In the case of the *makhweyane*, the quiet acoustics of this instrument result in its visual imagery carrying greater currency than its sound.

The above two reflections are rooted in top-down formulations of cultural power but the third outcome relating to Swaziness and the *makhweyane* asserts the agency of individual musicians in this web of enacted performances. Musicians, like other Swazi subjects, actively engage in visual and sonic markers of Swazi identity in their public and private performance attributes (*makhweyane* instruments with Swazi flags attached to them, fashion and instrument adornment e.g. traditional attire and flags, the arrangement and performance of regimental repertory). This can be seen in the numerous solo home performances of *makhweyane* players in full traditional attire but also in the *Bashayi Bengoma* ensemble and how these musicians assembled communally to perform their nation, and their history.

Figure 48 Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula at his home at eNyakatfo (February 2011).

Musicians can also enact their citizenry in their song writing, as Mkhulu Bhemani Magagula did with his composition about the *kaMkhweli* controversy. In this case study, Magagula, a recognised and respected musician and cultural practitioner, composed a song that retells a story about an area where land dispossession and nepotism had taken place by

those in power. In his role as a social and moral commentator, Mkhulu Magagula critiques the injustices around him through this music and these lyrics: "*Kunenkinga eNyakatfo. Ngiyakhala kaNgwane*" (There is a problem at eNyakatfo. I am crying, Swaziland). In this way, *makhweyane* players both represent and experience the archetypal, 'traditional', rural living invoked by the nostalgic romanticism of 'Swazi culture' but through their craft have opportunity to subvert and complicate it.

The *makhweyane* in context

Any study on music and culture in Swaziland would be incomplete without considering this country's particular nationalist, hierarchical, and royalist make-up – discussed in Chapter Two. With this context in mind, the third chapter in this dissertation examines the *makhweyane* as an acoustic and social instrument. My third chapter draws upon interviews with active musicians to consider the technical and constructional aspects of the *makhweyane*: to uncover how one makes, learns and plays this musical bow.

Due to the limited archival footprint of this instrument, I situate the *makhweyane* amongst the other musical bows of Swaziland, southern Mozambique and KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. Although these bows (the xiTsonga *xitende*, Swazi *ligubhu*, Zulu *ugubhu* and *umakhweyana*) all share socio-cultural ties and acoustical principles to varying degrees, it is the Zulu *umakhweyana* bow that has the greatest similarities with the Swazi *makhweyane*. This chapter (and dissertation broadly) seeks to put forward the playing preferences and practices of current musicians in Swaziland and seeks to provide the groundwork on Swazi bow music from which further research can be done. Preferred tunings and playing techniques are relayed with respect to the personal preferences of individual musicians and with reference to particular song examples.

With my focus on the individual within the social, it became apparent through interviews that the older *makhweyane* players all learned to play in the *veld* (the field) whilst tending livestock. Though self-delectative practice has nostalgic and simplistic connotations attached to it (through the writings of Hugh Tracey and even Killick himself), many of the older *makhweyane* players interviewed described how they learned to play in their youth sitting in the fields watching cattle or goats. It is here that the seeds of my engagement with Andrew Killick's idea of "holicipation" are planted. Many learned from cousins and other relatives, and some, Tfobhi Shongwe in particular, learned from afar, listening to others play, and then returning home to create their own instrument and to embark upon their own solitary experimentation with that sound.

Intrinsically linked to processes of learning to play the *makhweyane* is the function and performance setting of this music. Older players described how playing was used to

pass the time whilst doing chores or in the field, but also during courtship when young women would advise and tease each other about their respective love interests through song. If two girls were interested in the same boy, they would compete on their *bomakhweyane* to win his love. They also would arrange other material for *makhweyane*. Make Tfobhi Shongwe described how she arranged traditional *kumekeza* wedding songs for her *makhweyane* and would perform in those communal festivities. In this way, the assembled data deconstructs the simplistic notion of the *makhweyane* bow as merely a self-delectative instrument (in contemporary and historical practice) and at the same time, affirms that the versatility of its players has meant the *makhweyane* is at once a holicipatory and participatory musical tool.

The highly idiomatic and figurative lyrics of *makhweyane* music, as sung text and *tibongo* or praises, speak to the mixed functions of these songs and form the focus of much of my analysis. A reading of these songs as texts demonstrate not only the flexibility of these musicians as composers, but also the songs' value as moralistic reminders; humorous commentaries on the local and universal and private vehicles for solace and comfort. Slobin states: "One way people stitch their lives together is through musical memories, which act as milestones" (1993:6). This is apparent in the lyrics of *makhweyane* songs in which treasured and painful memories are stitched together through music.

Broadcasts, recordings and the imagination

It is evident that *makhweyane* songs function as tools for storytelling and sustaining communication to oneself, to one's family and to a figurative or visceral audience – so much so that Gogo Khokhiwe Mphila likened the *makhweyane* to a "radio" (K. Mphila, interview, eNsangwini, 8 May 2014). When Make Tfobhi Shongwe describes how she protects herself from the visitation of bad spirits by playing her prayer-songs on the *makhweyane*, there is resonance with Fanon's description of radio as "a protective organ against anxiety" (1965:89). I use the symbol of a 'radio' or *iwayilese* (wireless), a respected and much utilised technology in Swaziland, to further trace the bow's role as personal and physical accompaniment, and transmitter of messages and stories. Two recordings based around the theme of the *Mbhilibhi* bus (one historic Rycroft recording of Sitandi Mabuza, and a recent recording of Gogo Mphila) allow for the analysis of how space and story can be used in *makhweyane* songs as players express and accompany themselves in this way.

Gender plays various roles in how *makhweyane* songs are created and how lyric-stories are imagined. This has to do with the clear gender divisions in Swazi society: where rural women traditionally relocate patrilocally to their husband's homes after marriage; have been historically discouraged from playing the *makhweyane* after marriage; and do much of

the hard labour of subsistence farming. Though men and women both play the *makhweyane*, these divisions create different stories about love, difficulty, and movement (i.e. Mphila's '*Ngipheka kudla kakhokho tinkhuni*' (I had already cooked food when they were taking out the firewood) song and Sitandi Mabuza's '*Umbhilibhi*' (after the *Mbhilibhi* bus) song both discussed in Chapter Four).

I draw upon radio both symbolically and as an actual technology. Considering the prevalence and vibrancy of radio production and its consumption in Swaziland, it is not surprising that during my fieldwork there were opportunities to interact with the Swaziland Broadcasting and Information Services. Performing on radio and communicating troubles via the radio (*emsakatweni* – at the place of broadcasting) were common themes in interviews with *makhweyane* musicians. Great importance is placed on radio and recorded sound within this sonic community of performers.

Whilst radio is an important transmitter of other musical repertory (gospel, *umbholoho*, South Africa *mbaqanga*, and other popular musics), many of the older musicians requested and interacted with the recordings of their music that I made during my research. Simultaneously two young musicians demonstrated how they utilised recordings of *makhweyane* music as new transmissive strategies, informing and inspiring their practice in different ways.

Creation in *makhweyane* music

This dissertation closes with a focus on the craft of music-making on the *makhweyane*. The late Mkhulu Sagile Matse, a respected, elderly musician, advised Thobile "Makhoyane" Magagula to find her "own hand" ("*sandla sakho*") on the *makhweyane* before his passing (T. Magagula, interview, Mpolonjeni, 7 December 2015). The thrust of much of the musical analysis included in this dissertation has been to highlight the diverse compositional and performative strategies that contemporary *makhweyane* composer-musicians have explored in their music: the ways in which they have found their "hand" musically. For a quiet and ephemeral music, built upon the simple tools of wood, wire, overtones and voice, it appears that composers have generated creative 'voices' or styles particular to their own interests and strengths. This manifests itself in numerous and fluid compositional attributes: from cellular lyrical variation and bard-like improvisation, to set compositions, arrangement techniques, and organological innovation. It was in these conversations that I probed what those quiet moments of solitary composition, experimentation and innovation might have been like and what processes musicians utilised in the creation of their music. This inwardness, these 'inward' moments, as well as the very 'outward' festival performances and radio broadcasts have been a focus of this research.

As a development of the theme of individualism and the solitary, it appears that *makhweyane* music in Swaziland exists on a sparsely inhabited plane and this is true in numerous senses. From an archival perspective (and I refer here to written texts, interview recordings, and musical recordings), Kirby, Tracey, Rycroft, and Dargie contributed examples of *makhweyane* and other bow playing (and related information) across the past century with relatively little epistemological interaction or coherence. Of the older generation of *makhweyane* players alive today, there is little opportunity for communal music-making or general musical socialising, because these musicians are settled geographically far away from each other with little time or money to facilitate meetings. Of the younger generation, there are few players and there is relatively little access to the available recordings and performance opportunities, and so their practice is largely individualistic. As a musical "scene", this environment is sparse but without the fierce protectorateship of a guarded tradition, the sparsity in this local "sound culture" allows for the innovative development of own's own creative "hand", as documented in earlier chapters (Gandy et al. 2014:6).[137]

It is from this sparse space that musicians play to themselves, play to their respective pasts and to history (as biographers and storytellers), on occasion perform for and with each other, and play to the national cultural imaginary. In this dissertation, I posit that an enriched understanding of the fluidity and adaptability of these *makhweyane* players allows for us to appreciate them as holicipators as well as collaborative innovators.

Avenues for further research

There are always limitations to one's research and especially so when reliant on few foregrounding, recent texts. In many respects, this preliminary study lays the groundwork for further ethnographic and analytical study into the bow music of Swaziland and due to this, there are many resultant avenues for further research. From a methodological perspective, the open-ended quality of performance and practice-based research within musical bow studies has numerous applications. Modes of embodied practice in bow playing have yet to be utilised and yet the quiet and intimate nature of this instrument provides rich ground for this type of approach. The literature that has come before has focused primarily on generalised and systemic classification and in other cases, lyrical, poetic analysis. At the time of writing, the universities in South Africa are experiencing massive turmoil, with students calling for transformational redress of curricula and institutions. It strikes me that Conquergood's engaged research interventions have numerous applications in a southern African (especially ethnomusicological) research environment and practice-based research

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[137] Gandy describes sound cultures as "arising from specific associations between music, place and sound" (2014:6)

can speak to this. Unlocking the colonial and postcolonial power iterations within ethnographic and ethnomusicological study will go some way towards academic redress. Encouraging and investigating the possibility within artistic interventions in academic terrain also has the potential to open up intellectual trajectories from a more diverse body of researchers.

Beyond methodological endeavours, there are numerous aspects to the study of bow music and Swazi music in particular that could be opened up for further research. Samuels et al. in their article 'Soundscapes: Toward a sounded anthropology" describe the importance of investigating the "encultured nature of sound' (2010:330). The scope of this dissertation did not allow for an in-depth exploration of the acoustic and experiential nature of the sound of the *makhweyane*. The sound of musical bows within a southern African context provokes a particular experience in those familiar and those not with these instruments. Exploring the multi-faceted cultural and experiential nature of this sound but also how it is experienced would be of great interest to the broader field.

Regarding the field of Swazi bow music, further research into the relationship between the isiZulu *umakhweyana* bow, the Mozambican *xitende* and the Swazi *makhweyane* would greatly add to an understanding of musical links, and also perhaps of historical links in this south Eastern corner of the subcontinent. The scope of this dissertation did not allow for further engagement regarding recording strategies and album creation amongst these musicians. The recorded archive housed at the Swaziland Broadcasting and Information Services is relatively unknown to researchers and musicians and this would be an interesting avenue for further research. I came to know of these recordings only through the retired radio host, Edward Mthethwa, and at that time the collection of tapes was housed in his office, coated in dust with indecipherable labelling. An archival study of these tapes could bring to light different periods of performance over recent decades in Swaziland and add to the conversation about the role of radio and institutions in this cultural landscape.

Music in Swaziland is severely under-researched. With the particular emphasis on 'traditional' culture found in Swaziland, there are market and industry-related fields for research. There are numerous small but growing scenes of house music, hip-hop and other local musical variants developing and these may be of interest to scholars. There is little scholarly information about the polyphonic vocal music of the annual *Umhlanga* and *Incwala* festivals. As discussed in my second chapter, these repertories are rich with historical, cultural and musical significance.

In this study, I touched upon the potentialities of composition as a research tool, as a dialogic instrument within ethnographic research. Further investigation into the applications of composition as a research tool within bow music studies and more broadly within southern African ethnomusicology is required. The "compositional conversations" trialled in my

research served, in a dialogical sense, to stimulate conversation about compositional processes and possible musical parameters within *makhweyane* music. Time did not allow for a full examination or further development of this methodology but this could form the basis of further investigation. As a research strategy, it has the potential to disrupt conventional research role hierarchies and dissolve the researcher's liminal relationship to the music studied. Beyond this, composing and performing as research have the potential to enrich the embodied knowledge and musico-analytical outcomes of one's study.

Closing reflections

The musicians in this study occupy an unusual and precarious space due to their small number, their small sonic community and due to their location in a country where cultural practices and artefacts have currency. This research into the *makhweyane* and its music espouses the value of reading sound and music in order to understand the wishes, experiences, and stories of musicians. Impey states:

> …sound, perhaps more than any of the other senses, has an enveloping, affective character that creates in us an awareness of proximity, connectedness, and context and thus plays a significant role in the analysis of social, historical and political experience. (2008:34)

In the case of the *makhweyane* musical bow of Swaziland, rural and urban musician-composers have developed their own adaptive and responsive musicianship and music, resulting in a self-referential creative heterophony.

The *makhweyane* and its versatile ephemerality serve as a medium through which one may understand this particular space and moment in Swaziland. Although a small country, Swaziland provides an interesting cultural case study: a nexus where global world music culture and polemics, meet nationalism and self-censorship; where pan-Africanism meets fierce self-determination; and where archival concerns, class issues, rural-urban interfaces, postcolonialism and innovation compete for space. As Bonner (1983) spoke about the important political and migratory movements all passing through and affecting Swaziland historically, so, today, does this country and this music form a meeting point for the contemporary concerns for southern African musical studies, and global ethnomusicology.

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33. Sazi Dlamini, personal communication, 25 February 2016

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