

ABSTRACT

Transcribing and Notating *Isicathamiya*: a Transcription of the *Impi Yemikhonto* album by Mtuba Thulisa Brothers (1989)

Isicathamiya is a choral music style performed by Zulu migrant workers. It is a hybrid of multiple styles that include South African traditional musics and Christian hymnody that was brought into the country by a combination of industrialisation and missionisation of the African communities.

The central aim of the study is to transcribe, notate an *isicathamiya* album of the Mtuba Thulisa Brothers. This transcription will help sharing the genre with other choral communities who rely on written notation as a means of learning new songs. Kofi Agawu (2003: 66) indicates that “notations are read by communities of readers, so in order to consolidate African practices that can eventually gain some institutional power, it makes sense to use the existing notation, however imperfect”. This study is driven by a paucity of studies on the musical aspects of *isicathamiya*. There is more that can be done to engage with the scoring, arranging, teaching and transmission of *isicathamiya*.

Moreover, this study seeks to contribute to the growth of the indigenous African music repertoire. For the purposes of this study, I place equal value on oral and written traditions. I hope that this dissertation will provide insights that will encourage more scholars, artists and musicians to engage and respond creatively to the work of the *isicathamiya* choirs.