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Ximatsatsa: exploring genre in contemporary Tsonga popular music

Madalane, Ignatia Cynthia

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XIMATSATSA:
EXPLORING GENRE IN
CONTEMPORARY TSONGA POPULAR MUSIC

IGNATIA CYNTHIA MADALANE

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, for the degree Master of Arts

Supervisor: Doctor Grant Olwage

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Abstract

While much has been written on black South African popular music (see, for example, Anderson, 1981; Coplan, 1985; Erlmann, 1991; Meintjes, 2003; Allen, 2004; Ansell, 2004; Muller, 2008), little has been written on Tsonga popular music. This dissertation interrogates 'Tsonga music', a category for naming Tsonga popular music used by many including the South African Music Awards (SAMAs); one of the few SAMA categories (others include Afrikaans, Venda and Pedi music categories) to be named by ethnicity. I question why the music is labeled the way it is and how these genre labels, which participate in global genre histories and local ethnic histories, interact with the Tsonga music category. In sum, this study explores what Louise Meintjes calls 'genrefication' (2003: 19) in popular Tsonga music and the meaning this has for its practitioners in a 'glocalized' music market (Robertson, cited in Steger, 2003).

In chapter one I trace the origins of Tsonga music as it is known today. The chapter focuses on General MD Shirinda, considered the father of Tsonga music. I write about aspects of his life and the role he played in the development of contemporary Tsonga music. Chapter two pays close attention of one of the Tsonga music subgenres, 'Tsonga traditional' or neo-traditional music. The chapter interrogates the meaning of the Tsonga traditional label for its practitioners. Here I question the use of terms such as 'Tsonga' and 'traditional' for labeling Tsonga music. I end the chapter by discussing some characteristics of this subgenre.

The third chapter follows the narrative of 'Tsonga disco' as told by my informants. Through the life stories of the musicians who have played major roles in the development of this subgenre, I explore how socio-political circumstances influenced the labeling of the subgenre. The chapter gives attention to the contribution to the subgenre by Paul Ndlovu, Peta Teanet, Joe Shirimani and Penny Penny. I end the chapter with a description of a live performance of Tsonga disco. Ethnicity is a recurring theme throughout the study. However, it is in chapter four that explicit attention is given to this identity marker. The chapter explores the role of ethnicity in shaping Tsonga music and how Tsonga musicians construct and affirm their ethnic and other identities in their music. Finally, I discuss the relationship between Tsonga music and the global music market.

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

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Ignatia Cynthia Madalane

Contents

		Page
	Acknowledgments	v
	List of Music Transcriptions	vii
	List of Tracks on Accompanying CD	viii
	Introduction	1
Chapter 1	*Mabula Ndlela*: The Pathfinder: The emergence of contemporary Tsonga popular music	16
Chapter 2	The meaning of Tsonga Music and Tsonga Traditional Music for its practitioners	33
Chapter 3	Three Decades of Tsonga Disco	63
Chapter 4	Constructing Tsonga-ness in Tsonga music: Negotiating ethnic identity in 'glocal' music practices	96
	References	119
	Appendix: CDs	

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List of Music Transcriptions

Title	Page Number
Xilahla Metende	44
Mbilu ya Xihlangi	45
Xihatimana	46
A va Dakwangi	46
Ilala Mangove	47
Vanga taleli himona	48
Mabebe	49
Hita Famba Moyeni (a)	71
Hita Famba Moyeni (b)	71
Hita Famba Moyeni (c)	71
Mukon'wana	76
Hisarisile	77
Gabaza	85
Hai Ka Mina (a)	86
Hai Ka Mina (b)	87
Hai Ka Mina (c)	88

List of Tracks on Accompanying CD

Track	Artist	Title
Disc 1		
Track 1	George Maluleke	Xilahla Matende
Track 2	Thomas Chauke	Mabebe
Track 3	Paul Ndlovu	Khombora mina
Track 4	Paul Ndlovu	Mukon'wana
Track 5	Peta Teanet	Maxaka
Track 6	Peta Teanet	Matswele
Track 7	Paul Ndlovu	Hita Famba Moyeni
Track 8	Paul Ndlovu	Tsakane
Track 9	Donna Summer	I Feel Love
Track 10	Paul Ndlovu	Cool Me Down
Track 11	Paul Ndlovu	Mina Ndzi Rhandza Wena
Track 12	Paul Ndlovu	Dyambu Ri Xile
Track 13	Bee Gees	Stayin' Alive
Track 14	Donna Summer	Unconditional Love
Disc 2		
Track 14	Chicco	Tribute to our Heroes
Track 15	Paul Ndlovu	I Wanna Know Your Name
Track 16	Paul Ndlovu	Zantinti
Track 17	Peta Teanet	Hisarisile
Track 18	Peta Teanet	I'm a Dancer
Track 19	Peta Teanet	Saka Naye Jive
Track 20	Peta Teanet	N'wayingwana
Track 21	Peta Teanet	I Love You Africa
Track 22	Joe Shirimani	Gabaza
Track 23	Joe Shirimani	Limpopo
Track 24	Joe Shirimani	Miyela
Track 25	Joe Shirimani	Bangilimazile
Track 26	Penny Penny	Hai Ka Mina
Track 27	Jeff Maluleke	Byala bya Xintu
Disc 3		
Track 28	Jeff Maluleke	Let's Save the World
Track 29	Jeff Maluleke	Luleka Mn'wanati
Track 30	Jeff Maluleke	Woman of Africa
Track 31	Penny Penny	Laphinda Ishangaana
Track 32	Joe Shirimani	Bomba
Track 33	Jeff Maluleke	Bombomela
Track 34	Jeff Maluleke	Kabila
Track 35	General MD Shirinda	Hamilosa