

The Lumko Music Department and Cultural Heritage

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ABSTRACT

Until the 1960s music in the African language Catholic churches in southern Africa was confined to European (or European style) tunes set to African language texts. The music used suited neither the languages of the people nor their spiritual and emotional needs. Some church leaders, such as Archbishop Hurley of Durban, wished to see a change for the better. Certain missionaries tried to do something about it, in particular Oswald Hirmer and Fritz Lobinger, Bavarian missionaries working in the Xhosa area. The author had done music studies, and in his work in Zwelitsha parish, near King Williams Town, had used some of the music resulting from the work of Hirmer and Lobinger. The two missionaries gave him the chance to start a project for creating new church music in African styles by working with local church members in different areas. This went so well that the author was taken onto the staff of Lumko Pastoral Institute, with Hirmer and Lobinger. Over the period 1979 to 1989 the author was able to promote and record new church music in many languages in South Africa and its neighbours, plus a great deal of the traditional music of the region. In 1996 Anselm Prior, then director of Lumko, returned all the field recording originals to the author, giving him the opportunity to put together a significant contribution to the preserved music heritage of Southern Africa, including African traditional music and church music. The article is a report on the project and its results.

Keywords: Church music; Lumko Pastoral Institute; African traditional music; field recording; training composers; preserving music heritage

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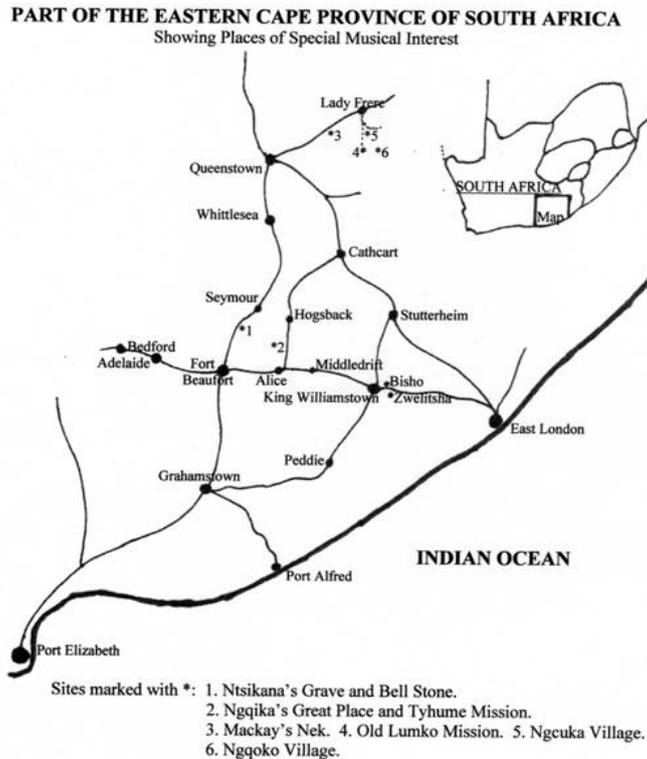


Figure 1: Map of part of the Eastern Cape; Lumko is at no. 4, south of Lady Frere.

PROLEGOMENON

Normally an article offered to a scientific journal will either present new scientific discoveries or information, or new interpretations based on already known scientific material. However, that is not the intention for this particular article. What is new in this is not the material of the article itself. I have already written a great deal about this material, and my intention is not to re-present what I have already published. This article¹ is intended primarily as a contribution to a Festschrift to celebrate 50 years of priestly ordination of Father Laurence Anselm Prior OFM, a former director of Lumko Pastoral Institute (hereafter Lumko) in South Africa.

The purpose of the article is firstly to present to the reader the work which the author was able to do because of Lumko and its leadership, and to describe how this work could be documented and brought into effective public use by the generosity of Father Anselm. I do not claim any particular credit for this work. Through Lumko I was given the wonderful opportunity of serving hundreds of marvellously talented people. I was the “-ologist”, but they were the

1 Article for the Anselm Festschrift.

experts. At Lumko I called myself the “catalyst”, the enabler, like a chemical compound which does not change itself but enables other chemicals to change. I have felt that I was like a locomotive running on a pre-ordained track: getting off that track on initiatives of my own would have simply been a derailment. Once I started to follow the track, things almost started to work by themselves: they just needed a catalyst. The experts I served were wonderfully creative African church musicians, and equally wonderful traditional musicians who were carriers of ancient traditions seriously threatened with extinction. To be able to do this was perhaps the greatest privilege I could ever have hoped for—though when I started on the track I had no idea where it would lead.

My article, “Building on Heritage, Preserving Heritage: Music Work in Southern Africa, 1976-2016,” (Dargie 2016, in *Collegium*, vol. 21: 163-188), covers largely the same scope as this present article. The link on Google to this journal, which is an internet publication, is <https://helda.helsinki.fi/handle/10138/167892>, and then one must go to the title *Collegium Vol. 21 whole volume vers2.pdf – Helda*. This article covers my work in ethnomusicology, including the Lumko work, under the aspect of applied ethnomusicology. The title of *Collegium* volume 21, edited by Klisala Harrison, is *Applied Ethnomusicology in Institutional Policy and Practice*. Ethnomusicology is the study of the folk music of all the peoples of the world, and, as Svanibor Pettan expresses it: “Applied Ethnomusicology is any use of ethnomusicological knowledge to influence social interaction, to maintain or change social conditions, or to direct the course of cultural change.”² In my article the institutions whose “policy and practice” are referred to include the Catholic Church, in particular the changes in Church attitudes to church music reflected in the writings of Pius XII³ and the Second Vatican Council⁴, and Lumko, whose policy of working to promote lay involvement and leadership in Church practice, provided the grounding for my own work of involving church members in producing their own church music for use in ways suited to their cultural and emotional needs in worship. In my Lumko work, conducted during the last critical years of apartheid in South Africa, the sociological and cultural aspects referred to by Svanibor Pettan in fact amounted to attempts at bringing religious and cultural liberation into African Catholic church music. By creating their own

2 Pettan, S., 2008. Applied Ethnomusicology and Empowerment Strategies: Views from across the Atlantic. *Musical Annual* XLIV(1), 85-99.

3 Pius XII. 1955. *Musicae Sacrae*, Encyclical Letter; promulgated Rome, 25 December 1955, especially articles 69 & 70.

4 Paul VI. 1963. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Constitution on the Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council. Promulgated Rome, 4 December 1963, in particular article 36, on the use of vernacular languages in the liturgy, and, on sacred music, articles 112-121.

church music in their own musical styles the composers with whom I worked were helping to create a local church led by local people, breaking away from the type of Western-based music used at the behest of the old missionaries. In this regard, C. Michael Hawn, who has written a great deal on liturgy and world church music, includes a chapter entitled “Singing Freedom: David Dargie and South African Liberation Song” in his book, *Gather into One: Praying and Singing Globally*. This chapter is largely focused on the music work at Lumko.

The article which follows was written in a rather light-hearted spirit. For the reader who would like something more solid to chew on, at the end of the article (see Addendum 1) I have added a bibliography and discography covering the field work done over the period 1977-1989, and the documentation growing out of this field work. The major boost to the written part of the work took place in 1996, when Father Anselm handed all my field recordings back to me. The documentation of the field work has occupied me extensively until now. At 79 years of age I hope I will be able to complete it before my competence runs out.

BACKGROUND

On 1 January 1979 I began work at Lumko, to start a department of church music. At that time Lumko was situated at old Lumko mission, about 12 kilometres south of Lady Frere in the then “Republic” of Transkei, on the dirt road to Qamata. At Lumko there was the mission church, the convent, a priests’ house, an administration block, a large dormitory building in which I was given a small flat, a building housing the former language laboratory, another building which was allocated for the new music department, plus a variety of other smaller buildings (see Figure 2). In 1985 the institute was moved to Germiston. When that happened, the Transkei dictator Matanzima stepped in, confiscated the place and declared it to be a new teachers training college, something he had “always promised to his people”. Until then the largest number of people staying at Lumko at one time had been, in addition to the permanent staff, 91 participants in a church music workshop held late in 1979. Matanzima put in over 700 students, with the results one can imagine. Recently I found Lumko on the Google satellite map. The only building still enjoying the presence of a roof is the church. But when I was there, things were well organised and excellent work of different types was being done.



Figure 2: Lumko in the early 1980s—a photo taken from the mountainside above Lumko, looking a bit north of west. The line of trees and bushes in the top left quarter shows the path of the Cacadu River, seldom more than a trickle, and the line of bushes running from the right edge of the photo to the Cacadu is the Ngqoko River (if one could call it that). It runs down from Ngqoko village—when it has some water in it to run, after heavy rain. (Photo by Fritz Lobinger.)

In the 1950s a catechists training centre was set up at Lumko. In 1962 this became a centre for training missionaries in Xhosa and other African languages, later including some training in anthropology. For a while work was done in church art. The last Xhosa language courses were held early in my time at Lumko. Two Bavarian missionaries working in the Xhosa area, who were beginning to take leading roles in laity training, came onto the Lumko staff shortly before me, and they completely changed the focus of the Lumko work. They were Fritz Lobinger and Oswald Hirmer, who both later became bishops. The director of Lumko in 1979 was Irish Sacred Heart missionary, Hugh Slattery, who also later became a bishop. When Slattery left Lumko, another Sacred Heart missionary, Dick Broderick, took over as director. German Spiritan missionary, Heinz Kuckertz, was working on anthropology, producing materials and organising conferences. Now Lobinger and Hirmer were turning the aims of Lumko to the training of lay leaders, imitating work done in South America where the church was being conceived of as a body of small Christian communities in which lay people took important roles as ministers of different types. These lay ministries included communion givers, funeral leaders, religious teachers, preachers, and so on. Lobinger and Hirmer's interest had also long been directed to the music in the Catholic African churches, especially the Xhosa churches. They had worked to develop new Xhosa church music as far as possible in true Xhosa styles, working with lay church members and at times employing B.K. Tyamzashe, the best-known Xhosa tonic-solfa composer of his day. Tyamzashe composed masses and other church songs.

These were published in a new Xhosa hymn book, *Bongan' iNkosi*, which came out in 1979, with Hirmer as editor.

Hirmer and Lobinger had begun to involve me in this music work in 1976. Hirmer and I worked together to produce a handbook on the training of hymn leaders, as part of the series of laity training publications. Some years earlier Archbishop Hurley, the acknowledged leading South African Catholic voice against apartheid, had told me of the need to develop church music for African congregations, music which was more suited to their spiritual and human needs than rhythm-less European tunes with African words tagged on. When Hirmer and Lobinger gave me a chance to do something about it I was very glad to accept.

THE ZWELITSHA WORKSHOP

It is beyond the scope of this short article to go deeply into the background, theoretical and otherwise, regarding the music used in African churches, but some things need to be covered. Briefly, two serious problems that had to be solved were that the accents in European tunes seldom fit the accents of African speech, and those tunes also do not fit the tones of African languages. Changing the tones of words in tonal languages can change the meaning of the words, with hilarious results such as making people sing “there is no egg on the bicycle” instead of the intended “there is no sorrow in heaven”.⁵

However, other matters also had to be treated as important. There are basic stylistic differences between Western and African music. A number of different scales are used in African music in South Africa, but these do not include the Western diatonic scale (do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-ti-do). This scale is not found in any African music. African church members have become used to the Western tunes brought in by the missionaries, but they adapt the Western scale and harmony in different ways to suit their ear, such as using “blues notes”. I call music using African adaptations to the Western scale “Afro-diatonic”. Most of the traditional African scales come from the overtone patterns of musical bows, such as those shown in the photos in Figure 2. These scales have their own harmony built from the scale tones. Xhosa traditional music, for example, uses a pattern of two overtone chords a whole tone apart: call them F major (F-A-C) and G major (G-B-D). The Xhosa way of playing musical bows is to use two fundamental tones

5 See the article “African Music in Christian Liturgy: the Igbo Experiment,” by L.N. Ekwueme, in *African Music* (ILAM, Grahamstown), vol. 5, no. 3 (1973), pp. 12-33.

a whole tone apart (e.g. F and G). The bows are made so that the overtone chords (the harmonics of the string) may be used by the player. The tones of these chords form the hexatonic (six-note) scale F-G-A-B-C-D. Some use of this scale and harmony may be heard in Xhosa popular songs, for example, there is some use of it in the “Click Song” popularised by Miriam Makeba. The “Click Song” is a traditional Xhosa bow song. I recorded it sung by the late Xhosa master player of the *uhadi* calabash bow, Nofinishi Dywili.⁶ Other differences are that Xhosa traditional and neo-traditional songs are nearly all in call-and-response form, with a song leader or leader group and song follower(s) responding to the leader. Xhosa songs are cyclic in form: the same (often short) pattern of rhythm and harmony is used over and over, with many variations and much improvisation by the singers fitting into the rhythm and harmony pattern.

The most important difference between Western and African music is in the use of rhythm. One might say that rhythm in Western music is passive and divisive. The rhythmic movement in Western music derives from time divisions in the length of the notes: 1 minim = 2 crotchets = 4 quavers = 8 semiquavers = 16 demisemiquavers and so on. In African music rhythm is active, and is built up from the voice and body movements of the performers. Kill the rhythm, stop body movement, and African music is dead. A most serious problem in the music in the missionary churches is that missionary influence had prejudiced many African Christians against the use of drums or often any kind of rhythmic music in church.

Before I tackled the task of trying to work on African church music I went for advice to Andrew Tracey, the leading ethnomusicologist in South Africa and director of the International Library of African Music (ILAM) founded by his father, Hugh Tracey. He pointed out these facts to me, and also, with a great deal of feeling, told me of the destructive influence that missionaries and Western educators had had on African music. From the very first I vowed to myself that I would do everything I could not only to avoid these mistakes in my proposed musicological work, but that I would actively do everything that I could to preserve and encourage African traditional music, and to promote the use of truly African music in church.

6 Mrs Dywili performs the song with *uhadi* on the CD “Sing an African Song” and also on the DVD “Performance at the Home of Nofinishi Dywili). Both discs are in the *Dave Dargie Collection*, ILAM: see the bibliography/discography at the end of this article. See photos of her in Figure 6.

As mentioned above, Oswald Hirmer had been appointed the editor of the proposed new Catholic Xhosa hymn book. The mainline Churches in Zimbabwe were way ahead of those in South Africa in developing new church music, so Hirmer and Lobinger sent me to a church music composition workshop in the last week of 1976 and the first week of 1977, at Kwanongoma College of Music in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, to glean ideas for promoting new songs for use in the hymnal. At the Kwanongoma workshop 29 participants produced 28 new compositions in a week. The workshop leaders, including Olaf Axelsson, the director of Kwanongoma, gave talks and lessons stressing the need to be African in what they produced, pointing out the importance of the use of rhythm. African people, for example, even danced in the songs sung at funerals. However, not much technical musical guidance was given. I suggested to Hirmer that we should have such a workshop. I suggested, however, that inspirational talks and the like be omitted, and that the participants should be allowed to get straight down to work in the knowledge that they should make music in a real Xhosa way. Oswald did the most useful preparation by writing out the texts to be set to music on pages of newsprint which would be displayed or handed out at the workshop. I had worked in Zwelitsha, the large township near King Williamstown, in 1966/7. I had brought a copy of a new mass by Tyamzashe published in 1865, and Lambert Mpotulo, the choir master at Zwelitsha, had performed it excellently and often with his choir, encouraging also the participation of the congregation. So I suggested the workshop be held at the church in Zwelitsha, and also suggested that Stephen Cuthbert Molefe, the enthusiastic and creative choir master at the church in Vosloorus, near Germiston, should also be involved. I had met Molefe, and had brought him with me (costs covered by Hirmer and Lobinger), to the workshop at Kwanongoma College.

The workshop was held over the Easter week-end of 1977. Participants included 12 members of Molefe's choir, brought to Zwelitsha by Hirmer, Mpotulo's choir and a number of interested members of the Zwelitsha congregation. The workshop was an amazing success. The participants were clearly delighted to have a chance to create church music for themselves. On the Easter Sunday afternoon as the workshop drew to a close the participants had divided into three groups. One group would be preparing their next composition, one would be practising a composition under the tree next to the church, and the third would be recording their new song. I had a very simple Philips cassette tape recorder, and hurried from group to group, then recording the finished products in the church. Hirmer later made happy references to me, running around brandishing the recorder (which had a built-in simple microphone) above the

heads of the singers as I recorded their work. In the end I had recorded 53 songs, including Molefe's first version of his Great Amen, *Masithi–Amen! Siyakudumisa*. This song is now in many hymn books in several continents. Extremely sadly, Molefe died in 1987, just before his song spread over the world. The following week-end I made transcriptions of the songs, and a number of them were later included in the new hymnal. Most of the compositions used Afro-diatonic technique, but there were a couple of attempts also at the use of the Xhosa scale.



Figure 3: Stephen Cuthbert Molefe (holding a hymn book), with composer Paul Thembayona Mancini, in front of the Lumko Priests' House at a workshop in 1979; Fr Mancini is now the Rector of St John Vianney's Seminary, Pretoria.

FURTHER WORKSHOPS AND RECORDINGS

During the rest of 1977 and the whole of 1978 I used every opportunity I could to do further workshops. My work was as chaplain and lecturer in music at Rhodes University in Grahamstown. I was able to use the considerable amount of time when the students were on vacations and breaks to travel to various parts of South Africa, looking for workshop opportunities. Archbishop Hurley of Durban and Bishop Schmidt of Mariannhill arranged for me to run two workshops in Zulu, and other organised workshops were held at Bloemfontein and Bethlehem (in Sotho) in the Free State, and at Ga-Rankuwa north of Pretoria (in Tswana). In addition, I was able to move around looking for known composers.

The most meaningful workshop at this time, however, was the second one in Xhosa, held at Lumko over the last week of 1977 and the first week of 1978, exactly a year after the Kwanongoma workshop. The workshop produced 75 new compositions, but just as significant

was the result of a decision made by Lobinger and Hirmer. I had seen and heard marimbas at Kwanongoma, built there for use in church singing, and I had come back with a recording of a marimba mass in Ndebele—the “Missa Zimbabwe”. Lambert Mpotulo of Zwelitsha was also sent to Kwanongoma after I was there, and he asked if it would be possible to get marimbas for his parish. So my Bavarian colleagues, who had access to far more funds than I would ever have, decided to import three sets of four marimbas. To enable them to be used for the workshop they also brought down four student marimba players from Kwanongoma, one of whom, Rosalia Nguza, was a Xhosa. I transcribed the music of the Missa Zimbabwe and arranged the texts in Xhosa—not so difficult, seeing that the mass was composed in Ndebele, a language very close to Zulu and almost as close to Xhosa.



Figure 4: The Kwanongoma marimbas at Lumko, 1977. Rosalia Nguza is wearing the dark dress.⁷

The three sets of Kwanongoma marimbas were allocated to different places, one going to Zwelitsha. But Lobinger and Hirmer were so pleased with what the marimbas were achieving

⁷ Photo by Fritz Lobinger.

that they later decided to set up a small factory in Mthatha to build marimbas for church use in South Africa: more of that later.

Altogether I recorded some 385 new songs in 1977-1978: 133 in Xhosa, 83 in Zulu, 104 in Sotho and 65 in Tswana. I transcribed all these songs into one collection which was later published by Lumko.⁸ For me the result was that I was appointed onto the Lumko staff to open a department of church music. I began at Lumko on 1 January 1979.

THE LUMKO MUSIC DEPARTMENT, 1979-1989

When I began at Lumko my work there had three main focus points: first, the publication of the materials already produced; second, the running of workshops for producing more new church music in African styles; and third, concentration on traditional African music.

As mentioned, at first the publication work was focused on the recordings from 1977 and 1978. I transcribed the melodies of all these songs in staff notation and also in solfa. However, when I started at Lumko I soon accumulated large numbers of new recordings. I managed to transcribe as many of them as I could, but I couldn't keep up with the production. I soon found, however, that for the purpose of spreading the music it was enough to publish the recordings on tape accompanied by the texts. I had begun with one very simple tape recorder, which nevertheless produced recordings which are still usable today. Soon I got a second such recorder, and then a better one with an extension microphone. Once I was established at Lumko I was able to get a first-class reel-to-reel recorder, with much better tape recorders for making the copies. Lumko had multiple tape copy machines from the language work, so all of this enabled me to get on with the work. Most unfortunately, I did not have a video recorder, and it was years before I was able to get one. On certain occasions I was able to get someone with a video camera to make video recordings, or to borrow a video camera.

At the time of the Zwelitsha workshop I had very little knowledge of African music. At least I knew enough to know this. So from the first I did not try to influence the work of the composers, but rather to give them the chance to compose songs for church use. This worked excellently. In 1977 and 1978 by far most of the new songs I recorded were in Afro-diatonic style, but most

8 D. Dargie: Church Music Compositions and Collections, Lumko, Lady Frere, 1979.

of them used rhythm which made them African in the way that the missionary hymns were not, and most also used call-and-response form. However, there were some really exciting songs which did use African techniques. For example, in the workshop at Bethlehem in 1978 three songs, according to Andrew Tracey, showed use of true Sotho style, one in fact using the Sotho *mohobelo* dance technique. This happened even though (or perhaps because) I knew nothing at all about traditional Sotho musical style at that time.

After I began work at Lumko we started receiving more and more requests for composition workshops, not only from various places in South Africa but even from as far as the northern borders of Namibia. In time I developed methods of helping people to work in groups, composing new songs. I learned from something which Oswald Hirmer had done. Oswald got children to shout song texts from a short distance away. When Xhosa people wish to communicate within shouting distance, while shouting they emphasise the tones of the words. In this way they make it easy for the listeners to understand what is said, even if the words are not clear. I have seen and heard this myself as a boy in the country. With Oswald, when a youngster shouted a song text from a distance the young listeners found it easy to sing what was shouted, and so the text was turned into a song. I took this a step further. When participants in a workshop needed inspiration for setting a text, I would get them to speak the words together, emphasising the speech tones and accents. Drummers were asked to play with the speakers, the drums coinciding with the accents of speech but then co-ordinating the drum beats into rhythm patterns. It was then often an easy step for the group to go from speaking to singing.

Sometimes, however, it was a struggle at first until someone found a melody. My most important early experience of this was in my first Namibian workshop in October 1979, in the Kavango language Kwangali at the remote mission of Bunya, west of the border town of Rundu on the Kavango River just across the border from Angola. I decided to try out the group composition method in a serious way, working with people about whose music I knew nothing. It took an hour or more, repeating the spoken words over and over and with drums underlining the rhythm, to get to the point when—to my intense joy—a mission schoolgirl began to sing the text: *Tanga nokufumadeka Hompa*. Praise and exult the Lord. In an amazingly short time this short text was built into a psalm response by using repetition and call-and-response technique. Then one of the mission song leaders (a man) built the verses of a psalm into a related melody, and the whole psalm was sung with excellent drumming, a group of three drummers accompanying the song in traditional style. From that point there was no holding

back the group. By the time I had to leave for the next mission at midday the following day I had recorded a complete new song mass in ruKwangali, with extra songs—13 compositions in all. All used authentic Kavango rhythm techniques; all used call-and-response form; some used Afro-diatonic scale and harmony; but a number of the songs used different traditional Kanago bow scales and harmony.⁹



Figure 5: Andara, eastern Kavango, 1988: A typical Kavango Workshop Group (but much smaller than the Bunya Group); note the typical set of three drums, large, middle size and small.

Figure 6 below shows my guide for group (and other) composition of songs. These are the patterns I followed in composition workshops—patterns which perhaps any musician can follow to build new songs.

Guide for people working in groups, but it is also useful for individual composers	
1.	Pick your TEXT, and ARRANGE it into singable phrases. Start with a CHORUS which all can sing
2.	Find the SPEECH TONES and ACCENTS in the chorus by speaking it, or getting a musician to “say” the words with his musical instrument.
3.	From the speech tones, build your MELODY
4.	From the accents, build your RHYTHM: say the words while clapping, drumming etc.
5.	When you have the melody, add the HARMONY PARTS: the parts for high and low voices.
6.	Organise the OVERLAPPING LEADER PART, to lead in the chorus, etc.

⁹ Included in the *Dave Dargie Colletion* (ILAM) is a Bunya Workshop set including, on one CD, recordings of the participants building songs, going from speaking to singing several times, another CD with the workshop compositions, and a handbook with documentation of the workshop and the recordings and score transcriptions of the songs.

7.	Add in the supporting MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS: drums, shakers, marimbas, bows or whatever
8.	Extend the song by adding VERSES, according to the pattern, and being careful to keep the rhythm.
9.	Add BODY MOVEMENT. People should be clapping and moving from the beginning of composing. But now add DANCING or other movement to suit the purpose of the song.
10.	Encourage singers to improvise and add in other OVERLAPPING PARTS with different texts, in the African way
11.	Also use special African VOCAL TECHNIQUES: humming, ululating, cries and so on, per local usage.
12.	People who are talented in that way should also use PRAISE POETRY and spoken texts.

Figure 6: “Twelve Steps to Compose an African Song.” (D. Dargie Lumko Music Department)

At times traditional instrument players in various places worked with church groups to build new songs. The photograph in Figure 7 shows blind Mr Emanuel Namulo playing his *okamburumbumbwa* musical bow. He worked with the workshop group (some shown in the photo) to build new church songs in the Ovambo language.



Figure 7: Blind musician Mr Emanuel Namulo plays his *okamburumbumbwa* musical bow at a workshop at Oshikuku Mission in Ovamboland, Namibia, in 1982.

THE FIRST XHOSA CHRISTIAN AND HIS MUSIC

The first Xhosa Christian was Ntsikana, the son of Gaba, who was converted in about 1815 in the absence of any missionary or other white person. Ntsikana had heard the missionary Johan van der Kemp preaching at the Great Place of the Xhosa King Ngqika, son of Mlawu, in 1799. At that time no Xhosa person converted to Christianity. However, years later historical circumstances caused Ntsikana, who was one of Ngqika’s councillors, to remember the

teachings of Van der Kemp, thereby triggering his own conversion to Christ. When Ntsikana was converted almost his first reaction, according to his disciples, was to sing. At first his song was a greeting song to the Great God in the heavens. The Xhosas had a tradition of belief in God the Creator, who was called Qamata, but only the King or Chief could pray directly to Qamata in times of war or other great need. Now Ntsikana began to pray directly to God, whom Van der Kemp had called Thixo, a name borrowed from the Khoi people. Later disciples gathered to Ntsikana, and when he died in 1821 his disciples went to join the missionaries of the London Mission Society who had set up a mission near Ngqika's Great Place a short while before. The disciples brought with them a hymn of Ntsikana. The missionaries wrote down the texts of this hymn, and many years later in 1894 John Knox Bokwe, the second Xhosa to be an ordained Christian minister, transcribed Ntsikana's song (or songs) as four hymns.¹⁰ Musically these "four hymns" are a composite of Western and Xhosa elements.

I had first heard about Ntsikana and his hymns when Hirmer and Lobinger published a mass composed by B.K. Tyamzashe, at Lumko in 1965. Ntsikana's hymns were an example for all Xhosa Christians who desired to create their own church music. Soon after I came to Lumko I began to look for a possible survival of the hymns (or hymn) as a traditional song. In 1981 I had the very great good fortune to discover and record a traditional version of the song— as a bow song, sung with the *uhadi* bow by two women from the village next to Mackay's Nek mission: see Figure 8. This was as exciting to me as the discovery of a live coelacanth had been to Professor J.L.B. Smith at about the time I was born. Later I found another different bow version of the song performed by women in Ngqoko village, plus several other traditional survivals of the song.¹¹

10 See Janet Hodgson: Ntsikana's Great Hymn—A Xhosa Expression of Christianity in the early 19th Century Eastern Cape, U.C.T. Communications no. 4, 1980.

11 See the CD and handbook set "Ntsikana Music Collection 2000" in the Dave Dargie Collection (ILAM).



Figure 8: The women who sang Ntsikana’s Great Hymn at Mackay’s Nek mission in 1981 pose with missionary Father Arnold Fischer. Nosinothi Dumiso (right) holds her *uhadi* bow, and Nomawuntini Qadushe who sang with her is at the left of the photo.

I learned to sing the Mackay’s Nek version of Ntsikana’s song with the *uhadi*, and since 1981 I have sung the song on innumerable occasions. Perhaps my best experience with the song was singing it at the re-installation of Ntsikana’s grave, after the grave had been damaged and re-built in 2002.



Figure 9: One of the Moments of a musicologist's life: the author sings a traditional version of Ntsikana's Song with *uhadi* musical bow, with some of his students from the University of Fort Hare, at the re-installation of Ntsikana's Grave, Thwathwa (near Herzog Eastern Cape), in 2002.

In 1979 when, as described in the next paragraph, we began with marimbas at Lumko, one of the first songs I arranged for the marimbas was the church version of Ntsikana's Great Hymn. Since then I have taught the song to many people in many places in several continents, the church version, the *uhadi* version, and the marimba version.

XHOSA CHURCH MARIMBAS

In 1979, as mentioned, Lobinger and Hirmer set up a marimba factory in Mthatha. They commissioned Brother Kurt Huwiler from Kwanongoma College in Bulawayo to run the factory. Kurt made a most successful design for the marimbas, using box resonators. On Andrew Tracey's advice I changed the tuning from the Shona tuning of the Kwanongoma instruments, basing it on the Xhosa bow scale, in such a way that the new "Lumko" marimbas could accompany both songs using Xhosa scale and harmony and songs using Afro-diatonic scale and harmony. The results were excellent, young people all over the country and beyond were enthusiastically learning to accompany the "Miss Zimbabwe" and many of the new compositions. Three of the first group I taught, at Langa parish in Cape Town in 1979, went on to found their own marimba and rhythm group, called Amampondo. Their CDs are still obtainable in the record shops.

Lumko arranged an extensive workshop to launch the new marimbas in a combined marimba and composition workshop at the end of 1979. As mentioned above, 91 participants attended. This was the second (and last) workshop held at Lumko itself. It was very challenging, teaching many groups to play marimba (Kurt had produced nine sets for use in the workshop) and also conducting composition sessions, over a period of two weeks. But the workshop was a great success—and the marimbas even more so. As time went on more and more songs using Xhosa techniques were composed at different workshops and by certain individuals. The great marimba moment came in 1984 with the ordination of the Bishop Lenhof in Queenstown. The new bishop asked for a marimba mass for his ordination, and the players and the singers put on a wonderful performance. The many bishops who came for the ordination had an unforgettable experience, though I am not sure whether all enjoyed it as much as I did.



Figure 10: Launching the new “Lumko” marimbas: Oswald Hirmer (far left) and Andrew Tracey of the ILAM look on as some of the new Players show their paces.

RESEARCH AND A LEARNING PROCESS

I clearly needed to learn about African musical styles, and in trying to do this, I decided to make a start by getting to know the traditional music of the people living in the area around Lumko. This turned out to be an extremely fortunate decision indeed. Unknown to the priests at Lumko, who thought I would find no trace of traditional music after missionaries had been active there for many years, in the Lumko area I found the most amazing survival of traditional music—beyond anything I could have dreamed of. Everybody was still singing the old songs, including ritual songs of great age. Many people were playing musical bows. The rhythms used in the songs were amazing; it often seemed that the body movement and the voice rhythms belonged to different songs, and yet it all fitted together perfectly. Perhaps the most exciting of all was my “discovery” of overtone singing, the Thembu Xhosa split-tone singing called *umngqokolo* and *umngqokolo ngomqangi*, the first documentation of overtone singing in African traditional music. Both forms of *umngqokolo* are striking, but the *ngomqangi* variety, imitating the mouth bow, is spectacular. The people of the Lumko district were (and still are) Thembu Xhosa. That particular branch of the Thembu lived side by side with a settled San group in the first half of the 19th century. Intermarriages took place. It seemed clear (and still seems clear to me) that many of the amazing techniques of the music of the Lumko area were inherited from the San, who disappeared around the middle of the 19th century but left a heritage behind; DNA and also a heritage of culture.

The Thembu Xhosa people whom I recorded lived mostly in the village of Ngqoko, no. 6 on the map at the beginning of this article. In Figures 11 and 12 are photos of two of the leading musicians of Ngqoko. The musical bows shown are *uhadi*, a large bow with calabash resonator, and *umrhubhe*, a small mouth-bow. Both these bows (and others) use the deep tones produced by the vibration of the bow string as fundamentals. The resonator (calabash or mouth) amplifies the overtones which the player uses to follow melodies. In the types of *umngqokolo* overtone singing the singer creates deep, rough tones used as fundamentals and amplifies overtones by shaping the mouth in order to follow a melody.



Figure 11: Nofinishi Dywili of Ngqoko Village plays *uhadi* (left) and *umrhubhe* (right).



Figure 12: Mrs Nowayilethi Mbizweni of Ngqoko Village sings *Umngqokolo ngomqangi* (left) and “ordinary” *Umngqokolo* (right). Note the position of the tongue and the shaping of the mouth.

My church music work took me all over South Africa, to many remote places in Namibia and also into Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana. Wherever I went, as far as possible I tried to record the traditional music of the people in the regions where I worked. I had some marvellous good fortune in this as well, and many missionaries were able to call traditional musicians for me to record. I found instruments which had not been recorded before. My particular interest was musical bows. I made the last recordings (as far as I know) of the most historically important Zulu bow, *ugubhu* (see Figure 13). In all I have recorded 21 musical bows of 11 different types among the different population groups among whom I have worked. I recorded songs in 20 languages or major dialects.



Figure 13: The Zulu *ugubhu* musical bow: Princess Phumuzile Mpanza (daughter of Zulu King Dinuzulu and half-sister of Princess Magogo) (left), recorded historic *ugubhu* songs for me, as did her husband Mr Bangindawo Mpanza (right). His grandfather was wounded by the British at the battle of Isandlwana (1879). The photos were made in 1982/3 by Mrs Anette Murless, reproduced here with permission. With Mr Mpanza are Zulu Benedictine Brother Clement Sithole (left), himself a player and composer with the *umakhweyane* Zulu musical bow, and the author.

SOME VERY SPECIAL PEOPLE

Not surprisingly, there were a number of people who had been waiting many years for the opportunity to bring their talents in African music into the Catholic Church. These included Sister Martina Msimang, whom I met at the Mariannahill workshop in 1978, Brother Clement

Sithole,¹² a Zulu Benedictine brother, and traditional musician and Mother Adelia Dlamini of the Servite nuns in Swaziland, among others. Brother Clement had composed masses when I first heard of him in 1978. Some months after that workshop I received a letter from the Zulu Bishops Conference, thanking me for my work in their area and asking me in the future kindly to keep out of it: bringing heathen practices into church! This was clearly not the wish of Archbishop Hurley—“Our hands are tied,” he said to me when I met him later.

Nevertheless, I met Brother Clement and recorded one of his masses and other songs in 1979, at Ulundi and later at Nongoma in northern KwaZulu-Natal. In 1981 and 1982 I was able to record *umakhweyane* bow songs which Clement composed, including psalms and church songs in true Zulu style. Except when I was there, his songs were never tolerated in church, and were not allowed into the Zulu hymn book—they were considered “pagan” by the editor. These pagan songs included Pater Nosters, Credos, Glorias and all the parts of the mass, psalms and so forth. Sing them in Zulu style and God wept. Nevertheless, for many years Clement has tried to bring his creativity to God. I was wondering if there had been any change, so when I met him recently I asked him if his songs had ever been allowed into church, except when I was there. “Never!” he said. Then he gave me an up-from-under look and said: “They were frightened of you!” I must confess, that was one of the saddest moments of my career as a church musicologist. Clement did me wonderful services by finding traditional bow players and bringing me to record them, including the Mpanzas (Figure 13 above). Through him I was able to document a treasure of wonderful bow songs. Please God my recordings of Clement and transcriptions of his songs will eventually find their way into church use when more truly Christian attitudes prevail.

Another Zulu churchman who has also shown marvellous talent for composing church songs is Father Paul Thembayona Mancini.¹³ Mancini can pour out wonderful songs seemingly without even having to think about it. His songs were also refused entry into the Zulu Catholic hymn book. Mancini did advanced studies on his own initiative through the University of South Africa, obtaining masters and doctorate degrees in theology. At least this scholarship has been recognised, as he is now the rector of St John Vianney’s seminary in Pretoria. I recorded many of Mancini’s church songs back in the 1980s, and like Brother Clement’s church songs they are

12 See the photo of Brother Clement in Figure 13.

13 See the photo of Fr P.T. Mancini in Figure 3.

also on a CD in my “Collection” at ILAM. Clement and Mancini are not the only ones waiting for full musical acceptance. We can only live in hope.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

In 1986 I took time off to work on my PhD in Xhosa music, at Rhodes University, working under Andrew Tracey of the ILAM as my supervisor. In 1987 I took further time off to turn the dissertation into a book, which was published by David Philip, Cape Town, as *Xhosa Music*, in 1988. During 1986 I took some weeks off from the thesis to make recordings of Xhosa Zionist Christian music. The field of Zionist church music had received little attention from academics. I found this music extremely interesting, mostly short cyclic songs with powerful biblical messages, sung over and over during the Zionist services. After finishing with the book I continued with workshops for a while.



Figure 14: Zionists Christians are noted for their love of the drum. This was a small congregation I recorded on a farm near Kirkwood in 1986: note the young drummer.

In 1988 I was asked by the Catholic organisation Missio München to come to Germany with a marimba group, to perform in churches around Bavaria for the 150th jubilee of Missio. This project turned out to be very satisfactory for Missio, and had an unexpected result for me. Doing her practical work at Missio for her social work studies was a lady whom later, after I had concluded my work with Lumko (in mid-1989) and with the permission of the church, I most happily married. Even after this I have organised and participated in several more marimba tours for Missio, and I am still very happy to do music work for the church in Munich, where I now live with my wife, and wherever else I have the chance, including South Africa.

THE “NGQOKO GROUP”

My investigations into the traditional music around Lumko led to musicians from there being invited to perform at conferences in the Eastern Cape. Later some of the musicians of Ngqoko formed a group which they called the Ngqoko Cultural Group, but which I prefer to refer to as the Ngqoko Traditional Xhosa Music Ensemble (or just the “Ngqoko Group”). They had their first overseas trip in 1989, going to Paris to take part in the Paris autumn festivals. That was just after I had finished my stint with Lumko. I was extremely glad to be with them in Paris, where they performed in a venerable old theatre. Mme Mitterrand, the President’s wife, attended one of their concerts. Since then the Ngqoko Group has had a number of trips to Europe, to England, to the USA and Canada and elsewhere. Sadly, at the time of writing (2017) the activities of the Group have almost come to a standstill.



Figure 15: The “Ngqoko Group” after a recording session at Fort Hare University in 2002. In the photo one may see two *uhadi* calabash bows, two small *umrhubhe* mouth bows, an *ikatari* (traditionally a boy’s bow with an oil tin resonator, between the two *uhadi* bows), and in the front a friction drum (left) and a diviners’ percussion drum. The only man in the photo is school-vice-principal Tsolwana Mpayipheli (at the back), usually the only English speaker in the Group, who performs with them and has guided them on tours in Europe and America.

CONTINUING THE WORK AFTER LUMKO

When I left South Africa for Germany in 1989 I thought I might never come back. And then all over the world walls came tumbling down, and in 1994 to my very great joy I stood in line in the South African consulate in Munich to vote for Nelson Mandela as president. In 1995 I began with Fort Hare University as professor of music, giving me the chance I had long waited for, to bring African music into its rightful place in a university where it had never been given a chance. My position at Fort Hare also gave me the chance to work further with Xhosa

traditional musicians, this time with a good video camera. Between 1995 and 2011 I made numerous recordings of the Ngqoko musicians, and other Thembu musicians in the Hogsback area and elsewhere. Together with earlier video recordings made on my behalf I have been able to put together nine DVDs of Xhosa traditional music, five of the Ngqoko musicians, three of music in Hogsback, and one DVD of a Zionist church service in the Lumko district.

For many years I had known Franciscan Father Anselm Prior. I was delighted when in 1987 he came onto the Lumko staff. In that year I was away from Germiston for long periods, including two months in four different hospitals and three months at Rhodes University working on my book. Nevertheless, I was extremely glad to be able to see Prior from time to time. In 1988, with my involvement with Missio München involving three trips to Munich, I was also away a lot, as also in 1989 when I undertook my last field trips for Lumko, including a marimba church music workshop and making traditional recordings in Botswana.

I had not seen Prior since mid-1989 when I went out to Fort Hare in 1995. In 1996 my wife Moni joined me in Hogsback, where I lived when busy at Fort Hare down the valley in Alice. Moni and I travelled to Pretoria, and we visited Prior. In 1990 he had become the Director of Lumko, something which I was very glad about and which had very special consequences for me. When we were at Lumko, Germiston, with Prior, he said to me: "What about all your recordings and materials at Lumko?" No-one had been brought in to replace me in the one-person music department. "Nobody will make any use of your recordings", he said. Take them all with you and put them to proper use. For distributing my recordings Lumko had cassette master copies of everything, plus copies of all the documentation from which more could be printed. He also made it clear that the copyright on my work belonged to me. I was not only deeply touched, I was electrified. When we left I took everything in the car to Hogsback, and then as soon as possible to ILAM in Grahamstown. It is all with ILAM now, together with all the original recordings of my Fort Hare research time.

Altogether there were around 140, maybe 150 reel tapes of my Lumko field work, several hundred hours of recordings of church music and traditional music, plus a number of cassette tapes recorded before 1979 and a significant amount of recordings from my Fort Hare time. ILAM has had all my recordings digitised. All can be obtained through the internet. I kept good copies of most of what I regarded as the most significant recordings, and in 2000 I began putting recordings onto CD and later, DVD. The back-breaking work has been, still is and will be for

some time, writing up the documentation essential for making the recordings usable. To my utter delight ILAM, under Dr Diane Thram as director after Andrew Tracey, undertook to publish these recordings and their documentation, and this process is now going ahead. ILAM called the discs and handbooks the “Dave Dargie Collection”. The “Collection” now includes 47 audio CDs, one CD ROM with photos, nine DVDs and 24 handbooks. I am busy compiling more CDs and DVDs, and the handbook work will keep me busy for a long time yet.

The usefulness of the recordings was brought home to me four years ago when two people, singing teachers from Antwerp, came to visit me in Munich. One of them, Ms Jackie Jansen, had learned the technique of *ungqokolo ngomqangi* overtone singing perfectly by watching my DVD recordings. Now I and other colleagues are working to try to ensure that this most difficult singing technique may be learned, taught and passed on. Only three of the original singers are still active, and apart from them it seems that *umngqokolo* is a forgotten art.

It was Prior’s kindness and generosity which opened the way for the preservation of my work; for the preservation of as much as I could of Southern Africa’s music heritage. I have every reason to be everlastingly grateful to him.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

At the time of writing many of the original Ngqoko Group have passed on, others are no longer able to perform, and all around them the songs are dying and the instruments falling into disuse. The same is happening all over southern Africa. The Zulu *ugubhu* is now extinct, together with many other traditional instruments. Traditional culture is giving way to money culture, motor car culture and worse.

One must wonder about the future of Southern Africa’s Intangible Cultural Heritage—the transmission of culture by oral processes. Such transmission depends on the actions of people, and if people fail to act—well, why stress the point. But traditional culture can be made tangible through documentation and recording. Lumko gave me wonderful opportunities to record and document what was once a most human glory of the indigenous peoples of Southern Africa. Culture is never static. People cannot be confined to any position on the scale of their human development. Documentation of culture at least will give people of the future some pride in

their past, and perhaps, even from the recordings, more people will learn the music, just as did Jackie Jansen.



Figure 16: The Lumko Staff, Germiston, 1989. Back row, left to right: Dave Dargie, Anselm Prior, Nick Harnan, Oswald Hirmer and Lumko Director Dick Broderick; Front, left to right: Sister Ursula, CPS, Sister Maris Stella, CPS, Emilia Charbonneau of the Grail and Sister Martin de Porres, CPS.

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ADDENDUM 1

*"The Dargie Collection": Bibliography and Discography of Writings and Recordings by the Author
African Church Music in Southern Africa*

Handbooks

Dargie, D. 1976. *The Training of Hymn-Leaders* (with O. Hirmer), Lumko, Lady Frere.

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Traditional Xhosa Music

Book

Dargie, D. 1988. *Xhosa Music, its Techniques and Instruments, with a Collection of Songs*, David Philip, Cape Town. New elements and discoveries in this book include the following:

- i. Discoveries in traditional music of versions of the Songs of Ntsikana the Prophet, the first Xhosa Christian, who died in 1821. Ntsikana's Songs were particularly relevant for my Lumko work in Xhosa church music.
- ii. The discovery of the first documented overtone singing in traditional African music, types of Xhosa *umngqokolo* singing.

- iii. The first successful attempts to provide satisfactory analyses of the traditional Xhosa use of rhythm, which until then had not been satisfactorily explained scientifically.

Journal Articles

Dargie, D. 1991. "Umngqokolo: Xhosa overtone singing." *African Music* 7 (1).

Dargie, D. 2010. The redoubtable Nofinishi Dywili, *uhadi* master and Xhosa song leader." *SAMUS* 30/31 (11): 1-30.

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ILAM has digitised all the field recordings made by the author at Lumko and afterwards. All are accessible through the internet. From his field recordings the author has compiled a series (to date) 49 audio CDs, 14 DVDs, one CD ROM (with photographs) and (to date) 24 handbooks documenting these recordings. This series is published by ILAM under the title of the "**Dave Dargie Collection**". This collection is accessible on Google on the ILAM website under

www.ru.ac.za/ilam/products/cds/davedargiecollection/. Here are some materials in the “Collection” relevant to topics covered in the above article.

African Church Music

Audio CD and Handbook/Song book sets (including scores, texts etc): Sing an African Song, African Sunday Marimba Mass, Lumko Marimba Mass, Ntsikana Music Collection 2000. Other CDs include: Missa Namibia, Morena ke Thebe, Compositions of Bro. Clement Sithole, Compositions of Fr P.T. Manci; the set of Music of the Indigenous Christian Churches (mostly Xhosa Zionist church music) includes 8 CDs, 1 DVD and 2 handbooks. The “Bunya Workshop” set of two CDs plus handbook includes recordings of a workshop group composing new songs, the resultant compositions, and a handbook with song scores.

The DVD “Xhosa Marimbas 1979-2004” (with handbook in preparation) includes video performances of many songs from the “African Sunday Marimba Mass” and the “Lumko Marimba Mass”. Video recordings of performances of Ntsikana’s songs are on the DVDs of traditional Xhosa Music mentioned below. Other DVDs include “Church Music in Namibia”, Ga-Rankuwa Church Music Festival 1989” (including new compositions), and “Composing with Traditional Musicians” (including Kavango, Tswana and Tsonga). Recordings of Tswana church music with marimbas are also on the DVD of traditional Tswana music.

Traditional African Music

There are 13 audio CDs and 9 DVDs of traditional Xhosa music, plus 6 handbooks with information, photos, song scores etc. The CD/handbook set “*Nguwe lo!*” and the DVD “Xhosa Music introduced by Dave Dargie” (both including recordings of Xhosa *umngqokolo* overtone singing) are designed an introductions to traditional Xhosa music.

Recordings of traditional music in other languages include “Zulu Bow Songs” (set of 3 audio CDs plus handbook), “Magical Musical Bows” (CD and handbook set with recorded examples and photographs of 21 different musical bows of Southern Africa), and 4 audio CDs with audio recordings of various peoples of South Africa, Namibia and other neighbouring countries. There is one DVD with Tswana traditional and church music.

Photographs

Photographs of church and traditional musicians are on a CD ROM accompanied by two handbooks and four audio CDs.