

# **HIV/AIDS and Discourses of Stigma and Denial: The Interventive Nature of Music Performance**

## **Abstract**

Discourses and general knowledge about HIV/AIDS filter down to the general population through the authoritative language of science and medicine, but various other role players also feature in such knowledge production. These include religious bodies, governments, and the general public. Each has noticeable effects on how HIV/AIDS is known, and more specifically, how those living with HIV/AIDS are treated in society. In this research, I use (auto)biographical texts by Cameron, Levin, McGregor and Steinberg as well as everyday talk, to analyse discursive processes around HIV/AIDS in South Africa. I examine the effects of language used in representing HIV/AIDS and explore how language contributes to the creation and maintenance of negative discourses that generate stigma, shame, and denial among those infected and affected. I then look at two films, one documenting the Mandela 46664 concert held in Greenpoint, Cape Town in 2003 which is captured together with other documentary material on the DVD *46664: The Event* (2004), and the other called *IThemba/Hope* (also 2004), a documentary showing preparations of Sinikithemba choir, Umlazi, to perform at the 10th Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Boston, USA. Through an examination of the music performances and extra-musical aspects of the two films, I interrogate how the music can be seen to constitute an intervention potentially contributing to a counter discourse that helps to demystify HIV/AIDS in South Africa and destigmatize the disease.