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YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

MALOMBO MUSICAL ARTS IN VHAVENDA INDIGENOUS HEALING PRACTICES

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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in the

Department of Music

Faculty of Humanities

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Declaration

I, ***Mudzunga Junniah Davhula*****,** declare that this thesis, submitted to the University of Pretoria for the degree of Ph.D, has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this University or at any other University, that it is my own work in design and execution and that all the material used therein has been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

The traditional healing practices of the Vhavenda people include one very important component, the *malombo* ritual healing practice.

This healing practice has been conducted for centuries. It involves the use of music (including singing and the use of drums and shakers for rhythm), dance and elements of theatre performed by the person to be healed, the healer, invited *malombe* (community members who have been through the same ritual), as well as family members and supporters.

The importance of this ritual as a healing process has long been acknowledged. Of interest in this study, however, is the role-played by the music itself in facilitating the healing process. The ritual cannot take place without the music; neither is the music used outside this specific ritual.

Seven representative *malombo* songs have been partially notated by John Blacking and N. J. van Warmelo also as recorded texts. However, since this ritual is closed and seldom open to strangers, their research was, of necessity, limited. Through long-term fieldwork, and from an insider perspective, this thesis is based on participation in more than fifteen *malombo* rituals during the field research period (2005-2014). Songs and performances were recorded as possible and some are included on the accompanying CD. In addition, transcription was utilized as a tool to demonstrate the core melody of selected songs, with the acknowledgement that transcription in Western notation limits the demonstration of the creative *mato*[1] process that is fundamental to the *malombo* ritual.

This thesis argues that that music plays a vital role in this healing ceremony, and it is through the *mato* process that the ancestors are called to heal. The texts of the songs at times include words of the Tshikalanga language that is spoken by the Vhakalanga of Zimbabwe. Most significantly, music is seen as the bridge between the ancestral spirits and the patient and participants in the ceremony, thus underscoring its fundamental importance in Vhavenda culture.

[1] *Mato* – the process of adapting melody and adding on text while leading a song to suit the situation. The leader can acknowledge recent activities in the text by singing and adapting a known and core song melody.

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KEY TERMS

Vhavenda music, *Malombo* music, Healing, Possession, Trance, Spirit possession, Healing songs, Music of healing ceremonies, *Mato* processes, Indigenous African music, Ethnomusicology, African religion, Indigenous musical arts practices, Ritual, Ceremony.

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May their souls rest in peace as the work is now complete.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my departed father, Mr Khubana Jacobus Funzani, whose determination to see me get an education defied the dominant male-oriented mindset of his time. He went to great length to ensure that I got an education, including delaying his embarking on his final journey.

My late mother, Mrs Mukondeleli Musandiwa Grace Funzani, also contributed greatly to my academic achievements by providing that initial spur that is so crucial to shaping one's future.

May their souls rest in peace.

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GLOSSARY

Tshivenda term	English translation
Domba	Young adult's initiation school
Dzembe (pl. Malembe)	Bent flattened wire shaped like an axe to be used as a part of beads
Dzikhumela	Medicines used for the patient whose ancestral spirit is delaying
Dzivha la mutada	Yellow colour
Lilombe	A person who was once possessed
Lutombo	Powder blue colour
Luvhande	A ground used to dance the ritual dance
Madzhukwa	Another type of possession dance found at Ha Makuya
Mafumo	Spears
Maine (pl. vhomaine)	The healer/diviner 'specialist in something unusual, as diviner, doctor, circumcision operator, malombo medium, hence European instruments like spirit level, Theodore lite (Van Warmelo: 168)
Maine vha tshele (pl. vhomaine vha tshele)	The healer who uses shakers/for the possession dance
Makhulu	The name of the possessed dancer while in the trance state
Malombe	A group of the people who were once possessed and who can be the dancers of the possession dance
Malombo	The ritual dance for the Vhavenda which is the possession dance
Mashavhi	Another type of possession dance found at Ha Makuya
Matongo	The attire for the possession dancer
Matsige	The professional drummer for the possession dance
Midzimu (singular) (pl. vhadzimu)	God or the ancestral spirit[1]
Mirumba	Smaller, conical drums
Mpumbulu	The name of a village
Mudala	Green colour
Mungome	Diviner

[1] Because of the mistake made by the missionaries who translated the Vhavenda bible – *Mudzimu* means 'God' whereas in Zimbabwe *Mwari* is God. In Venda *Nwali* is a pagan or a heathen god, hence '*mudzimu – midzimu*' for ancestral spirits.

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Murumba (pl. Mirumba)	The two smaller drums used during malombo ceremony
Murundu	Boy's initiation school
Musevhetho	Puberty girls initiation school
Mutshena	White colour
Mutswu	Black colour
Mutswuku	Red colour
mutungwa/tshilala madini	Smaller conical drum used during the dance
Mututulwa	Of the Solanum fruit (Van Warmelo 1989: 251)
Muvenda (pl. Vhavenda)	A person/a member of the Vhavenda tribe
Ngoma dza malombo	Dance for the ancestral spirits
Ngoma dzo fhalala	*Malombo* dance has come to an end
nwenda (pl. minwenda)	"Female upper garment of salempore, just a length of cloth with strip (bannda) sewn on crosswise at the top to make it longer, with two tapes (mivhofho) of the same material to tie over the shoulder. In olden days all minwenda was made of muridili cloth" (Van Warmelo 1989: 290).
Nyadala	An alternative name for makhulu – the possessed person
Nzheti	The red and black scotched material worn by the healers and by the ancestral spirits who was a healer
Palu	The blue scotched material for the ancestral spirits
Pfumo (pl. Mafumo)	A spear
Thangu	The divining bones
Thevhula	The ritual to taste the first fruit
Thohoyandou	The capital of the Venda region (head of the elephant)
Tsanga	An adze
Tshidulule	The name of the ancestor
Tshilemba	The hat worn by the possessed
Tshilombo	An ornament picked up that will cause troubles
Tshivenda	The language spoken by the Vhavenda
U kanda luvhande	The first time for the patient to dance
U sumiwa	To inform a superior of an event (Van Warmelo 1989:343)
U vumbela mulwadze	To smear extra medicines to the patient

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U wa mudzimu	The ancestor has arrived
Vhadzimu	Plural for ancestral spirits
vhangome	Diviners
Vhavenda	Plural for Venda people
Vhembe	Limpopo river
Vhulungu ha madi	Spirit beads
Vhusha	Adolescent girls' initiation school
Zwitungulo	Totems

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Ntshavheni a vha mu funi	They don't like Ntshavheni	4-46	
Ndo lunwa nga phame	I have been stung by a scorpion	4-48	19
Ndo vhidzwa musanda	I have been summoned to the chief's kraal, yes	4-54	20
Ndi a sinda	I grind	4-56	21
Vhasikana kha ri ye Khadane!	Girls, let's go to Khadane!	4-58	22
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[1] Not all transcribed songs were recorded in a high enough quality to be included on the accompanying CD. Therefore, some songs are omitted on the accompanying CD. Other songs have more than one recording to demonstrate the use of *mato*.

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH TOPIC

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The Vhavenda people of Limpopo, South Africa, maintain a close relationship between the living and the living dead through a number of rituals. One such ritual is called *malombo*, which is a healing ceremony that plays a central role in supporting the physical, spiritual and cultural health of people through the integration of music, dance, performance and healing. This thesis explores the value that the Vhavenda people, similar to many African people and communities, attach to their ancestors and how this relationship is enacted in their lives through the perceived intervention of ancestral spirits in important events. It has been observed that even patients who have been conventionally healed through the modernized medical system still feel the need for final healing by their ancestors. The process through which this healing is achieved, namely in the *malombo* healing ceremony, leads the researcher to examine the role of the music, dance and community participation in this specific ritual. As such, this is a significant study of the relationship between music, healing and community in the Vhavenda context in South Africa that provides insight into the ritual as well as valuable documentation of the musical systems involved in this event.

1.2. BACKGROUND

The research presented here is the result of dedicated interest and study surrounding the healing rituals practiced by the Vhavenda. The ethnomusicological research in this study was conducted between 2005-2014 in Vhavenda communities throughout the Vhembe district of Limpopo province. The researcher was challenged to pursue further study about the nature and efficacy of this healing practice, and in particular its musical component, after a preliminary presentation at the International Society for Music Education (ISME) conference in Tenerife, Spain, 2004 titled 'The role of music in the spiritual dance (*malombo)* of the Vhavenda tribe of Limpopo Province'. In addition, as a cultural insider, the researcher offers unique insight into the complex relationship between music, healing and culture in the Vhavenda context.

Beginning officially in 2005, this research was further developed to determine the role of music and its relationship to the participants in rituals that lead to an altered state of consciousness. This was done through participant-observation, observation, interviews, musical transcription and analysis, and a comprehensive review of literature. The researcher set forth with the tentative hypothesis that the music of the ritual *malombo* is the *primary* channel for the healing results to be achieved. If this is indeed true, how does music, therefore, provide the bridge for bringing healing to the sick; that is, to those suffering with illness brought by their calling from the ancestral spirits.

The theoretical framework for this study is that in African traditional medical practices, integrated musical arts (sound, dance, music, drama, etc.) are required in order to induce the critical state of altered consciousness requisite for the supernormally indicated as well as for healers to connect and communicate with ancestral spirits. The performative engagement enacts psycho-psychical therapy for

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the participants/patients as a part of indigenous holistic curative procedures in order to restore the mind, body and community.

1.2.1. ANSCESTRAL SPIRITUALITY IN AFRICA

It has been widely documented that African societies, without exception, embrace strong beliefs in ancestral spirituality (see for example: Awolalu 1979; Beattie & Middleton 1969; Blacking 1985; Chakanza 2004; Dagan 1997; Emoff 2002; Junod 1920; Nzewi 2003). In the Vhavenda context, even those who are converted to religions such as Christianity still often maintain traditional concepts of, and ties to, their ancestral spiritual world.

The Senegalese poet, Birago Diop, hauntingly observes that in Africa:

> Those who are dead are never gone: they are there in the thickening shadow.
>
> The dead are not under the earth: they are in the tree that rustles, they are in the woods that groan;
>
> Those who are dead are never gone: they are in the breast of a woman, they are in the child who is wailing and in the fire brand that flames.
>
> The dead are not under the earth: they are in the forest, they are in the house.
>
> The dead are not dead
>
> (Jahn 1961:108).

Diop's poem provides a clear indication of the African sensibility for honouring the dead. Death is viewed in African societies as a passage from the living world to the spiritual world, with the spirits finding residence in nature and in people. South Africans also embrace this African spiritual sensibility, and ancestral spirituality is a tenet upheld by many across the different cultural groups, including those who have converted to Christianity, which is commonplace in the South African context. Mosothoane (1973:86) contends that even some African Christians are involved in this practice:

> Despite the concerted effort on the part of at least some church leaders in at least some parts of Africa to eradicate any remains of the traditional ancestor cult among black Christians, African believers continue to revere their departed forbears.

Vho Maine Vho Ali, during an interview about *malombo*, alluded that these ties to the ancestral spiritual world are reflected strongly in the way in which many cultural groups conduct their rituals, with rituals being viewed as a way of communicating with the ancestral spirits (Personal interview 03/05/2008). Rituals afford opportunities to present complaints, to worship, to celebrate, and to address many other issues. Within African cultures, ritual is not for one person alone, but must always be

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performed as a group activity by members of a clan.

Schapera (1937:250) contentiously states that the belief in survival after death is common to all so-called "primitive peoples", and Hammond–Tooke (1962:325) indicates that whatever Africans do, "the fundamental norms and values must be restated with a greater stress on ancestral authority than human authority – and everywhere this authority is conceptualized as residing in supernatural or super empirical beings." Hammond–Tooke lists these 'supernatural beings' as:

> among the Bantu these beings are ancestors (Zulu: amandlozi or amathongo; Cape Nguni: amathongo or izi (imi) nyanya; Tsonga: shikwembu; Lobedu: vadimo or zwidajani; Tswana: medimo or badimo; Venda: mudzimu; Pedi and South Sotho: badimo)" (Hammond–Tooke 1962:325).

1.2.2. THE VHAVENDA CULTURAL GROUP

The people who are the focus of this study belong to a cultural group that is located within the most Northerly part of the Limpopo Province of South Africa, a cultural group known as the Vhavenda. Among the Vhavenda of South Africa, spirits and spirituality figure importantly in daily life and religious practice. The topic of the current study concerns how a person may communicate with the ancestral spirits, and how this occurs in Vhavenda society after a person is placed into a state of trance, an action that is facilitated through music.

Minaar et al. (1992:8) maintain that Vhavenda people never doubt the presence of the spirits of the departed ancestors. They are believed to be nearby and concerned with the activities of their descendants. They become angry if neglected, slighted or not informed of family matters. If displeased with the living they can also become dangerously meddlesome. The spirits may reveal themselves to their descendants in dreams, and a person visited by the spirits must consult a *nanga* or *mungome*, who invariably advises that the ancestors must be propitiated immediately.

These characteristics make the rituals of the Vhavenda particularly interesting to study, and one specific ritual, the *malombo* healing ceremony, will provide clear indications of the role and function of music in summoning the ancestral spirits. In this ceremony, music is used as the vehicle to cross the threshold between the earthly and spiritual realms, enabling the living to communicate with their ancestral spirits or forebears.

1.2.3. SPIRITUALITY IN VHAVENDA COMMUNITIES

It is noteworthy that the Swiss missionaries, and the Berlin missionaries who worked in the Vhavenda region from approximately the second half of the nineteenth century, introduced Christianity to the Vhavenda. From the perspective of spirituality and religious practice, contemporary Vhavenda people can today be divided into three distinct groups that experience their universe in three great orders of existence, namely those people practicing the Christian religion, those maintaining African traditional religion and those who honor both religions. As Ralushai (1977:1) has noted:

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> In religion, some of them are members of either 'White' or 'Black' controlled churches, whilst others still practice ancestor-worship either alone or in combination with Christianity.

While acknowledging the strong presence of those converted to Christianity, the focus of this research is on Vhavenda people who still practice ancestor worship, contemporary people of the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province who maintain their historic and cultural customs.

Mahlangu (1996:39) maintains that the cult of ancestors in African ancestor worship is what Jesus is to Christianity, and what Mohammed is to Islam. It is the main focus of African traditional religions. It is therefore in the everyday activities of people that one observes the interaction of people with their culture and religion. Among the Vhavenda people, relationships extend far beyond the living as relationships are extended to include the deceased.

Minaar et al. (1992:8) describe the presence of the ancestral spirits within Vhavenda culture, and the way in which they are honoured as follows:

> The ancestral spirits play a pivotal role in Venda society, even today. Their influence is almost all pervasive, though this is sometimes denied by those more exposed to Western ideas. Present-day Venda is still cohesive enough for groups to meet at intervals to pray to their common ancestors. Most families have a set of amulets or heirlooms, inherited from their ancestors, one for each individual, which are used for these rituals. Quarrels within the family circle are to be avoided as they may disturb the ancestral spirits who would then send misfortune to all the participants. The ancestral spirits, or *midzimu,* take an active interest in the welfare of their descendants, watching over the birth of a child, blessing the first harvest, and protecting the family. That is why for every unusual occurrence, whether unacceptable, or highly positive and beneficial to the group, the Vhavenda maintain the need for consultation with the ancestors.

Mageza (1997:132) further explains the importance of the ancestral spirits, stating that:

> More than any other force, the ancestors are the protectors of the society, its most feared direct critic and source of punishment. Above all, they are the watchdogs of the moral behaviour of the individual, the family, the clan and the entire society with which they are associated.

The Vhavenda belief system is therefore centered on the idea that the ancestral spirits exert a significant influence on the living. The ancestors protect the interests of their descendants and possess special powers, which they can wield to bring about illness and misfortunes to the descendants who fail to venerate them.

Nzewi (2003:5), reflecting the sentiments of Diop's poem cited earlier in this chapter, describes the profound importance of elders, and the necessity for honouring those who have passed on:

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> To bury our dead is not to dispose of their meaning. If our roots die off, our lives cease to inspire...A mighty tree that rejects nourishment from its buried roots condemns its outward bloom to blemish and breathe no more.

1.2.4. BACKGROUND TO THE *MALOMBO* HEALING CEREMONY

In Van Warmelo's dictionary (1989:173), he describes *malombo* as being "spirits of non–relatives taking (or wishing to take) possession in the same manner as family midzimu". According to Warmelo, this is a "possession cult" which he describes as being introduced by:

> the Pfumbi of the North-East in c.1913–14 (ṅwaha wa xuṅwa-xuṅwa), at Makonde by Vha ha Malindika who settled in the tshisi Maṱavhelani. The drums and procedures are practically the same as for possession by family ancestors.

While conducting interviews on *madzhukwa* (another type of ritual possession dance), the researcher met an older woman, Vho Masindi Nyungulani, who introduced herself as a Pfumbi from the then Rhodesia. This woman stated that her father introduced *madzhukwa* possession dance at Ha–Makuya Maholoni. She even showed the researcher the tree that they used for the performance of the dance (Personal interview 20/02/2011). It is true that *ngoma dza vhadzimu* or *malombo* is found among the Vhavenda of the Northern part of Limpopo Province up to this day. It is necessary to point out that during to an interview with Professor Ralushai (Personal interview 16/09/2011), he stated that *malombo* was originally a dance of the people of Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia). The Vhapfumbi and Vha ha Matibe (a Mbedzi in mutupo) culture groups stayed across the Vhembe (Limpopo) river and have strong ties with the Vhavenda. In his thesis Ralushai (1977:1) also elucidates:

> They have also adopted Shangana-Tsonga [sic], Swazi, Zulu, and Lembethu-Kalanga possession cults, hence in both Matzhomane or Manzhozi (Shangaan-Tsonga, Swazi and Zulu possession cults) and Ngoma dza vhadzimu or malombo (Lembethu-Kalanga possession cults) possessed dancers are expected to speak in Zulu or Swazi and Kalanga respectively (further explanation about this will be found in Chapter Three of this thesis).

It is interesting to note that Ralushai, along with Blacking and many other scholars, refers to the *malombo* ritual as a "cult" within the tribal context. The concept of a "cult" was introduced into sociological classification in 1932 by the American sociologist Howard P. Becker. He split the ecclesiastical term "sect" into "sect" and "cult". Becker described cults as small religious groups lacking in organisation and emphasizing the private nature of personal beliefs. Later additional emphasis was placed on cults as being religious groups that derive their inspiration from outside of the religious culture from which they originate. This deviation is often thought to lead to a high degree of tension between the group and the more mainstream culture surrounding it, a characteristic shared with religious sects (Stark & Bainbridge, 1987:25). Sociologists, however, maintain that, unlike sects that are products of religious schism and therefore maintain continuity with traditional beliefs and practices, "cults" arise spontaneously around novel beliefs and practices (Stark & Bainbridge 1987:124).

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From the discussion that will follow, it will become clear that the *malombo* healing ritual cannot be described as a "cult" practice. The two most important arguments against this description are that, firstly, it does not represent a religious schism within the group itself; and secondly, it does not give rise to tensions between cultural group members. In this ritual, community participation is highly integrated with the music and dance. During the *malombo* ceremony those needing healing are required to dance to the songs and instrumental music that are performed by members of the healing group. Through this process, they attain a psychic connection with their ancestors so that healing may occur. While the *malombo* ceremony takes place, participants are lifted to a state of trance, where, as Rouget (1985:3) has documented, individuals enter into "a state of consciousness composed of two components, one psycho-physiological, the other cultural."

To the Vhavenda cultural group, *malombo* is an indigenous, performed, healing ceremony in which music, dancing and community participation are highly integrated. Acknowledging the presence of ancestral spirits in the *malombo* ceremony, Van Warmelo (1932:141) contends, "The state of being possessed by the ancestral spirits witnessed during a malombo healing ceremony provides individuals with the highest socio-political and religious status. Such a status does not accord with the status of a cult, which has largely negative connotations within the society where it originates."

Stayt (1968:302) has recorded that the *malombo* dance was witnessed, as early as 1914 but according to Vho Makhadzi Vho–Mutshekwa Matumba, *malombo* is as old as the Vhavenda culture itself (Personal interview 12/11/2011). Ralushai (1985) also alluded to this when he indicated that *malombo*, as it involved the Lembethu of Hamutele, occurred much earlier, probably already in the nineteenth century.

The emanation of the ancestral spirits is widely acclaimed among the Vhavenda. They hold that the ancestral spirits transmigrate: that is, the spirits of the dead pass on to occupy other living bodies. Examples of this transmigration could include a deceased grandparent who, while having passed on some decades before, appears in the body of a young descendant. Another example is the belief that the spirits of the dead chiefs may return to earth in the form of animals (Wessman 1908:82). According to this belief, members of a clan would inherit the names of the animals with which the dead person had a close spiritual connection.

According to the Vhavenda, a person is praised by his/her own *mutupo***,** and mostly related to it. *Mutupo*, according to Van Warmelo (1989:250), is the name of a clan or totem group, nowadays typically used as a surname. The most important *mutupo* are names of animals connected to the clans e.g. Mudau (a lion), Ndou (elephant), Vhalaudzi–Lwamondo–pfene (baboon), etc.

For Africans in general, music maintains a special place in their religious heritage, as it serves as the vehicle for evoking the ancestors' spirits. In Vhavenda society, the *malombo* spiritual dance and its music is considered to be the bridge by means of which the living can reach the ancestors. According to Blacking (1985:180):

> A person's ultimate response to the music of the possession cult was to be "taken" by the spirit of a departed ancestor, and that the degree of people's

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> responses tended to vary according to their membership in social groups. Musical performances provided experimental proof of the spiritual nature of the universe and of the role of ancestor–spirits as guardians of the earth and of the health and welfare of their descendants.

In healing, the Vhavenda use indigenous herbs and medicines for the treatment of ailments associated with a disabled spiritual or emotional conditions but this is considered inadequate unless it is fully integrated into the *malombo* ceremony. *Malombo* is thus a complex religious ceremony that involves the advent of the ancestral spirits, and there is palpable evidence, as noted by Blacking (1995:180) and others, of people connecting with the ancestral spirits through *malombo*.

The academic works that are relevant to this study of *malombo* are Blacking (1957; 1985; 1995 (in Byron, R. & Nettle, B.)), Van Warmelo (1932), Stayt (1968), Nzewi (2010), Shabangu (2004), amongst others. It is noteworthy that Blacking studied and documented the role of music in Vhavenda society and the possession music as well. He observed that music is both an integral and a powerful force in the healing process in *malombo* dance. However, Blacking failed to establish how music facilitates the healing process, providing only descriptive and brief examples of the genre. Blacking's work also relied on terminologies such as 'cult possession' to refer to healing music which detracts from understanding the curative relationships between music and wellbeing. The problem of terminology is also exhibited in Wessman (1908) referring to *malombo* dance as a madness dance.

Nzewi (2010) describes the indigenous African medical practice as combining two cardinal principles of wellness – health care (public health) and health care (individual health). He reiterates that the science of healing relies on inter-structuring and inter-acting the four cardinal curative agencies that operate in concert namely: spirituality, community, musical arts and medicine. However, Nzewi does not discuss how the interaction of musical arts with the other components within the curative process contributes to healing. The *Malombo* ceremony has the four cardinal curative agencies noted by Nzewi that interact to ensure the rehabilitation of the psychophysical health of the patient, which results in greater community wellness. Therefore, this study will establish how musical arts practices interact and interplay with these curative agencies to promote healing. It is only the interaction that leads to healing, as each process is non-effective on its own.

As such, this study fills the gap in previous research between Blacking's descriptions and colonial rhetoric surrounding healing ceremonies, and Nzewi's study that outlines the curative agencies at play in musical healing. The theoretical framework in this study builds on bridging the descriptive elements of ethnomusicological research with an analysis of the elements of healing that are required for healing to take place. It is acknowledged that it is not the music alone that heals a patient, but rather the interactive and interlocking components and processes that lead a patient to health.

1.3. RESEARCH STUDY

The *malombo* ceremony of the Vhavenda has thus far been observed, analysed and interpreted by outsiders to Vhavenda society. In the documented observations, its

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complexity (which has been briefly alluded to in the discussion above) has not been fully understood.

It is important to note that the role of the musical arts (in the present context is to be interpreted as the integration of music, dance, drama, and costumes as per African indigenous perceptions), is an important theoretical concept utilized in this thesis. As noted by Nzewi: "The term musical arts reminds us that in African culture the performance arts disciplines of music, dance, drama, poetry and costumes are seldom separated in creative thinking and performance practice" (Nzewi 2003:13). Therefore, one cannot separate music from performance disciplines, much like music cannot be separated from the *malombo* healing ritual which relies on integrative and interlocking components for healing to take place.

Although the *malombo* dance ritual and its inducement of a state of altered consciousness in participants is commonly practiced amongst the Vhavenda, there has been no in-depth study of the nature and significance of two of the most significant factors during the ceremonies: music and dance. The resultant ignorance or misconceptions about their significance in Vhavenda religious rituals is problematic, for it continues to perpetuate a lack of understanding of these elements as critical components of healing.

Further questions that arise concern the state of trance that the patient experiences. Is this state attained because of the existing illness that needs to be healed, or is it induced through the music and the consequent dance by the patient? These questions determine the foundation of this current study.

Rouget (1985:73) states:

> As a general rule, possession fit or trance is accompanied by music, and music is always regarded as being more or less responsible for its onset. In what does this music consist? A swift glance at the evidence shows that from the viewpoint of its formal characteristics it varies considerably, if not totally, from one country to another. Ultimately we have to accept that there are as many different kinds of possession music as there are different possession cults. Yet all these different kinds of music are regarded as being responsible for inducing the trance. How can it be that, despite their respective differences, they all have the same effect?

This raises the question: how effective is the music in *malombo* in leading the patient to possession? Is the music the necessary tool to bring the patient into possession in order for them to be healed effectively?

Although John Blacking explored this topic to a limited extent, he does not explain how music interacts with other curative agencies involved in the healing ceremony that facilitate the state of trance.

It is important to investigate why some Vhavenda patients who have undergone conventional medical treatment (they might, for example, have been hospitalized, presumed healed and discharged) still decide to undergo the *malombo* ceremony for continued or final healing. An explanation is necessary as to why patients feel the

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need to re-unite with their ancestors in order to attain full recovery. It has been acknowledged that an effective traditional healer could be an integral part of the health care of patients with particular beliefs in healing through the presence of their ancestral spirits, since some illnesses are fully healed only through the traditional healing music. In this regard Oosthuizen (in Olupona 1991:47-48) recommends that:

> Hospitals should consult reputable traditional healers in therapy-resistant cases of culture-bound syndrome in African patients...In spite of the individualistic scientific approach of each and every hospital in South Africa, a large section of both urban and rural patients wish to have their illnesses treated in a way that is to a certain extent a traditional medical approach.

Thus, whether *malombo* functions as the singular means of healing, or as an adjunct to Western medical treatment, it is considered by the Vhavenda to be an essential component of the healing process.

Although many people in urban areas prefer the knowledge that they frequent traditional healers to be kept private, the African Medical Research Foundation has indicated that "in rural South Africa, over 60% of the population seek health advice and treatment from traditional healers before visiting a medical doctor" (www.amrefusa.org Accessed 10/12/2013). Such a strong involvement in traditional healing practice is the reason for recommending further research on the various facets of *malombo* and other African healing practices. Despite modernization and the rise of hospitals in most parts of Southern Africa, the belief system of many compels them to seek out traditional healers for indigenous healing practices. As discovered in interviews, some patients indicated that they consult the healers after hospitalization as well, because they feel insecure due to the absence of their ancestral spirit during hospitalization. As such, medical practice in South Africa could benefit by taking traditional healing practices and beliefs into consideration.

1.3.1. THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The primary aim of this study is to determine the interaction and functionality of factors including music, healing and dance in the longstanding traditional healing practice of *malombo*. It is through engagement with *malombo* that ensures that patients are fully restored - psychologically, spiritually and physically. As such, this study aims to examine the central role of music in supporting this healing practice that leads a patient to recovery.

1.3.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are to:

- Determine the psycho-sociological disorders experienced by patients who require healing through *malombo* ritual;
- Determine the structure and style of music of *malombo* ceremony (textual and musical analysis of the songs);
- Establish and examine the role of musical arts in the healing process during *malombo* ceremony;
- Establish the role of musical arts in inducing a state of trance in a patient;

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- Determine how the musical arts interact with other curative agencies in *malombo* ceremony to facilitate healing.

1.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The VhaVenda have a saying: *U sa divha zwi fana na u fa' thus*, which means when you do not have knowledge, it is the same as being dead. This thesis is significant not only in terms of ethnomusicological research and contribution to knowledge, but also for the patients (*malombe*), healers, cultural informants, community members, department of corporate governance and traditional affairs. As stated by Thram (1999:316), the understanding of "the power of performance is in the daily lives of those who continue to dance with great joy and satisfaction." Thus, knowing the value and the difference of what music is bringing to the suffering of people in the community allows for a deeper discovery of the value of music within Vhavenda communities.

Overall, this study is significant and contributes to current knowledge about the role of music in the healing ceremony known as *malombo* among Vhavenda communities. Its significance and contribution is noted in the following areas:

- To determine the role of the music, dance and community participation in a healing ritual that will contribute to expanding knowledge in the fields of ethnomusicology, African religious practices and traditional medical practices.
- To acknowledge the role of Vhavenda indigenous knowledge systems in defining the healing practices of Vhavenda communities. Through ethnographic fieldwork from an insider perspective, this study provides insight into how Vhavenda community members define, describe, and employ *malombo* within their communities. Thus, the study integrates historical and outsider perspectives whilst privileging the indigenous knowledge of current practitioners and community members.
- To support Vhavenda communities, especially the younger and the future generations, to understand the potential impact of spiritual music on their lives and the relationship of their music to other ceremonial music types, as well as to the spiritual music of other cultures. In addition, outsiders may gain a more comprehensive understanding of the Vhavenda and their indigenous healing practices.
- To preserve and document *malombo* songs in CD format for community access and through the documentation of lyrics and transcriptions.
- To support Vhavenda young people who desire to become more knowledgeable about their heritage, as well as the Vhavenda population in general. This research can serve an important source that documents the nature and validity of the traditional *malombo* healing ceremony. The outcome of this research may therefore also form the basis for further related studies.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research examines the following questions.

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The primary research question:

- What curative input does music contribute to Vhavenda *malombo* healing practices?

The research sub-questions:

- What psychic disorders do the patients who require the *malombo* healing ceremony experience?
- What is the nature of the music in *malombo*?
- What role does music play in inducing trance during the *malombo* ceremony?
- How does the possession state reveal itself during the *malombo* healing process?
- How does the music interact with other curative agencies in *malombo* ceremony to facilitate healing?

1.6. RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODS

This qualitative research was based primarily on ethnographic methodologies and also included historical research and musical transcription and analysis. The ethnographic research design examines what is happening as it is lived by the people, while historical research helps in arriving at conclusions about causes, trends and effects of the past phenomena in order to explain the present.

The ethnographic research included observation, participant-observation, and interviews (both structured and semi-structured). Ethnographic research was the primary tool to engage in the *malombo* ceremony, participate, and to observe and interview healers, patients and participants (before, during, after ceremony as well as during specific times outside the *malombo* ceremony).

The historical research method was used to examine the study of *malombo* in literature and historical documents. This data was used to compare current practice and as a means to demonstrate the lineage of the *malombo* ceremony.

Most of the participants are not literate; the literate ones did not wish to be mentioned, as they indicate that they are only curing their bodies as they need it. Thus, to administer a questionnaire was against their desires.

Musical transcription and analysis was used as one of the tools to outline the musical framework of *malombo* and as a means to document musical structures that exist. Lyrics, melodies and rhythms were also documented as a means to analyse and preserve the tradition of *malombo*.

1.7. RESEARCH APPROACH

Vhavenda people are known and considered in the South African context to be very peaceful; they are very humble and socially welcoming to both insiders and outsiders. They are unselfish when it comes to sharing food or clothing with others. Yet, the Vhavenda do not typically find it easy to trust others.

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An example of this behaviour was seen in Vho Mukondeleli Rabumbulu, Vho Maine vha vhana (the healer of the infants) who was 89 years of age by the time of her interview (Personal interview 16/06/2010). She knows how to use medicines to cure infant/children's diseases. However, she wanted to pass the skills to her daughter only. When asked why she cannot share her knowledge of the medicines with other people, nor even her daughter-in-law, she expressed that she cannot pass on her healing skills to her daughter-in-law as she would no longer receive the respect and regard she deserves from her and that medicinal skills are passed through your clan, so the daughter-in-law should inherit that through her own clan.

As a result of secretive and, sometimes distrustful natures, it is difficult to obtain information surrounding such an esoteric issue as *malombo*. A person researching this cultural phenomenon has to display an enduring and understanding research spirit and establish a very good rapport with the research participants. The approach should be circumspect and not arouse suspicion. A study such as this can only be undertaken through dedicated research relationships that span many years and an understanding and trust that the research results will be shared in an ethical manner outlined in the ethics application and letters of consent received by all participants in the study.

The study of *malombo,* a sacred religious dance, is complex in a way that it will not be justified and rationalized like any health study in a hospital or at home hence the selection of data, study area, population, sample size and so forth.

1.8. RESEARCH PREPARATION

Before the process of selecting research sites and cultural experts, permission was sought to conduct the research about the *malombo* indigenous healing practice from the Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, which is now known as Corporate Governance and Traditional Affairs, at Thohoyandou in Vhembe (District Office), where the research was to take place. The researcher then proceeded to the Executive Secretary of the Committee of the Healers' Association in the Vhembe District to seek the official permission to conduct the research on how the music and songs contribute to *malombo* healing practices. Research was also approved by the University of Pretoria Research Ethics Committee.

1.9. ETHICAL ISSUES

These were some of the ethical issues that governed the collection of the research data:

- There were no inducements offered, all subjects are acknowledged in the thesis (as approved by the Ethics committee).
- The thesis will be made available for the public in the local University of Venda library as well as the University of Pretoria library.
- The permission from the Department of Corporate Governance and Traditional Affairs and The Executive Secretary of the healer's committee was given and is attached in the appendix.
- All information will be treated as confidential as determined by the research procedures and the University of Pretoria, Music Department of the University of Pretoria. Elements may be approved for the University of

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Pretoria music archive in order for on-going access to the research data.

- Pseudonyms can be used to protect the informants if desired, if participants chose to use their names this was respected.

1.9.1. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As with all arts based research, this study faced limitations that impact the scope of the current research. However, the researcher attempted to work within the bounds of these limitations in order to provide a comprehensive overview of the music of the *malombo* healing ceremony. In addition, all research was guided by the Research Ethics Committee that mandates procedures for responsible and ethical research. All research was conducted with the framework of the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Pretoria and limitations were overcome through extensive fieldwork that addressed the specific role of music in *malombo* whilst respecting the privacy of people involved in the study and the secrecy of some aspects of the tradition. The specific limitations faced in this research include:

- The secrecy of the ceremony and of the participants who chose not to divulge certain pertinent information;
- The presence of the researcher, who was sometimes a stranger to those involved in the ceremony (i.e. during participant-observation), which occasionally determined that participants chose not to reveal details about the individual process of their meeting with the ancestral spirit;
- The secrecy of the healers to the process of the ritual that takes place in the (shrine) or the divining house before the actual availing of the ancestral spirits;
- The length of the song. The song length depends on the process known as 'mato'. A tree first has a trunk, branches, leaves, and then bears fruit. Mato enables the song to grow like a tree as the lead singer adds to it. This is how the length of the song can continually elongate. Accordingly, each performance means the song will be of a different length. The length of the songs cannot be demarcated by the verses; it depends on the 'mato' of the leader. This can lead to some researchers to believe they are hearing different songs when, indeed, the song root is the same;
- The limitations of Western notation in the transcription of African music.
  - Seven songs were transcribed into staff notation as an indication of the love of transcriptions, but the community of the study is not familiar to the notation.
  - Most of the community is still used to oral tradition; even the learned has difficulty in reading notation.
  - For the community itself, recording is the most appropriate method for this type of music.

1.10. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Of all research methods available, the qualitative research method was deemed to be the best choice for this particular study as it takes into consideration the context in which the research is to be undertaken. Furthermore, this methodology is also particularly suitable for socio-religious phenomena, the category into which the *malombo* indigenous healing practice may be placed. As Merriam (1998:5) explains:

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> Qualitative research is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that helps us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible.

The methods of research utilized in this thesis adhere to the typical methodologies of ethnomusicological research as outlined by Rice (2014:27-43), where researchers conduct participant-observation fieldwork and "live in a community; participate and observe and record musical events; interview musicians, their patrons, and audiences; and learn to sing, play, and dance" (27).

By making use of this research methodology it was possible to acquire first-hand information concerning the Vhavenda and also to collect data from the traditional healers, the patients and the observers, who provided the relevant data for reliable analysis.

1.10.1. PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION

The researcher used both observation and participant-observation for the *malombo* sessions because these methods provide a means for obtaining first-hand information of the phenomenon of interest. Analysis and interpretation followed. The researcher's choice of method was supported by Jorgensen's (1989:18) idea that "the methodology of participant observation encourages the researcher to begin with the immediate experience of human life in concrete situations and settings, and make the most of whatever opportunities are presented". Participant-observation also elicits "three kinds of event description: particular, normative, and interpretive…the ultimate goal is an interpretive description of the cultural meaning of a particular musical event" (Rice 2014:34). For the research in this thesis, participant-observation included attendance at *malombo* events involving participation in singing, *tshele-playing*, drumming, in addition to observation of all aspects of the ceremony. As an insider, the researcher had additional access to knowledge but recognized the ethical considerations this mandates, including being aware of research vs. non-research conversations and in particular, adherence to respecting privacy for those who did not want to be publically named. Finally, it is important to note the high level of sensitivity and secrecy around many areas of this ceremony. In order to protect and preserve relationships and rituals, the researcher did not report, describe or share cultural knowledge that was deemed secret by the participants in the study. Due to the insider status of the researcher, it was a privilege to participate in all aspects of *malombo* on many occasions but for reasons of the ethics outlined above, only materials that were approved by research participants were included in this thesis. This consideration, of insider status during participant-observation is one that has been considered peripherally in the field of ethnomusicology but not in terms of access to secret and sacred rituals.

In addition to general observation, interviews and participant-observation in Vhavenda communities in the Vhembe district of Limpopo, South Africa between 2005-2014, the researcher participated and observed fifteen complete healing performance sessions in the following communities (each ceremony can take up to several days to complete):

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Table 1.1: *Communities where complete healing performance sessions were observed during the research period*

Community	Number of complete *malombo* ceremonies observed
Tshakhuma	5
Ha-Mutsha	2
Maniini	1
Itsani	1
Khubvi	2
Tshitomboni	1
Vhurivhuri	2
Ha-Makuya	1

In some of the sessions the researcher attended, the invocation of the ancestor spirits took a full day and a half, like the one at Lukau in September 2010 at Vho Maine Seani's place. Some took 8 – 10 hours at Tshakhuma – Luvhalani and Tshitomboni respectively. In addition to the complete performance sessions, the researcher, as a member of the community, participated in several spontaneous sessions of song sharing, conversation, and partial performance sessions. Throughout all activities, the researcher conducted participant-observation by singing, dancing and participating in the sessions.

During the complete healing sessions, data was collected through participant-observation of the different sections of the *malombo* healing ceremony including the *tshele* healing ritual sessions and *ngoma dza vhadzimu* healing performances. The researcher also conducted follow up sessions with the patients who had been possessed to determine whether there were problems with the healing and how they felt after the healing process. These follow up sessions gave the researcher deeper insight into the traditional healing practice. Participating and observing the *malombo* ceremony is an elongated process that can take place over the course of several weeks to months. Therefore, long-term research was necessary as a means to engage with patients and healers from the onset of illness, diagnosis and follow-up. In addition, because healers do not always have patients it is necessary to find both healers and patients interested in participating in the research project. This type of research requires long-term dedication and a sensitive approach in order to understand the role of music within the ceremony and beyond. Therefore, this research goes beyond any other work done in the area (namely Van Warmelo and Blacking) because these scholars had limited access to the ceremony and as such, their research overlooks the detailed and elaborate role of music in the *malombo* ceremony and in the cultural lives of Vhavenda people.

The researcher was able to observe healing ceremonies and practices in many communities including Tshakhuma, Ha-Mutsha, Maniini, Itsani, Khubvi, Tshitomboni, Vhurivhuri and Ha-Makuya. Conducting research in many communities provided the opportunity to engage with different healers and community members in order to intimately observe the *malombo* ritual from the preparation for evoking the ancestral spirits to its conclusion. The researcher also travelled to other remote areas such as Ha-Makuya and Vhurivhurias as a participant-observer to document whether there are differences in the techniques used by different healers in different

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communities. The researcher travelled as far as Mutale (northern side of the Zoutpansberg mountain ranges), and it was significant to establish that the same procedures are followed everywhere by traditional healers in Vhavenda communities.

As far as the musical aspect of *malombo* is concerned, an effective mode of study from an ethnomusicological perspective is to include the process of understanding the style and structure of music; that is, to study the texts of the songs, play the musical instruments and take into consideration the kinetic activities that occur together with the music. It is also of utmost importance to take into consideration the beliefs that are held by members of the culture.

The researcher's choice of method was further determined by Taylor and Bodgan (1998:92), who state: "it calls for a flexible research design. Neither the number nor the type of informants needs to be specified beforehand." They continue:

> Participant observers develop close and open relationships with all informants. Field researchers usually try to cultivate close relationships with one or two respected and knowledgeable people in the early stage of the research. These people are called key informants. The key informant is the researcher's best friend in the field (1998:53 & 54).

The researcher's key participants in the research study were primarily healers, patients, and some *malombe* dancers and community members. For the purpose of explanation *malombe* are people who were possessed before and who may become possessed again in any session of the *tshele* and *ngoma dza vhadzimu*. *Malombe* are also the source of singing for the *malombo* songs.

1.10.2. NON-PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

The researcher also engaged in non-participation observation as a means of gathering information from the first session of *tshele* ritual dance. Evoking of the ancestral spirits is highly ritualistic and therefore highly secretive, and as a result the performance must not be disturbed by outside participants. The researcher was able to observe this segment of the *malombo* ceremony but was unable to participate. Using both the participant and non-participant methods allowed the researcher to be present for all portions of the ritual ceremony. The observation method was also used when attending the other sessions during which it was necessary to observe the proceedings attentively. This allowed for the careful witness of the curative input of music, up until the manifestation of the ancestral spirits. The duration for each session could last up to approximately eight hours.

1.10.3. INTERVIEWS

The researcher chose the interview method because most of the participants are illiterate and interviews were a positive means to discuss the research questions and to provide the opportunity for the participants to share knowledge and history. Interviews were conducted in person or sometimes, over the telephone.

The interviews used for this study of *malombo* music and songs made use of a mixture of unstructured/informal and semi-structured questions. The unstructured

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approach entailed open-ended questions: flexible, exploratory, more like a conversation, while the semi-structured was a mix of more and less structured questions.

The research questions were translated for the purpose of this thesis, as nearly all interviewees were not English speaking persons. The questions were typically used in a semi-structured format to allow the participants to expand on their knowledge of the essence of the phenomenal aspects of *malombo* especially as far as the effects of music were concerned.

Most of the detailed information gathered about *malombo* was gained during unstructured and semi-structured interviews. During these interviews, participants felt free to share their experiences without the interruption of recording devices or video cameras. Many times the participants would close the interview with the figure of speech: "*Ndi u anea ngoma duvhani izwi?"* Literally translated this means "is this putting the drum in the sun?" – meaning that they wished to be reassured that the sharing of this information would not be used for something else beyond the research.

With interviews in general, it was important to first gain trust so that the participant felt free to answer questions with the knowledge of what purpose the research serves. The researcher became aware with this during the interview with Vho Maine Vho Mutshe (Personal interview 12/07/2010). The first appointment revealed limited information and took about 1hour and 45 minutes. Although she was smiling, one could see that she was suspicious and to a certain extent reserved. Following an explanation of the purpose of the research as a means of understanding the *malobmo* ceremony, she became more involved in the process.

The purpose of an interview is to allow the researcher to enter into the interviewee's perspective. As one of the data collection methods, the researcher interviewed the informants before and after the sessions, especially the first private session, as this deals with the invocation of the ancestral spirits. As Merriam (1998:71 & 73) indicates:

> The main purpose of an interview is to obtain special information. The researcher's task is to discover what is 'in someone's mind'.

As the research involved the communities of the researcher's own culture, some (but not all) of the phenomena were known to the researcher prior to the interviews. The researcher consequently interviewed the healers, the patients, their parents or relatives as well as members of the communities as a means to gather comprehensive information about *malombo*.

Interview data was recorded by using forms for the interview sessions that lasted between one hour fifteen minutes and three hours each. The interviews mainly occurred after the healing session, because the *nyadala* (the possessed patient) sometimes did not want any outside disturbance or the presence of any 'foreign object' while the trance was taking place. Most of the interviews were thus conducted after the session had ended, after they had gained consciousness, and not on the same day as the ceremony.

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The interview occurred after the healing session because of the sensitivity of the ritual. Any disruptions would antagonize *nyada's* possession process. Merriam B. S. (1998:72 & 73) states that:

> We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe…We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behavior that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that prelude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attached to what goes on in the world. We have to ask questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective.

The researcher's observation and subsequent questioning of the participants therefore became the main source for the data informing this study.

1.10.4. LITERATURE AND DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

In order to strengthen the data collection, both primary sources and secondary sources were consulted. The thesis includes a comprehensive review of literature that supports the examination of the *malombo* ceremony. In addition, other relevant published, archived and electronic sources were accessed.

In addition to academic texts, various relevant published sources were examined, including books, encyclopedias, journals, newspaper reports and articles, archival materials, publications of the state, conference, congress, and symposia publications, annual reports released by government departments and related non-governmental organizations, internet websites, and electronic sources. The literature review found in chapter two encompasses the Vhavenda and other cultural groups, primarily in African contexts, who utilize music in healing practice.

1.10.5. POPULATION OF STUDY

Subjects were selected by random sampling through previous research relationships. The healers then led to introductions to new healers interested in partaking in the study through a research technique known as snowballing. The subjects included were:

- 18 healers (and former healers),
- 18 *malombe* (those who have participated in *malombo*),
- 8 cultural informants (who are not healers and who do not participate in *malombo*).

Participants were chosen according to availability and agreement to participate.

In order to procure the first key informants, the researcher used snowball sampling, which Jorgensen (1989:50) defines as follows:

> Snowball sampling is a strategy that is especially useful when the phenomenon of interest is obscured, hidden, or concealed from the viewpoint of an outsider. (The basic idea of snowball sampling is to obtain sufficient

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> information from a known instance of the phenomenon to be able to identify and locate subsequent instances for observation). As the name suggests, phenomena for observation tend to grow like a snowball through this procedure.

Snowball sampling provided the researcher with the solution for accessing the field of inquiry because the researcher as an integral member of the community has friends who assisted in locating and accessing community healers.

The researcher's first key informant was Vho Maine Vho Nyawasedza. She, in turn, referred the researcher to other healers who perform the *malombo* indigenous healing practice to heal their patients, and also to their patients. The researcher, however, ensured that a variety of informants were interviewed, since the researcher was aware of Taylor and Bodgan's caution that:

> A potential drawback of the snowball technique is that it can limit the diversity of your informants. Therefore you need to be prepared to use a range of different approaches to identify possible subjects. You can locate potential informants through the same process that the participant observer used to gain access to private settings (1998:93).

In the light of the caution above, the researcher grouped the key informants into three main categories: healers, patients and community members. Each group completed University of Pretoria consent forms to agree to work with the researcher for this thesis.

1.10.6. RESEARCH FORMS AND EQUIPMENT

FORMS

The forms used for this research were:

- University of Pretoria Committee of Ethics consent form

These forms are attached in the appendix together with:

- A list of observation sites
- Interview schedule with questions targeting the different categories of respondents interviewed
- A document outlining how the reliability of the data was maintained

EQUIPMENT

The researcher used the following equipment to collect data:

- Notebook and pen
    - Notes were taken during the *tshele* and *ngoma dza vhadzimu* sessions and during interviews.

- Recording

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- A Merodex audio recorder was used to record interviews of the healers, patients, their relatives, and members of the community as well as the *malombo* music when possible.
- Music was recorded and documented for future reference.

- Video and photography
  - Sony 7.2 and Samsung 10.2 megapixel digital cameras were used for photographs of people, places and the musical instruments;
  - A Sony Handycam DCR – SX40 video camera was used for video recording when available.

1.10.7. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is an on-going process that supports data collection. As an important part of the research, data analysis manages the data collected in order to arrive at conclusions about the topic of research. Analysis starts with the first interview, observation and the documentation of the researcher's findings. It was through the results of the preliminary findings of the initial interviews that the researcher became aware that further data was required for investigation into the topic. A number of follow up visits were then made to verify the preliminary findings.

The research that took place was, therefore, not a linear process. The researcher analysed the episodes that took place in the real setting of the *tshele* as well as *ngoma dza vhadzimu* sessions and then interpreted the collected data. Sometimes the researcher found it necessary to observe some episodes again in order to interpret, manage and verify the data. There was thus a repeated process of returning from the field to the documentation and its interpretation, and then revisiting the field for verification of the findings.

1.10.8. DATA RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The researcher acknowledges that the data found in this study is based on qualitative research and participants have expertise of the knowledge they have shared. As a participant-observer, the researcher witnessed the healing sessions discussed in this thesis and data was deemed reliable and valid based on observation and qualitative research over an extended fieldwork period. The researcher takes responsibility for any mistakes or misinterpretations found in this thesis. Furthermore, the research was conducted in an ethical manner in compliance with the University of Pretoria Research Ethics Committee.

1.11. PRIMARY PARTICIPANTS

The following people were the primary sources of information, and facilitated subsequent follow-up interviews and information sessions. It is with gratitude, that the researcher acknowledges the valuable contribution made by the following people in the study.

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Table 1.2: *Research participants*

Name	Community	Role
Vho Khakhu	Makwarela	Former healer
Alidzulwi Murei	Lukau	Healer
Masindi	Vhurivhuri Matovha	Healer
Nyawasedza Bulala	Maguvhuni	Healer
Vho Joseph Singo	Maniini	Healer
Vho Josephine Musetsho	Tshitomboni	Healer
Vho Joyce Madzivhandila	Maswie	Healer
Vho Mavis Mulaudzi	Lukau	Healer
Vho Mutshekwa Nekhudzhiga	Tshitavhadulu	Healer
Vho Namadzavho Mphephu	Tshamanzenge	Healer
Vho Nyawasedza Netshifhire	Musumani Luvhalani	Healer
Vho Riccardo	Madiini	Healer
Vho Tshinakaho Rambau	Hamutsha	Healer
Vho Vele Neluvhola	Siloam	Healer
Vho Wilson Musetsho	Tshitomboni	Healer
Vho Neluvhola	Nzhelele	Healer and chairperson of the healers
Azwinndini Mashamba	Maguvhuni	Healer trainee
Vho Mukondeleli Rabumbulu	Muledane	Infant healer
Vho Angelina Muzila	Maswie	Informant
Vho Avhavhudzani Nemukondeni	Luvhalani	Informant
Vho Christina Madzhiabada	Tshiinganwe	Informant
Vho Elisa Mbadi	Tshipfapfani	Informant
Vho Flora Mudau	Luvhalani	Informant
Vho Munzhedzi Mudau	Lukau	Informant
Vho Mutanwa Zanyele	Tshakhuma	Informant
Vho Nyamukamadi Davhula	Tshakhuma	Informant
Alidzulwi Sibara	Lukau	*Malombe*
Emily Madzivhandila	Tshakhuma	*Malombe*
Gloria Mathisa	Mavhulani	*Malombe*
Makwarela Gabara	Rembuluwani	*Malombe*
Masindi Khubana	Mavhulani	*Malombe*
Masindi Nyungulani	Ha Makuya	*Malombe*
Mavhungu Masindi	Lukau	*Malombe*
Munzhedzi Nelukau	Lukau	*Malombe*
Nyadzanga Mathisa	Lukau	*Malombe*
Nyamukamadi Ndou	Tshakhuma	*Malombe*

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Sara Khubana	Lukau	*Malombe*
Sylvia Nemutavhani	Lukau	*Malombe*
Tshinakaho Mavhungu	Tshakhuma	*Malombe*
Tshinakaho Ndou	Tshakhuma	*Malombe*
Vho Masindi Nengwani	Lukau	*Malombe*
Vho Mutshekwa Madzunya	Lukau	*Malombe*
Vho Sanna Nemugumoni	Musumani	*Malombe*
Vho Tshinakaho Mutavhatsindi	Lukau	*Malombe*
Total number of healers (including former healers): 18 **Total number of informants: 8** **Total number of *malombe*: 18**		

The participants included were 18 healers (and former healers), 18 *malombe* (those who have participated in *malombo*), and 8 cultural informants (who are not healers and who do not participate in *malombo*). These participants were chosen according to availability and agreement to participate, and have consented to their names being used in this study and preferred this over the use of pseudonyms.

1.12. DIVISION OF THE CHAPTERS FOR THIS THESIS

This study of '*Malombo* musical arts in Vhavenda indigenous healing practices' consists of five chapters.

1.12.1. CHAPTER ONE

Chapter one is an introduction to the research topic and outline of the research data collection methods and procedures.

1.12.2. CHAPTER TWO

This chapter focuses on a literature review, and includes an overview of how other African cultural groups venerate their ancestral spirits. Related terminologies and concepts are identified, analysed and discussed. The literature review provides evidence that, in most cultural groups, music plays a decisive healing role in the treatment of patients.

1.12.3. CHAPTER THREE

In Chapter Three the reader discovers how the Vhavenda of South Africa practice the process of healing through the *malombo* healing ritual. Categories of healers, their purpose and functions are discussed. Evidence is provided that some illnesses need *malombo* healing ritual to be fully cured. A breakdown of the different sessions, or segments, of the *malombo* ceremony are outlined and discussed.

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1.12.4. CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter four provides detailed song translations and transcriptions of key *malombo* songs. This chapter outlines the role of *mato* in song and the impact it has directly on the songs and texts of *malombo* songs.

1.12.5. CHAPTER FIVE

Chapter five provides a summary as well as recommendations for further study.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

There is limited research and literature that directly addresses the role of music in Vhavenda indigenous healing practices. This study, therefore, relies primarily on knowledge gathered directly from Vhavenda traditional practitioners and other community members, healers and patients to examine the relationship between music and healing in the Vhavenda context. Relevant literature sources on Vhavenda communities are limited to historical research by Van Warmelo (1932), Stayt (1968), Hammond-Tooke (1962) and Blacking (1995). Research in the fields of music and healing and music and possession have been examined as a means to further contextualize Vhavenda *malombo* practices in the broader fields of ethnomusicology, medical ethnomusicology, and music therapy.

2.2. BACKGROUND

Several researchers, most notably Van Warmelo (1932), Stayt (1968), Hammond-Tooke (1962), Blacking (1995), Nzewi (2008), Ralushai (1977), Shabangu (2004), Lebaka (2001, 2008), Maraire (1990), Mageza (1997), Olupona (1991), Thram (1999, 2002), Janzen (1992), Friedson (1996), Willis (1999) have addressed the topic of spirit possession and healing in an African context. In addition, Rouget's (1985) study of music, trance, and possession has framed this current research. These studies of possession and healing in other cultural groups help to create an awareness of the challenges surrounding the study of African music, and in particular, of the challenges the researcher faced in studying the role of music in spiritual practices. The studies that address healing, possession, and music in an African context and also provide a demonstration of similarities between cultures, as well as distinguishing the unique features of healing and music in the Vhavenda *malombo* dance (see for example Gouk (ed.) 2000 whose edited volume addresses the question of universalisms in music and healing). *The Oxford Handbook of Medical Ethnomusicology* (Koen et al. 2008) has also proved valuable throughout this study to inform and substantiate the current study through a global examination of the relationship between healing, music, and spirituality.

2.3. DISCUSSION AND DEFINITION OF TERMS ADDRESSED IN THIS THESIS

It is to be noted that in research on African music in healing and religious practices, terminology has been problematic. It is therefore necessary first to cite some examples of the constraints caused by the use of terminology that has bound scholarship on African music and African religion. Concepts to be identified, analysed and discussed include: African music; African religion; African ritual; ancestors; festivals and ceremonies and spirits possession.

2.3.1. ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

There are three important principles that emerge from the field of ethnomusicology

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that are pertinent to this study:

- Whatever a particular society calls 'music' is very highly ordered;
- Understanding cultural context is paramount in delineating the relationship between music and its connection with ritual;
- Music is always context-sensitive.

Hood's (1974:134) definition of ethnomusicology as "an approach to the study of any music, not only in terms of itself but also in relation to its cultural context" is particularly relevant to this study because it embraces all three of the above principles. For the research undertaken in the current study, this definition serves well, because the music itself cannot be studied in any context other than that in which it appears: directly connected to a ritual, the healing ceremony, and limited to a particular society, the Vhavenda.

2.3.2. AFRICAN MUSIC

Scholars have attempted to define African music itself from different viewpoints. One definition that is presented by Bebey (1975:5) is that "it is the traditional music of the black people of Africa, which is best understood within the context of traditional African life".

Bebey (1969:iv) further sees African music as "fundamentally collective art, that is, a communal property whose spiritual qualities are shared and experienced by all". Mbiti (1970:87) defines African music as "that aspect of traditional African life which provides the repositories of traditional beliefs, ideas, wisdom and feelings".

Chernoff (1979:28) describes African music as an art form "admired mostly as a spontaneous and emotional creation, an uninhibited, dynamic expression of vitality." This description downplays the highly organized nature of music, an aspect that the present study will seek to address in its analysis of one of the most 'spontaneous and emotional' creations: *malombo* dance.

As with most types of music around the world, African music operates within its own parameters and contexts. While African music can be respected for its unique treatment of rhythm, of pitch, timbre and form, Chernoff's assertion that "African music can offer us an especially valuable approach to African culture," (1979:153) is particularly important. There are various aesthetic principles embedded within the music and these principles form the collective means by which rhythms and melodies are produced together by a group of singers, players, and dancers, and these will be addressed with regard to *malombo* dance within this study.

Jackson (1985:37) describes traditional African music as "the phonic expression of psychic experiences generated within the spiritual framework of traditional institution which, in turn, constitute the basis of society". He claims that these psychic experiences are highly regarded by all members of the society in that they comprise a homogeneous unit with common ancestry and a shared worldview. Jackson herein confirms one of the basic tenets of the present study, namely that African music performed within a specific social and religious context also offers a channel for communicating with the spiritual force of ancestors, especially in the management of

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psychosocial disorders. As such, and as the present study documents, this music becomes a vehicle for reaching the spiritual world.

2.3.3. AFRICAN RELIGION

Olupona (1991:26) observes that African traditional religion is so diversified in nature and scope that it represents different things to different ethnic groups with certain common themes (such as ancestral worship) running through the various religious traditions, regardless of where they are located.

While the present study cannot attempt to provide a comprehensive survey of the vast area that is covered by the term 'African traditional religions', it is nonetheless essential to provide certain observations regarding the traditional religious beliefs of the Vhavenda simply because this study concerns the study of a particular religious practice, namely *malombo* healing dance that is known as *ngoma dza vhadzimu*.

In Tshivenda (the language of the Vhavenda), religion is spoken of in plural form, *midzimu* or *vhadzimu*. According to their belief, religion is not a singular relationship, because a person cannot 'own' the religion as an individual. Religion belongs to, and is practiced by, the extended families, clans and kinship groups to which an individual belongs and amongst whom the individual lives. The religion thus becomes "a living religion that is written in the lives of the people" (Mageza 1977:14,22). Consequently, people in this context must know where they come from and with whom to consult during their developmental problems and circumstances, because the acknowledgement of the ancestors forms an essential part of traditional religious practice.

Thorpe (1993:11) importantly asserts that traditional African religion differs fundamentally from most others (including Judaism, Christianity and Buddhism, for example) in that there are no sacred written scriptures. Instead, the culture and customs are passed orally from generation to generation. This goes some way towards explaining why traditional African religion has sometimes been regarded as informal and therefore not openly acknowledged.

Opposing this view, Olivier (1985:1) indicates that some black medical students in South Africa believe that only "witch-doctors" or "indigenous medical practitioners" can cure the illnesses that cannot be cured by medical practitioners. This in itself is a clear indication that the importance of traditional healing practice is widely acknowledged, including in South African medical schools. Although to African societies, as Shabangu (2004:77) has alluded, the 'medicine men' are the great gift, and the most useful source of help. Mbiti (1970:166) maintains that these are the people who suffered most from European and American writers and speakers who so often called them 'witch-doctors' a term that, in his opinion, should be buried and forgotten forever.

In the case of traditional healers, the healing practices are closely guarded secrets that few outsiders are privileged to witness. Even having witnessed an event such as the *malombo* dance, an uninformed or partially informed outsider may not make sense of the ceremony.

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The first researchers did, of course, not understand this, and so Wessman a century ago described *malombo* dance in this manner:

> Expelling the evil spirit also cures illness. For this purpose the doctor performs the maddest and most difficult dances, while the relatives of the patient sing their applause and ultimately join the mad dance (1908:86-87).

It is not surprising that Wessman (1908) describes the dance in this way as he had a dismissive attitude towards Africans, as evidenced when he made his sweeping statement that "The Venda like all the African nations are accomplished natural liars."

Perspectives such as these provide further justification for the current study, which seeks also to provide a source of reference for this important healing practice.

2.3.4. AFRICAN RITUAL

There are various rituals in traditional African religion that can be observed from birth to death. Across the continent, many Africans themselves are cognizant of these rituals, which cannot be ignored, as they enhance the self-confidence of the individual by marking certain rites of passage. According to Zeusse (1979:7-9), "African ritual is interpreted as directed to the reconciliation of contending parties and thus it is largely social in purpose. But the fusion of social and spiritual concern is evident in all accounts. Ritual is the vehicle by means of which religions of structure achieve this complex act of integration."

The spiritual indigenous practice of the Vhavenda is one of the vehicles for connecting not only the individual, but also the participating community members to the ancestral spirits. As Shabangu (2004:164) has highlighted, "it is equally important that through rituals, African people not only act their religion, but also communicate it to the younger generations." Consequently the *malombo* ritual performance is an important ceremony for Vhavenda to honour and venerate their forefathers. In this regard, Chernoff (1979:154) remarks, "The values of African traditional wisdom are integrated into a style of communication which is both musical and social."

2.3.5. ANCESTORS

Most Africans look to their ancestors for wisdom and strength. Olupona (1991:42) explains that "When Africans approach time, the past receives the main emphasis; here the human being finds his orientation; here lies his roots; here he finds security. Here is the world of ancestors from which he finds direction." The power demonstrated by traditional healers is believed to originate with their ancestors. The relationship between ancestral, spiritual, human and material powers can be symbolized by a spider's web, in which the threads are connected to each other to form a highly organized, interdependent system. Chidester (1992:11) suggests that equilibrium is fully maintained when no thread (called the subsystem) is disturbed.

In a discussion of the power of healing, Olupona (1991:46) states, "The traditional healer, directed by the ancestors and other spirits from whom he/she receives power, utilizes this supernatural power for healing purposes." The work of the healer is considered critical to the improvement of maladies and diseases, and thus the healer is

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a respected figure by members of the community. It is known that the ancestors direct him. Kringe & Kringe (1965:231) allude to how the Lovedu, another South African tribe from the northern part of the country, venerate their ancestors: "The gods of the Lovedu are their ancestors, deceased fathers and mothers who guard one in death as they did in life. Each family has its own ancestors, and religious observances are thus a particular family concern."

2.3.6. FESTIVALS AND CEREMONIES

The Vhavenda festivals are purposeful occasions, and many have religious significance. There are celebrations that cater for individual achievements, royal coronations or the installation of the chiefs, or graduation from initiation schools. Some of the most important festivals and initiation schools include:

- *domba,* the initiation school to teach the grown up girls/ladies how to handle their families;
- *vhusha,* the initiation school to teach the matured girls the norms and values of society as far as womanhood is concerned;
- *murundu,* the initiation school to teach the boys the behaviour of men and how to handle their families;
- *Musevhetho*, the initiation school to teach the young girls to be aware of the changes in their bodies;
- *Bepha*: takes place when one chief visits the village, home, and family of another. This festival mandates the involvement of the chief's kinsmen, as well as all his men and dancers, as a sign of respect;
- *Tshikona* is a reed-pipe ensemble, performed primarily by young men attending *thondo*. *Thondo* is a traditional school directly under the auspices of the chiefs. Hence the Vhavenda saying '*Tshikona ndi tsha mahosi, musiwana u tshi wana fhi?'* 'Tshikona is for the chiefs, where do commoners get it from?' Blacking (1965:52) also described *tshikona* as "a symbol of the power of chiefs and sonorous emblem of national pride".

Other examples of Vhavenda festivals are thanksgiving ceremonies and burial rites. Members of Vhavenda society value these festivals, as they are the means by which their ancestors are honoured.

The Vhavenda have a ceremony that is associated with the dead. Some years (it might be 3 – 10) after the burial, depending on the need brought about by the ancestors, they have a ceremony called *u vhuisa hayani* - bringing home the dead and *u luvhedza* – to dress the dead. This event was witnessed during fieldwork in Tshakhuma, May 2011. Vho Maine Vho Joyce performed the rite – she slaughtered a black goat with her helper and removed the skin from the whole body as a gesture for the ancestors for a deceased relative.

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Figure 2.1: *Sacrificing a goat for the cleansing ritual*

Figure 2.2: *Wrapping and adding medicine to the bones of the sacrificed goat*

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Figure 2.3: *The sacrificed goat wrapped for burial*

Figure 2.4: *Burying the sacrificed goat and adding medicine to the grave*

They deboned the meat from the whole goat and put the bones back into the skin together with the head and feet. Vho Maine sprinkled medicines over the bones and wrapped all the bones in the skin. They buried the covered bones in a home dug grave that was sprinkled with soil from the cemetery grave; all the close relatives were present to witness the burial. According to Vho – Nyamukamadi Davhula, an

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octogenarian, in the beginning they would use a sheep, but now the sheep are scarce and so they use a goat in its place (Personal interview 15/05/2009).

2.3.7. SPIRIT POSSESSION AND TRANCE

In the Oxford dictionary online (http://www.oxforddictionaries.com accessed July 3, 2015) the words "spirit" and "possession" are not listed together. According to Oxford spiritual means, "concerned with sacred or religious things", spiritualism is defined as "a belief that the spirits of the dead can communicate with the living, especially through mediums", and spirit is "the non-physical part of a person which is the seat of emotions and character and regarded as their true self and as capable of surviving physical death or separation." Possession is defined as "the act or state of possessing or being possessed." These terms are often combined to describe the phenomenon of musical healing practices such as *malombo*. However, it is necessary to examine their meaning as applied to music and healing practices as examined through relevant literature.

Rouget (1985:30) described possession as: a form of religion characterized by a relationship between a given deity and categories of his or her followers. He further argues that possession itself is:

> the socialized behavior of an individual consisting, given certain circumstances, in a change taking place within him, with the effect that his usual personality (which governs his everyday behavior) is replaced by the persona of the deity, who dictates different forms of behavior to him. This substitution is often accompanied by an alteration in psychic activity generally termed trance. This identification brought about in this way constitutes an alliance, the major function of which is to lead the divinity either to exert his power in favor of the possessed person and/ or his group (by increasing their strength, say, or protecting them) or, alternatively, to cease exerting his power against them.

Rouget's landmark study of music and trance is instrumental in defining the terminology in order to understand the complex relationships between music, trance and possession. His research offers a framework to why trance is often associated with music in cultures around the world (1985:xvii). Applied to the Vhavenda context, *malombo* reveals unique relationships between music, possession and healing that consider why music is necessary in order for healing to take place.

Junod (1962:301) elaborates on possession as 'superstition'. However we cannot call possession superstition because this undermines the complexity of systematic healing systems such as *malombo*. As Vho Mutshe indicated, "when called by *midzimu* you cannot deny as all your property, children and whatever belongs to you will just go wrong" (Personal interview 15/05/2008). Therefore we cannot understand simplistic denotations of healing ceremonies as superstition because the lived experiences of people in Vhavenda communities demonstrate its significance and the reality of ignoring the call of the ancestors.

It is clear that ideas about possession, trance, and spirituality are diverse and historically (and even in contemporary popular contexts) couched in biased rhetoric

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that does not accurately define these terms with contextualized meaning. Therefore, this thesis aims to understand these terms in culturally relevant contexts that are defined from the perspectives of those entrenched in the on-going practice of spirit possession and trance.

Spirit possession as explained by Van Warmelo (1932:141) is when the ancestor spirits need to enter into one's life (a person's life) and take control over her body (a person's body). Many African communities across the continent believe in the powers of their ancestors. Within African contexts, time is also considered as a two dimensional phenomenon, the past which is important as the era of the ancestors and the present that is in most cases directed by the ancestors who are concerned for the health and well being of their descendants.

Ndou (1993:106) reinforces this view:

> The unshakeable belief of the Africans on the powers of the ancestors in most cases is unquestionable; they believe that their ancestors have much concern in their living descendants. This notion and belief became more conspicuous during the wars of liberation in Zimbabwe. The Blacks in that country had a very strong belief in their ancestor Nehanda, and they were convinced that this ancestor was in control of the war, and was always consulted for advice and guidance.

Kringe & Kringe (1965:242) indicate:

> For the spirits that possess people are not evil spirits to be expelled; they are the ancestors whom one worships, and their desire occasionally to manifest themselves through some living relative is comparable to that impulse towards life that makes them desire shrines, dedicate animals, and the perpetuation of their names in their descendants. The method by which a spirit is enabled to 'come out' and disclose its identity and the possessed person to become the host (*ledala*) of the spirit without being ill consists largely of dancing; and on all subsequent occasions when the spirits manifest themselves they signify their desire to dance.

Furthermore, according to Crapanzano and Garrison (1977:94) "Illness is the first if not the exclusive reason for renewing the alliance with the spirits. The bodily space is invested and pervaded by the ambivalent ancestral sign."

2.4. TYPES OF AILMENTS THAT NEED THE *MALOMBO* HEALING

Hammond-Tooke (1979:54), in his discussion of spirit possession argues that:

> The illness that drives a person to consult a *malopo* diviner is undoubtedly psychosomatic: a persistent pain in the chest, nerves, hiccoughing, anorexia and emaciation. The symptoms are reminiscent of the thwasa illness of Nguni mediumstic diviners and it is significant that the Tsonga refers to a person initiated into the cult as being thwaza. The symptoms are explained as being caused by the possessing spirits "pressing the person down". Treatment consist of dancing under the supervision of a cult leader who herself becomes

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affected. It is the dance that enables possessing spirits to come out and express themselves.

Although Hammond-Tooke's description of "psychosomatic illness" is clearly problematic in that he is seemingly arguing that the illnesses healed through possession may merely be of the mind, there is indication that the relationship between the body and the psyche is what is healed in the *malombo* context. For example, Vho Maine Vho Seani, in an interview at her home (Personal interview 20/02/2009), indicated that the symptoms of illness are confusing as the mind and body are not working together - one may not tell which one is the problem. Therefore, *malombo* will heal both the psychological and physical ailment as they are clearly linked when the mind and body are not working together.

The types of ailments that need *malombo* healing deal primarily with psychological issues that are manifested through physical ailments. However, the types of ailments are so widespread that they cannot be enumerated as they may also shift and change over the course of history. Sometimes the patient will complain of pain and the pain is sometimes symptomatic and inflicted by the ancestors as an indication that you too must be a healer. The ancestors inflict pain as a means to direct your intentions to answer the questions in your life that need addressing through communication with the ancestors. Therefore, the ailments may manifest themselves through physical indicators but the diagnosis is typically that the ancestors are challenging you to deal with them and therefore your ailments will only be healed through communication with the ancestors. This can be tested through *malombo* as if you are healed then indeed it was an ailment inflicted by the ancestors. If you choose to resist and challenge the ancestors again then you will once again be ill.

Malombo is used for diagnosis; it is through this ceremony that the person is healed from their ailments. It is also a means for new healers to be identified who must then undertake further training to become healers themselves.

The powerful effect of music as a healing tool has been outlined in the studies referenced in this chapter. There is however a vast difference between William Congreve's famous "Music has charms to soothe a savage breast" and the reasoned and organized use of music as a curative measure, such as the field of music therapy. However as with other aspects of Vhavenda culture and society, little has been written about what we might title "music therapy" practice amongst the Vhavenda.

As has been indicated, studies of Vhavenda music within the healing practice of *malombo* are scarce, and the two documents by Blacking (1957; 1985) are limited in scope because this was not his primary study in the field and according to his work he only attended one *malombo* ceremony. It is for this reason that the present study is particularly valuable, since it strives to provide a valuable resource for further research in this area. Blacking (1985) did explore the context in which, what he terms 'possession music,' takes place. He also documented the general role of music in Vhavenda society. Blacking's limited observations of the practice of *malombo* do not provide a comprehensive examination of the complex relationship between music and healing. There is also a lack of literature that elaborates on the kind of ailments that would lead to the deliberate choice of music for therapeutic means within the Vhavenda context.

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Historically, music has been used for healing purposes in widely reported contexts around the world. It is explained, for example, that Kleinias of Tarentum, Greece, would play the lyre whenever he was angry. If asked why he did so, he would explain, "I am calming myself" (Horden 2000:57). On a more practical level, Horden reported that the *aulos* (a wind instrument of ancient Greece) was played by Ismenias from Thebes, in Phrygia (Greece), to help Theophrastus. Interestingly, Theophrastus suffered from sciatica, but could be kept free of the condition if Ismenias played on the *aulos* using the Phrygian mode, over the affected body part or limb. Fainting, panic, and snakebites were additional conditions that are known to have been described as having been alleviated by means of the *aulos*. An *aulos* performance made patients palpitate, as if they were dancing in response to the music, and these vibrations removed the pain Horden (2000:61).

Celcus Rome who lived in the times of Tiberius wrote eight books on medicine (Horden, 2000:62). He documented that a mental illness such as *tristes cogitations* (depression), was treated by *symphoniae et cymbala strepitusque*. He acknowledged the power of music and song to calm the soul or raise the spirits and even epilepsy (referred to at that time as *sacred disease*). According to Crapanzano & Garrison (1977:94) "Other times it indicates a body condition which, according to its symptoms (reversible paralysis, asthenia, amenorrhea, remittent fever), serves as a signifier that can be turned into a medium of exchange within the circuit of gifts and debts that bind the possessed's own family to his or her *rab*."

These records may be regarded as the beginning of what is today called the field music therapy (Horden, 2000:62-63) and history provides much evidence of the treatment of many ailments through the use of music rather than through chemical medicines.

2.5. MUSIC AND HEALING

In the absence of other direct Vhavenda sources, besides Blacking (1957 and 1985) on religious ritual music, it has therefore been necessary to rely on the literature that documents comparable practices in other cultures to help to place the observations and findings of this research into a broader context. This wider literature study has also helped to validate some of the research findings. The comparable practices that other cultures have in common with each other and also with Vhavenda practice is their reliance on the inclusion of the spiritual aspect within the healing process: a healthy mind in a healthy body is the norm. For this reason the religious context cannot be disregarded, and consequently traditional African religious practice, especially its emphasis on ancestor veneration is central to this study.

It has been necessary to refer to literature that documents the use of music for healing in a wider context, represented by the fields of music therapy, music psychology, and medical ethnomusicology. As this research will demonstrate, *malombo* distinguishes itself by exhibiting a high level of organization and structure while allowing for a completely spontaneous response from the patient. In addition, it allows for a post-experience analysis that can be explained by the patient.

Friedson (1996), Thram (1999) and Willis (1999) have all conducted work on healing

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and its relationship to music that are significant to the current study. These scholars agree that spirit possession is the term used to indicate the evocation of the ancestral spirits. They also outline the intrinsic relationships between healing and music that are directly applicable to the Vhavenda context.

According to Thram (1999:42) the Karanga are a sub-group of the Shona who live in the southern part of Zimbabwe and may have been the historical name for most of the people who are known as Shona. A person, *munhu* in Shona, is someone who has an entity that has a duality of body and soul. Thram states "Spirit possession is a necessary ingredient in the curative process of the ceremonies in which the spirits are called to come out through their mediums" (Thram 1999:89). Because the spirits need the physical body of the medium, this can be applied to the Vhavenda healing process because they believe that life does not end when a person dies.

As Friedson argues, music and trance are the two aspects of healing that are needed to generate the possession. Friedson states: "generally, though, the longer someone has had and has been dancing as part of a therapy, the more control he or she gains over the onset of possession trance when *vimbuza* music is present" (Friedson 1996:123). This resonates with Rouget's (1985:323) theory that music socializes the trance state, bringing them under cultural control. Perceiving musical experience as a socialization process enables us to understand only a small part of the phenomenal reality of the musical experience.

Willis, in his discussion of *ngulu* in Zambia, argues that healers go "beyond social and even human boundaries in pursuit of healing knowledge and powers" (1999:3). The relationship between trance and healing is clearly delineated and provides further support for indigenous knowledge systems that draw connection between spirituality, healing, and music.

According to Thram (1999:312):

> The 'work' of the ritual also insures nurturance of the human psyche through contact with the ancestral spirits who respond to the dancer's music making by coming out to provide counselling for proper behaviour and resolution of problems. When spirits possess their mediums, more often than not, their first mode of communication with the people is through song – imagine the power of singing with the spirits of the ancestors. The songs sung are restorative to the psyche through the familiarity of their sounds, the message of their lyrics, and their deep connection to the past experience of performers, both spirit & human.

As such, the healing process takes place through a number of stages that connect music to the ancestral spirits; without each stage of the ceremony, the healing process cannot take place. Therefore, music is both a healing tool and an essential part of the healing process.

Thram, Friedson, and Willis all argue that music is necessary for healing to take place in contexts where ancestors are evoked through possession. Therefore, music is the transformative vehicle for healing. This supports the view of Tracey who argues that music is a "force". Hugh Tracey (1967), in his observations of Shona musicians, calls

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music making a power or force, a dynamic action which is not personified. He argues that "the music is not looked upon as a thing but a means of force. If it has force enough of the right kind, then it should produce the right effect"(1967:49).

2.6. THE ROLE PLAYED BY MUSIC IN THE VHAVENDA HEALING PRACTICE

As already indicated, literature concerning the role played by music in Vhavenda healing practices is sparse. There are various reasons for this, but the most important is the secrecy surrounding their rituals. The Vhavenda do not easily allow a foreigner into their innermost circle, and so the music that accompanies the rituals, in particular the *malombo* dance, remains fairly unknown. Vhavenda communities are typically conservative and rarely share their rituals with foreigners.

The arrival of John Blacking in 1956 in Venda communities could not change the state of the cultural mindset of the Vhavenda. His arrival at Thengwe and his acceptance owed much to the ability of his research assistant, Mr. Nkhumeleni Ralushai, who pleaded successfully with the organizers of the dance that John Blacking would in no way bring any harm to them (Personal interview, Ralushai 28/08/2011).

Blacking also demonstrated his interest in the community by adopting all the practices that are observed when visiting *malombe* for the first time. He gave them traditional Vhavenda snuff, and it was after this that he was allowed to photograph the dancers and notate the songs. Personal accounts indicate that Blacking started to play the drums slowly and ended up being the first white man to play *malombo* drums whilst *malombe* were dancing. From then he was allowed to observe *ngoma dza malombo* without any considerable amount of suspicion. Every time when he arrived the *malombe* would say *mukhuwa o swika,* meaning that the white man has arrived (Personal interview Ralushai 03/05/2011). It has also been a privilege of the researcher to have been allowed to record this music so that the music found in this Vhavenda indigenous religion can be recorded and transcribed for further scholarly research.

The music used during the indigenous healing process has exceptional characteristics. The first of these is text employed. As Merriam (1964:193) notes, "It appears that song text, because of the special kind of license that singing apparently gives, affords an extremely useful means for obtaining the kind of information which is not otherwise easily accessible." The text of a song may therefore, function as "a window to a world of information" which would otherwise remain hidden.

The Vhavenda maintain a close relationship between the living and the dead through a number of rituals. One of the primary means to maintain this relationship is through the *malombo* healing ceremony, which has been described in detail in this thesis. Van Warmelo (1989:173) also describes *malombo* and its origins:

> this possession cult is said to have been introduced from or by the Pfumbi of the North-East in c. 1913 – 1914 (nwaha wa xunwa-xunwa) at Makonde by Vha ha Malindika who settled in Matavhelani. The drums and procedures are practically the same as for possession by family ancestors.

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While conducting interviews (Personal interviews 20/02/2011) on *madzhukwa* (*madzhukwa* is another type of ritual possession dance), the researcher met an old lady, Vho Masindi Nyungulani, who introduced herself as a Pfumbi from the then Rhodesia. Of interest, she stated that her father introduced *madzhukwa* possession dance at Ha–Makuya Maholoni. She even showed the researcher the tree that they used for the performance of the dance. It is true that *ngoma dza vhadzimu* or *malombo* is found among the Vhavenda of the northern part of Limpopo Province up to this day. It is necessary to point out that according to an interview with Professor Ralushai (19/09/2010), he stated that originally *malombo* was a dance of the people of Zimbabwe (the then Rhodesia), Vhapfumbi and Vha ha Matibe (a Mbedzi in mutupo) groups of the Vhavenda who stayed across the Vhembe (Limpopo) river; that is why in his thesis Ralushai (1977:1) also elucidates:

> They have also adopted Shangana-Tsonga [sic], Swazi, Zulu, and Lembethu-Kalanga possession cults, hence in both Matzhomane or Manzhozi (Shangaan-Tsonga, Swazi and Zulu possession cults) and Ngoma dza vhadzimu or malombo (Lembethu-Kalanga possession cults) possessed dancers are expected to speak in Zulu or Swazi and Kalanga respectively.

It is interesting to note that Ralushai, along with Blacking and others, refer to the *malombo* ritual as a "cult" within the tribal context. The concept of a "cult" was introduced into sociological classification in 1932 by the American sociologist Howard P. Becker. He split the ecclesiastical term "sect" into "sect" and "cult". Becker described cults as small religious groups lacking in organisation and emphasizing the private nature of personal beliefs. Later additional emphasis was placed on cults as being religious groups that derive their inspiration from outside of the religious culture from which they originate. This deviation is often thought to lead to a high degree of tension between the group and the more mainstream culture surrounding it, a characteristic shared with religious sects (Stark & Bainbridge, 1987:25). Sociologists, however, maintain that, unlike sects that are products of religious schism and therefore maintain continuity with traditional beliefs and practices, "cults" arise spontaneously around novel beliefs and practices (Stark & Bainbridge 1987:124).

From the discussion that will follow, it will become clear that the *malombo* healing ritual cannot be described as a "cult" practice. The two most important arguments against this description are that, firstly, it does not represent a religious schism within the group itself; and secondly, it does not give rise to tensions between cultural group members. In this ritual, community participation is highly integrated with the music and dance used. During the *malombo* ceremony those needing healing are required to dance to the songs and instrumental music that are performed by members of the healing group. Through this process, they attain a psychic connection with their ancestors so that healing may occur. While the *malombo* ceremony takes place, participants are lifted to a state of trance, where, as Rouget (1985:3) has documented, individuals enter into "a state of consciousness composed of two components, one psycho-physiological, the other cultural."

To the Vhavenda, *malombo* is an indigenous performed healing ceremony in which music, dancing and community participation are highly integrated. Acknowledging

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the presence of ancestral spirits in the *malombo* ceremony, Van Warmelo (1932:141) contends thus, "The state of being possessed by the ancestral spirits witnessed during a malombo healing ceremony provides individuals with the highest socio-political and religious status. Such a status does not accord with the status of a cult, which has largely negative connotations within the society where it originates."

Stayt (1968:302) also noted that the *malombo* dance was witnessed as early as 1914, however, according to Vho Makhadzi Vho–Mutshekwa Matumba, *malombo* is as old as the Vhavenda culture itself. Ralushai (1985) also alluded to this when he indicated that *malombo*, as it involved the Lembethu of Hamutele, occurred much earlier, probably already in the nineteenth century.

The emanation of the ancestral spirits is widely acclaimed among the Vhavenda who are found in the Vhembe district. They hold that the ancestral spirits transmigrate: that is, the spirits of the dead pass on to occupy other living bodies. Examples of this transmigration could include a deceased grandparent who, while having passed on some decades before, appears in the body of a young descendant. Another example is the belief that the spirits of the dead chiefs may return to earth in the form of animals (Wessman 1908:82). According to this belief, members of a clan would inherit the names of the animals with which the dead person had a close spiritual connection.

According to the Vhavenda, a person is praised by his/her own *mutupo*. *Mutupo,* according to Van Warmelo (1989:250), is the name of a clan or totem group, nowadays typically used as surname. The most important *mutupo* are names of animals connected to the clans e.g. Mudau (a lion), Ndou (elephant), Vhalaudzi–Lwamondo–pfene (baboon), etc.

For Africans in a more general sense, music maintains a special place in their religious heritage, as it serves as the vehicle for evoking the ancestors' spirits. In Vhavenda society, the *malombo* spiritual dance and its music is considered to be the bridge by means of which the living can reach the ancestors. According to Blacking (1995:180):

> A person's ultimate response to the music of the possession cult was to be "taken" by the spirit of a departed ancestor, and that the degree of people's responses tended to vary according to their membership in social groups. Musical performances provided experimental proof of the spiritual nature of the universe and of the role of ancestor–spirits as guardians of the earth and of the health and welfare of their descendants.

In healing, the Vhavenda use indigenous herbs and medicines for the treatment of ailments associated with a disabled spiritual or emotional conditions, but this is considered inadequate unless it is fully integrated into the *malombo* ceremony. *Malombo* is thus a complex religious ceremony that involves the advent of the ancestral spirits, and there is palpable evidence, as noted by Blacking (1995:180) and others, of people connecting with the ancestral spirits through *malombo*.

2.7. CONCLUSION

The literature in this chapter outlines evidence that music plays a role in treating and

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healing patients in various contexts around the world. The current research outlined in this thesis presents evidence that in certain instances where a particular disorder is found, music plays a decisive healing role amongst the Vhavenda. In Vhavenda communities, there are patients who are healed from all types of illness, including psychological and psychic illnesses. During fieldwork it was observed that a woman who was suffering from '*swili'* was healed by the *tshele* and *ngoma dza vhadzimu* healing sessions during which rattles, drums and community participation accompanied songs and healing. Witnessing this healing session ignited the researcher's interest in the *malombo* musical arts in the Vhavenda indigenous healing practice.

In terms of Vhavenda healing practices, *malombo* music is the music that communicates with the spirits, with the people, and within the biological organism of the individual human being who creates the music through performance. This study will examine how the bonding of rhythm and melody is crucial to performance and the impact of music making on the human healing process. This fundamental process and framework of healing is dependent on music carefully moving a person from one stage to the other – music is the guide, and without music these stages cannot progress. These stages will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

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CHAPTER THREE

CATEGORIES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF THE HEALING PROCESSES OF THE VHAVENDA

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter Three discusses how the Vhavenda of South Africa practice the process of healing through the *malombo* healing ritual. Categories of healers, as well as their purpose and functions are also discussed. Evidence is provided to demonstrate that some illnesses need *malombo* healing ritual to be fully cured. Included in this chapter is a discussion of the *tshele* session of spirit possession that takes place, with the combined effects of music and *tshele* leading the healing session. The differences between the *tshele* session and *ngoma dza vhadzimu* are also discussed. This chapter further investigates the importance of music in the public performance of the ritual dance utilized in *malombo*.

3.2. GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

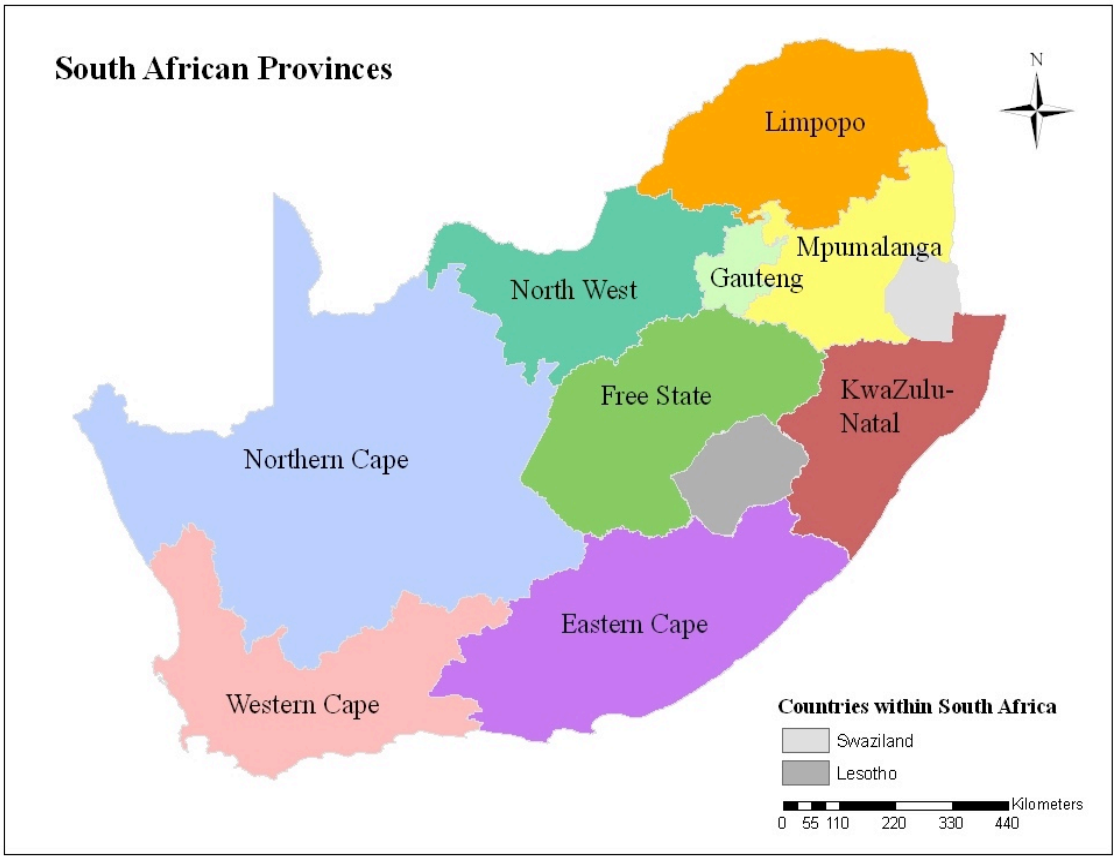

Figure 3.1: *Map of South African provinces*
Map Data Sources: ESRI & Maplibrary.org

South Africa is comprised of nine provinces. Within the country, there are eleven different official languages and people whom are marked by their own cultural groups, traits, and customs, many of which recognize and revere ancestral spirits. Among the extant cultural groups in South Africa (which extend beyond the 11

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official languages), one is the Vhavenda who are found in the northern part of Limpopo Province and in the southern part of Zimbabwe. According to Ralushai (1977:29):

> In Zimbabwe we find the Vhavenda on the North Western part of Zimbabwe that is Beit Bridge Province and Vhapfumbi that reside on the Eastern part of Zimbabwe together with different groups like Mbedzi of Mulungudzi (Rhodesia) and Vhumbedzi (South Africa).

On the Eastern side the Vhavenda area borders Mozambique, while Botswana borders it to the west, and to the southwest and southeast lie the North West and Mpumalanga Provinces respectively. Ralushai (1977:29) further explains that the Vhavenda are made up of the following sub-groups: "the Singo, Ndalamo, Davhatsindi, Mbedzi, Twanamba, Lembethu, Nyai, Lea, Kwevho, Ndou, Khomola."

The language that is spoken by Vhavenda is Tshivenda. According to Ndou (1993:1) "The language is quite unique in South Africa, for it cannot be grouped with either Nguni or Sotho. It is entirely on its own but it is nearer to Shona (Kalanga), one of the languages spoken in Zimbabwe."

Limpopo Province itself divides into five districts, as indicated on the map below, and most of the Vhavenda live in the Vhembe District. Migrant labour practices have resulted in many families being resident in the rural area while the breadwinners are resident in towns and cities spread throughout the country. However, the heads of families will return home for important family events and rituals.

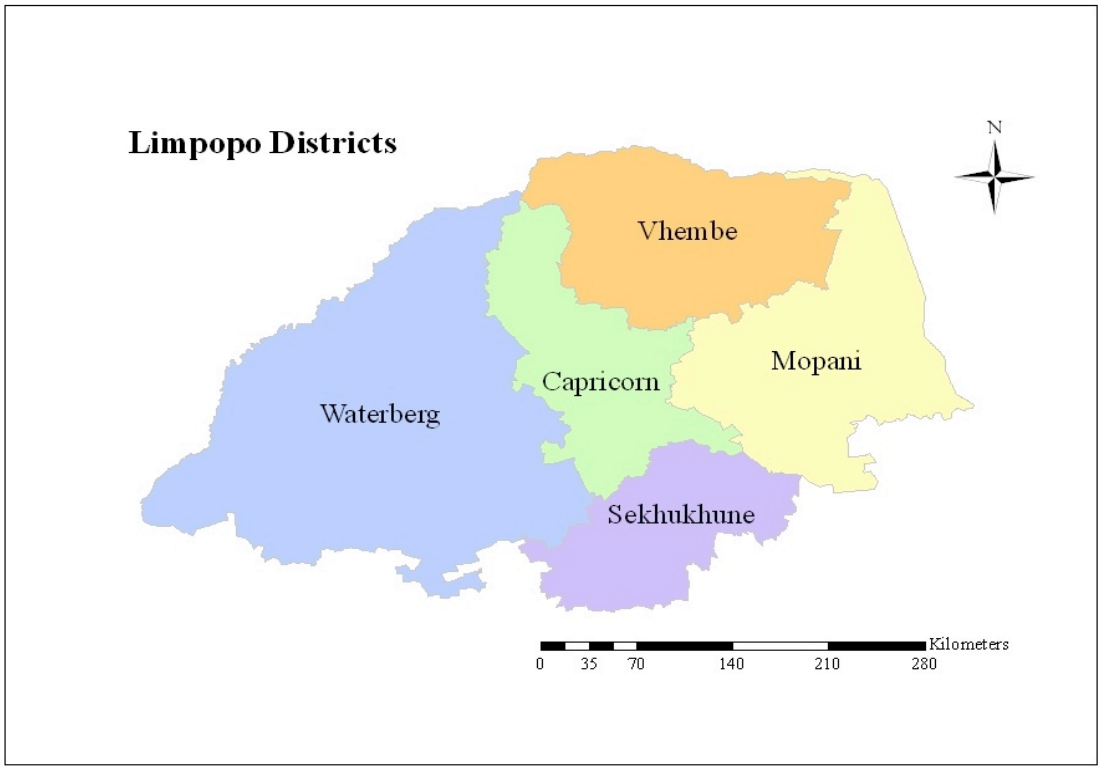

Figure 3.2: *Map of Limpopo districts*
Map Data Sources: ESRI & Maplibrary.org

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3.2.1. MIGRATION TO SOUTH AFRICA

According to Ralushai (1977:23) the Venda people originally lived in Egypt, where a succession of disputes and civil wars led the vanquished group to trek southward via the Congo and Vhukalanga. However, Ralushai acknowledges that there are various accounts of the place of origin of the Vhavenda, some historians arguing that the Vhavenda migrated south from their original homeland in Zaire known as Zendji, situated in central Africa.

Ralushai (ibid) also states that "Chief Davhana one of the Vhavenda dynasty explained how, after reaching the Congo, where they built a big village, dissensions in this village over succession issues forced the vanquished group to move further south until they reached Vhukalanga, Zimbabwe, where they settled. Here again, after many years of living in peace with their neighbours, the Kalanga, disputes over succession, forced the group to flee, and they settled at Tshiendeulu in the Northern Transvaal."

Community members Chief Davhana and Vho John Mulaudzi also concur that the origins of the Vhavenda are in Egypt, and the latter backed up the statement by mentioning that he had even "seen old Venda works of art in a big house in Egypt" (Personal interview 09/05/2010). Some historians argue that the Vhavenda migration took place as early as the 11th century before the Vhavenda finally settled in the region that they still occupy today.

Regardless of the path of migration, since the sixteenth century, the Vhavenda have lived in the area now known as the Vhembe district of the Limpopo province (see map above). The Vhavenda saying, *Muvenda mu bikwa na ive, ive la vhibva Muvenda a sala*, is testimony to the strength and continuation of Vhavenda beliefs and practices. According to Vho Maine Vho Neluvhola, the Vhavenda do not easily compromise on their culture or their traditions (Personal interview 16/07/2008).

Whatever the path of the Vhavenda migration, it is agreed that the Vhavenda carried with them their sacred drum, *ngoma lungundu*, the drum that belongs to *Mwali,* their traditional Supreme Being. This is the same Supreme Being who was cited in Shabangu (2004:132):

> The ancestors are dependent upon Mwari [Mwali], the traditional Supreme Being, for the exercise of their various functions…. Therefore, ancestors are representatives of Mwari and act as the mediators between him and their living relatives. Although the family ancestors sometimes direct petitions of their survivors through the hierarchy of spirits to the Supreme Being, it is especially the tribal spirits, who are understood to be close to Mwari. The spirits play the most prominent role as mediators between God and man. The tribal spirits are expected to act as advocates before Mwari, the God of fertility.

It is generally believed that the sacred drum protected the Vhavenda because of its magical powers. The drum was forbidden to touch the ground, and so it was carried, with two men taking turns to do so when the journey was long. During rest periods it was placed high on a tree. Folklore accounts have it that on their journey through other territories, the Vhavenda would beat the drum if the inhabitants were hostile,

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and those inhabitants would fall asleep, allowing for easy passage. This is where the song *Seli Vhembe* originated. This song of praise to Mwali Raluvhimba (the high God of the Vhavenda) also praised the ancestors who had protected them in times of trouble and war. The song of praise was taught to the researcher by Vhakoma Vho Wilson Neluheni – (octogenarian) during the years 1967 & 1969:

Seli ha Vhembe
Across the River Vhembe (Limpopo River)

Ro vha sia vho lala Vhembe
We left them sleeping at Limpopo River

Ngoma ya Mwali
The drum of Mwali

Ro vha sia vho lala Vhembe
We left them sleeping at Limpopo River

Ro vha sia vho lala Vhembe
We left them sleeping at Limpopo River

Ngoma Lungundu
The drum Lungundu

Ro vha sia vho lala Vhembe
We left them sleeping at Limpopo River

According to Vhavenda legend, Mwali or Raluvhimba lived in the caves of the Makonde Mountains, which lie to the north east of Thohoyandou. The site Makonde, where the caves are found, used to be the home of Mwali, Raluvhimba, and it is shown by an arrow on the map below:

Figure 3.3: *Makonde is located at the North East end of Thohoyandou*
Venda Development Cooperation Document 1987

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Figure 3.4: *Google map image of Makonde area (in red)*
www.google.co.za (accessed July 7, 2015)

It is believed that sometimes Mwali could be heard making big sounds in the skies while passing over the Nzhelele area and his subjects would be ululating in his honour. However, at one point the drum, blown by the wind, fell to the ground, and the people were massacred. Following this episode, the enemy, the Vhatavhatsindi, took the drum. With the help of Mwali, the drum was recovered and the Vhavenda overcame the Vhatavhatsindi. It is in the light of this incident that the Vhavenda still honour and respect their ancestral spirits, as they know they have always protected them.

3.3. VHAVENDA PEOPLE AND THEIR SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CHOOSING A HEALING METHOD

For the sake of clarity the researcher has classified present-day Vhavenda people into three groups that may be broadly defined according to their relationship with their deity and the value they place on the *malombo* healing practice.

Group 1 comprises of Vhavenda people who attribute the power to control their day-to-day living and well-being to the ancestors. This group believes in the *vhadzimu* (ancestral spirits) and honours them as active beings in the universe. This group may be classified as the primary category of Vhavenda people, sometimes referred to as the "original" or "authentic Vhavenda". Because of their veneration of the ancestral spirits, this is the group of interest in this study of Vhavenda indigenous healing practices.

Group 2 comprises those who consider their health to be addressed by modern Western health sciences, implying that only medical or psychological practitioners can address their problems. This group has generally accepted Christianity as their religion and therefore believes in the Christian triune God.

Group 3 comprises of people who do not belong exclusively to either of the two

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previous groups, but depending on occasion, may embrace either belief. They may attend Christian church services and may also consult indigenous healers if they experience certain problems. At specific times, some of them might even go to remote places to perform the ritual that is known as *u kanda luvhande* (meaning 'to step on the ground' – that is to dance the *malombo* dance to honor their ancestors) in order to venerate the ancestral spirits. One of the informants for this study, while on his way home from a training session for traditional healers, related how he had witnessed a Christian woman in a state of spirit possession.

This group is also of interest as it led the researcher to question why some Christians consult their ancestors. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the belief in life-after-death is also fundamental to the Christian faith, and many African Christians see no difference between the veneration of their ancestors and the veneration of saints as practiced in, for example, the Roman Catholic Church. A pamphlet produced by the Oral History Project, School of Theology, University of Natal, in 1995 confirms this, stating, "The people who practice ancestor veneration are adamant that veneration is not to be equated with worship: *Asiwakhonzi amadlozi siyawakhumbula, siwabonge* (We do not worship ancestors, we remember them and thank them)" (University of Natal 1995: un-paginated).

Group 1, the Vhavenda who are also the adherents of *vhadzimu* (ancestral spirits) in the healing practice, is presently attaining significant growth as its view is shared by Afro-activists who regard Westernization as a means to suppress the African human and intellectual status. In this regard, therefore, it would seem that many Vhavenda, regardless of economic, educational or social status, seek help to address their immediate problems from traditional healers, whom they view as intermediaries to connect them with their ancestors.

According to Vho Munzhedzi Nelukau (Personal interview 16/06/2005), this group holds the strong belief that, after death, a newly deceased joins the other ancestors who live in the vast forests and in big caves. The deceased, especially the head of the family (a husband), might come home to visit the living and so, because the living may be frightened by the deceased's new appearance, will change the entrance gate after his burial so that the deceased cannot recognize it and enter the yard until transformed to a higher status of ancestor spirit. That is why Ndou (1993:106) has described "the unshakeable belief of the Africans in the ancestors in most cases is unquestionable, they believe that their ancestors have much concern in their living descendants." It is quite true that the first group of Vhavenda comprises a large majority of people, although some of their followers try to hide whom their belief is being directed to. Ndou (1993:117) further states: "The concept of understanding life hereafter as viewed by the Vhavenda is well demonstrated by the various ways of contacting the living dead (ancestors)."

Vho Munzhedzi Nelukau (Personal interview 16/06/2005) further emphasized that the first group of Vhavenda are led and guided by Vho Maine/*dzinanga dza sialala* (traditional healers). They regard traditional healers as the community guards sent by the *vhadzimu* (ancestral spirits) to guide the Vhavenda religiously and spiritually.

Over seventy years ago, Van Warmelo recorded that becoming (or regarded as being) possessed by the ancestral spirit is the highest socio-political and religious status that

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any person can acquire (Van Warmelo 1932:141). His description remains true to this day, with *ngoma dza vhadzimu* (*malombo*) – the ritual in which the patient strives for possession by the ancestral spirit – still being practiced and revered in the same way.

3.4. THE IMPORTANCE OF VHAVENDA ANCESTRAL SPIRITS

Vho Maine Vho-Neluvhola described the ancestral spirit veneration process, which the researcher recorded at his residence at Siloam on 08/01/2008, as follows:

> When we think of our ancestral spirits, water and stones play an important role in helping us to show our respect. A person is like water: once outside the mother's womb he starts to take shape and, through life, he becomes harder and harder, like a stone. That is why we speak to the ancestral spirits by means of *u phasa*: we spit special water by mouth onto the stones and then we follow that up with our comments, praises as well as requests and desires. Mostly *u phasa* is done at a sacred place that is built using two pointing stones that are a symbol of the ancestors. This ritual must be performed in the morning or in the evening.
>
> The fountains for the water that is used together with the preferred stones (they are oval in shape and very smooth) are found in a dense place, in thick bushes. Ancestral spirit veneration is a way of praising your forefathers.

Figure 3.5: *Vho Neluvhola, General Secretary for the Vhembe district healers*

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Figure 3.6: *Vho Neluvhola at the launching ceremony of the farm for planting medicinal trees for Vhembe district healers* (2007).

Mahlangu (1996:39) maintains that the cult of ancestors is to the African what Jesus is to Christianity and what Mohammed is to Islam. It is the main focus of the African traditional religions. It is therefore in the everyday activities of people that one observes the interaction of people with their culture and religion. Among the Vhavenda people, relationships extend far beyond those between the living; relationships are extended to include the deceased.

Minaar et al (1992:8) describe the presence of the ancestral spirits within Vhavenda culture, and the way in which they are honoured as follows:

> The ancestral spirits play a pivotal role in Venda society, even today. Their influence is almost all pervasive, though this is sometimes denied by those more exposed to Western ideas. Present-day Venda is still cohesive enough for groups to meet at intervals to pray to their common ancestors. Most families have a set of amulets or heirlooms, inherited from their ancestors, one for each individual, which are used for these rituals. Quarrels within the family circle are to be avoided as they may disturb the ancestral spirits who would then send misfortune to all the participants. The ancestral spirits, or *midzimu,* take an active interest in the welfare of their descendants, watching over the birth of a child, blessing the first harvest, and protecting the family. That is why for every unusual occurrence, whether unacceptable, or highly positive and beneficial to the group, the Vhavenda maintain the need for consultation with the ancestors.

Mageza (1997:n.p.) further explains the importance of the ancestral spirits, stating that:

> More than any other force, the ancestors are the protectors of the society, its most feared direct critic and source of punishment. Above all, they are the

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> watchdogs of the moral behaviour of the individual, the family, the clan and the entire society with which they are associated.

The Vhavenda belief system is therefore that the ancestral spirits exert a significant influence on the living. The ancestors protect the interests of their descendants, and possess special powers, which they can wield to bring about illness and misfortunes to the descendants who fail to venerate them.

Nzewi (2003:5), reflecting the sentiments of Diop's poem, cited at the beginning of this thesis, describes the profound importance of elders, and the necessity for honouring those who have passed on:

> To bury our dead is not to dispose of their meaning. If our roots die off, our lives cease to inspire... A mighty tree that rejects nourishment from its buried roots condemns its outward bloom to blemish and breathe no more.

3.5. RELEVANT TERMINOLOGY

The following is a list of terminology relevant to the ensuing discussion.

Malombe (plural), (*tshilombe* - singular): are a special group of people who attend the *malombo* ceremony, who were previously possessed by the spirit, and become spirit mediums when they talk on behalf of the spirits. They may also participate when the singing and dancing takes place.

Zwigwasha*:* is the possession cult based on a bad omen picked up from foreigners. They also have another name of *mapili* according to Vho Vai Nemasisi (Personal interview 18/02/2010).

Zwilombo (plural), (*tshilombo* – singular): Van Warmelo refers to *tshilombo* as "stranger spirit of a deceased (i.e. non–kin, not ancestral-*mudzimu*) neglected or rejected by its own, seeking to take possession of a person and causing misfortune and sickness" (1932:411). *Zwilombo* can reside in an object that becomes possessed by a spirit. By picking up or by touching the object, the residing spirit might then affect the one who touched the object. This can sometimes be mistaken for *malombo*. An example of such an omen is described in the interview conducted with Professor Ralushai (12/022011). He stated that Vho Nthangeni, his cousin, a woman who did not have a child, was one day busy collecting firewood in the bush. She saw a shiny beautiful gourd and tried to pick it up but the gourd vanished. Thereafter she became very ill. After some time when they consulted the healer, he diagnosed a foreign *mudzimu (tshilombo*). They then took her to a healer who was trained to deal with foreign *mudzimu wa matzhomane* (Shangaan ancestral spirits).

According to Vho Masindi Tshinyiwaho Nemasisi of Ha-Makuya Maholoni a dancer of *zwilombo* (Personal interview 24/02/2010), *zwilombo* is a type of possession dance that also has different types of songs. The attire of *zwilombo* is *nzheti*, black and white materials with white beads across their shoulders.

Madzhukwa*:* According to Vho Masindi Nyungulani Munyai (Personal interview 18/02/2010), a Mumbedzi of Ha-Makuya Maholoni, *madzhukwa* is a certain type of

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possession that came with her father from Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) in the Vhapfumbi nation. In *madzhukwa* possession, the *malombe* and the patient dance at a spot digging their toes into the ground. This is significantly different from the *malombo* dance where the feet movement goes back and forth. Their attire is also different from the *malombo*. They wear *nzheti*, as in *malombo*, and *mbikiza* (a black and red skirt) decorated with white beads and black and red materials. They also wear *thuzwu* (fried egg flower or snuff box tree flowers – oncoba spinosa) on their feet. Van Warmelo (1989:380) defines *thuzwu* as "fruit of the *mutunzwu*, when dry and filled with seeds or pebbles, is worn as ankle-rattles when dancing."

Figure 3.7: *Vho Muofhe Babala of Ha-Makuya wearing Madzhukwa attire*

The songs of *madzhukwa* are different from the *malombo* songs. For example, the song *nne ndi lila ndi ndothe* – I cry alone. The soloist Vho Muofhe Babala of Ha-Makuya Maholoni started the song (Personal interview 18/02/2010) where she introduced herself as a descendant of the forefathers migrated from the then Rhodesia (Zimbabwe).

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Table 3.1: *Song text of Nne ndi lila ndi ndothe* (*I cry alone*)

1. Solo	*Nne ndi lila ndi ndothe vha do nkhumbula nga ḽiṅwe ḓuvha*	I cry alone they will remember me some day
Refrain:	*Ahee hee hee hee ahe – haa matanda*	Oh! Yes yes yes yes -the branches
2. Solo	*Nkadzhi a no naka ndi a na nwana*	The wife who is beautiful is the one having a child
3. Solo	*A si na nwana a vheleke shamba*	The one without a child must carry the wild granadilla on her back
4. Solo	*One matanda wee!*	Oh! The branches

Mashavhi: This is another type of possession dance danced by Vhavenda of Ha-Mutele and Ha-Makuya Maholoni. According to Vho Shonisani Violet Nemasisi (Personal interview 18/02/2010), they dance during the night or, if it necessitated, they dance during the day, but the house must be without a window, so that it can be dark.

The songs of *mashavhi* are different from the ones for *malombo* and *madzhukwa*. Their attire is also *mbikiza, thuzwu* and *lithenga* (a big feather) that are worn on the forehead. The *mashavhi* dance is always danced with singing and drums.

3.6. OVERVIEW OF VHAVENDA HEALER GROUPS

In the traditional Vhavenda religion, Vho Maine (a traditional healer) is central to the management of illnesses, health and the wellbeing of the whole group. One cannot discuss *malombo, madzhukwa* or *machomane* and music without first knowing the relevant healers (Vho Maine) who assist in the calling of the ancestral spirits.

Vho Maine are devoted to serving people. In doing so, they make use of various methods to assist people in solving their health problems. For the sake of clarity, *malombo* dancers and healers have been grouped categorically. In addition to these major categories outlined below, the primary category of Vho Maine vhahulwane/madzolokwe is divided further by the type of healing and issues treated. Healers are classified according to the nature of the disease they are healing and by considering the ability of traditional healers in healing each distinct and particular disease.

3.7. VHO MAINE VHAHULWANE/MADZOLOKWE (MAJOR HEALERS)

Vho Maine *vhahulwane/madzolokwe* (major traditional healers) are comprehensive in their healing practices i.e. they cover most areas of illnesses and sufferings and use (*thangu*) - divining bones to diagnose the patients. This category will be divided further below.

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Figure 3.8: *Joyce Madzivhandila checking her diving bones*

Vhavenda society distinguishes between different categories of Vho Maine by giving each healer a designation that indicates what method the healer will use, or what the healer's area of specialisation is.

Vho Maine vhahulwane may make use of both *thangu* (divining bones) and general healing methods and herbs. These healers are divided further into those with special capabilities who employ a spiritual agency (such as divination) and those who concentrate their efforts on the general use of herbs and medicines (herbalists). These healers use the divining bones to diagnose illness. This category of healers covers a wide area of healing that includes critical diseases like *tshipfula*, *pfuko* etc. Apart from curing (*u lafha)* most diseases, most of them can also perform the following:

a. *U bikela vhunanga*: to train and introduce a new traditional healer to the healing profession.

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Figure 3.9: *Joyce Madzivhandila (right) training a new healer (Lithwasana)*

b. *U vhea mudi*: to protect the family against the *vhavhi* (people with evil spirits who are thought to be troublesome at night, or any evil that might attack the family) by the use of medicines.

c. *U lafha muhumbulo*: to cure mentally disturbed patients.

d. *U tibula tshitombo*: to literally 'undo the stone'; the ritual that is performed to get rid of the shadow of death where a member of a particular family has passed away, as well as finding the cause of death and whether a person or the ancestors are involved, which is known as *u amba uri o liwa nga'ni* (what happened with the deceased).

e. *U luvhedza*: to dress the deceased – a ritual performed after the death of an elderly person or the owners of the household – such as the husband and the wife of the family. The ritual is performed to cleanse the widow or widower. A black goat is used in the ritual; a she-goat symbolizes a deceased woman, and a he-goat symbolizes a deceased man. The ritual is performed after the burial, but during this time because of the relatives who stay and work far from home, they must perform the ritual on the day of the burial, a black goat is slaughtered and the skin and the bones are used for the dressing ritual.

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f. *U lafha nga tshele*: to cure by using rattles in the healing process. This is also known as the *malombo* healing ritual, and it is this particular ritual that forms the basis for the current study.

g. *U vhuisa hayani*: to bring back home the dead ceremony. A goat will be used for this particular ceremony (described in chapter 2, see **Figures 2.1-2.4**). In this instance, a black goat is slaughtered after removing the skin from the whole body besides the head and the feet. They de-bone the meat from the whole goat and put the bones back to the skin together with the head and feet. Vho Maine sprinkles the medicines over the bones and wraps all the bones in the skin. Then the burial of the bones will take place. Because of the style of burying in the cemetery (*mutsha)*, the ritual is done on the same day of the real burial where the skin of the bones will be put in the coffin under the corpse's legs and be buried with the corpse.

Vho Maine *vha musika* are healers who use traps, which Van Warmelo's dictionary (1989:237) calls drug or magic, that are used to kill or harm people from a distance and *tshidomba munwe* (finger-pricking herb). In the *musika* (herbal trap) healing specializations, Vho Maine would set up a herbal trap on the client's property such as in fruit trees or on domestic animals. As a response to contact with the herb, a thief would experience a condition such as distension of the stomach or, if the stolen goods are eaten, the thief would tell everyone how good it was, thus revealing himself. For the *tshidomba munwe* (finger-pricking herb), the finger would become crooked or painful or swollen. The obvious reaction to the herb will compel the culprit to confess his/her deed and ask for forgiveness.

Vho Maine *vha tshipfula* (healers of painful sores) are healers who are good at getting rid of the *tshipfula* infliction. The Van Warmelo dictionary (1989:419) calls this sickness one sent by magic; medicine or magic to hurt or make someone sick at a distance. This type of painful sore can cause dismemberment of a limb from the main body if it is inflicted on the hand, finger or foot. It is a cultural belief of the Vhavenda that *tshipfula* is inflicted by an enemy.

Vho Maine *vha tshithavhi* (healers of pain under the ribs) are healers who cover *tshiliso* (asthma), *thikhwa* (hiccups), *nombe* (continuous nasal bleeding) and *tshiivhana* (fits) and who are experts in curing such diseases.

Vho Maine *vha nyimele* (healers who normalize family situations/conditions) are healers who perform different healing functions in family situations, especially where the head of the family or the wife has passed away. The rituals performed under these circumstances include:

a. *U handulula mudi*: protecting the family fences and buildings with the use of herbs.

b. *U kumulula*: body realignment; to bring back the body into its state of vitality. This ritual cleanses a widow's body so that she may 'acquire' a new and fresh body.

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c. *U kuvha*: literally washing or cleansing; if someone was not buried at home or disappeared without trace, this ritual must be performed. A sheep will be slaughtered and only its head will be washed and be buried as a symbol of bringing back home the deceased who was not buried at home. Hence even if they die far away from home, most of the Vhavenda will be carried back from far off places so as to be 'buried' at home.

d. *U tanzwiwa*: being washed or cleaned; the ritual has to be performed where a goat will be slaughtered and the intestines will be used to cleanse the widower (*u tanzwa* for the widow) to avoid tiredness and painful bones.

Vho Maine *madzhukwa* (healers who heal using music or by using herbs and medicines)**.** The word *madzhukwa* comes from the possession dance that was introduced in Venda by the people who migrated to Mutale – Ha Makuya during the nineteenth century, as estimated by Vho Masindi Nyungulani (Mbedzi) Munyai (Personal interview 12/05/2011). *"Rine vho khotsi ashu vho da kha lino kale vha tshi bva seli Vhukalanga. Vho ri u swika vha mbo di imisa ngoma dzavho dza madzhukwa hafhano"* ("Our fathers came to this country from Zimbabwe long time ago, and introduced this type of spiritual dance known as *madzhukwa"*). It is a dance that is very close to *malombo* but differs in the style of dancing. It was during those times that people witnessed patients who have been cured by music and dance. The healers in this category do not use divining bones to help them to heal the patients, but use herbs and medicines to heal their patients. They are able to heal certain illnesses without consulting the divining bones and have an intimate knowledge of medicines and herbs.

Vho maine *vha muthuso* (healers for infant protection): The healers in this category deal with all the health requirements of a newborn baby and the mother. They perform an induction act to introduce the newborn into the social setting. They conduct a *muthuso* ritual to give a child a name, protect such a child against unknown life-threatening situations like *misho* (physical numbness), *ngoma* (bregma), v*hudaadaane* (rush of the tongue), and *u melisa mano* (teething). This category of healers can also heal *gokhonya* (both infant and the mother's illness), which can be seen by a red spot at the back of the infant's head immediately after birth. This can be a dangerous disease if not treated in time and with diligence. If the *gokhonya* is ignored, within a very short space of time the child may die suddenly of illness.

Another important function of these specialized healers is the remedy of *u wela,* which occurs when a man has sexual intercourse with a woman who has recently had a miscarriage or abortion and, because she has not undergone a Dilation and Curettage (D&C) procedure, she may have developed an infection that could be passed on to him. If not treated, the man may die, but if he consults this type of healer he could be cured. This treatment is particularly interesting since it demonstrates the reliance on both conventional Western and traditional medicine within the society. This area would also require further medical-historical research, since the D&C procedure is a relatively recent one, forming part of Western medical practice only since the late 19th century. Since more advanced medical treatment would only have been introduced into the northern areas of South Africa where the Vhavenda reside

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some years later (Elim Hospital was, for example, only established in 1899 by the Swiss missionaries), it is unclear what procedures women and men would traditionally have undergone before this, or whether such treatment was considered necessary. Today, D&C procedures are becoming less common in medical practice, and it is not clear how this will impact on *u wela*.

Vho Maine vha vhupwa are healers of a skin disease in children, a fine grained crusting of the scalp and head sores. These healers come from a particular lineage or clan e.g. Vho Matamela Buda, Ramulifho, Madzivhani, Ndou dza ha Tshifura and Netshikhudini clans. The medicines they use feature their own saliva as the most important ingredient of the remedy.

Vho Maine vha thwani (healers of cracked ear disease) are healers who are specialists in ear-related diseases (*thwani)*. They come from family lineages that are not trained healers but who are known to be good at healing these specific ailments. They are identified as healers by *mutupo* (the family name). According to Vho Elisa Nyamukamadi Davhula (Personal interview 06/072009), these lineages had a healer who never wanted to be recognized but passed on the knowledge to heal to family members, e.g. the Netshikhudini clan.

Vho Maine vha u tsidulula (a person who stretches sprained joints) are healers of sprained joints and limbs who use *mukwatakwata* (type of a medicine/shrub). A razor blade is used to pierce the skin of the person so that a little blood flows out, which is to be mixed with the medicine. The medicine, mixed with the blood from the elbow, is used to stretch the affected part and in this way the affected part is healed. After they have performed a healing practice, no pain will ever be experienced by the patient. Generally after broken limbs have been set in Plaster of Paris for healing, some pains are experienced in the affected joints or bones especially on cloudy days. After *u tsidulula,* no pain will ever be experienced again. This type of medicine is found in healers at a young age as a symbol of their lineage.

Mungome (plural vhangome) is a traditional 'healer' who tells all without consulting the divining bones. Vhangome are also classified as healers even though they do not typically use divining bones and medicines. They can diagnose an illness by looking at the patient, or smelling a patient, and, after giving the cause of the illness; they will direct the patient to the type of healer who will be able to heal the disease.

3.8. VHO MAINE VHA ZWIGOMA-MUTANDA (PETTY HEALERS)

This group of healers is referred to as *zwigoma-mutanda* because they do not carry a full bag of divining bones (*thangu*). They make use of only two to three divining bones to diagnose their patients. They have healing powers for limited types of diseases and have knowledge of medicines and herbs. They carry the medicines that they use with them while major healers keep their medicines in a special house.

3.9. VHO MAINE VHA MIDZIMU YA NNDA

This is a category of healers who can be possessed by unknown foreign spirits**.** These healers may be a person from a different culture who can be possessed by an ancestral

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spirit from another culture group/language group.

Vho Maine vha Mundau. According to Vho Maine Vho-Musetsho of Tshitomboni village (Personal interview 14/10/2010), Mungoni healers are distinguished from other healers:

> *Vho Maine vha Mundau vha wanala u bva kha vhakale arali vho fuwa vho zwidobiwa vha dzula navho u swika vha tshi lovhela mitani yavho. Vhakale vho vha vhe na zwi dobdoba. O no lovha mudzimu wawe u vhuya he a tutshela hone. Vhana vha vho tambudzwa nga Mundau.*
>
> Mundau healers are healers who possess foreign ancestral spirits (spirits who are unrelated to them). They are known as having the Mundau ancestral spirits. This can, for example, happen to a person who had given refuge to a person who was not known, especially the person's original place of birth, and the foreigner died while staying with them.

It is believed that when the spirit of the unknown person returns, it returns to the place where the foreigner met his death. When the person is possessed by such a sprit even in public performance, such a person dances in a kneeling position. These healers are generally visitors from the Kalanga area in Zimbabwe, Mozambique or from any other African country. They make use of divining bones to diagnose their patients and then give them the essential medicines. This is different from what Friedson has discussed from the Tumbuka where "the majority of vimbuza spirits are from foreign peoples who for various reasons, have come into contact with the Tumbuka. With only a few exceptions, they are not the spirits of individual persons but rather the spirit energy of entire peoples" (Friedson 1996:65).

Vho Maine vha Mungoni (healers with Zulu ancestral spirits) are healers who, when possessed, do not speak Kalanga like some of the possessed Vhavenda, but the Zulu language. They dance in a kneeling position and are also known as *mupfuko* healers. They make use of divining bones to diagnose their patients and also give them the required medicines.

3.10. VHO MAINE VHAMADZHUKWA

This category of healers, known as Vho Maine vhamadzhukwa, are healers who can heal without consulting the divining bones.

3.11. HOW IS A HEALER CALLED BY THE ANCESTORS?

To be called as a healer is a serious issue, as it will determine the whole career or status of a person throughout his/her life. The calling does not follow only one path. The following is one way the calling could occur:

CASE STUDY 1

A healer, Vho Maine Vho–Mavis related her story (Personal interview 19/02/2010), which the researcher has translated into English as follows:

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Figure 3.10: *Vho Mavis*

"My calling was a difficult journey, as in many ways I refused to acknowledge the signs that I was getting, that I should be a healer. I decided to join the church to try and reject the calling, first by becoming a member of the Lutheran Church at Mapate, and later I then joined the United Zion Church at Mapate, the place of my origin. After I got married, during my first pregnancy I had a miscarriage at seven months without feeling any pain. I conceived again and had a baby girl, after which I started to become very ill. My whole body was wracked with pain; I sometimes used to scream in pain. I had another problem with the child, right up to the age of two years my baby could not stand up and walk. Then, while undergoing treatment at Donald Frazer Hospital without any progress being made, a message came to me in a dream: *You will never be healed because you have disrespect for your ancestors*. When I told my elder sister, she advised me to take the route of consulting the indigenous healers to pay my respects to the *vhadzimu* (ancestral spirits)."

She continued: "I still remember a day in November 1989 when I went to a healer in Tshakhuma to present myself; to show the ancestral spirits that I had accepted their calling. The lady healer performed the ritual of *u sumiwa* (that is to announce to the ancestral spirits that at last I had decided to listen to their voice). The following night the *tshele* ritual was performed to call out the ancestor who was troubling me. I recall that after that ritual, the following day, I was no longer feeling any pain, and I decided to prepare a meal in a large pot, which I was unable to do ever since I started with the problems two years earlier on, after the birth of my little girl. To my surprise, as I was busy in the kitchen, I heard a loud voice of another lady saying: *Vho Nyabele (the name of the lady healer), kha vha bve vha mmbonele vho!* (Vho Nyabele, come out

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and see for yourself!) I also came out of the kitchen and was startled, I could not believe my eyes! My daughter was standing by a *guvha*. As I headed outside the kitchen, then to my amazement, the little girl started moving the right foot, and the left one followed. That was how I was convinced that the ancestral spirits have great powers."

After the *tshele* ritual the ancestral spirit who availed herself indicated that she (Vho Maine Vho–Mavis) was to become a healer, and so she had to follow *u bikelwa vhunanga,* that is the course to train as a healer. She started with that course in November 1989 and completed it on 7 December 1996. She is now one of the great healers at Tshakhuma where she lives.

CASE STUDY 2

Vho Maine Vho Namadzavho, who is now a graduate and a traditional healer, narrated (Personal interview 02/02/2008) her calling to me:

Figure 3.11: *Vho Namadzavho Mphephu*

"By the time these spirits were ignited in me, I was doing my certificate course in Business Administration in Durban (South Africa). I honestly tell you I could not pay attention to the lecturer's sessions, sometimes I was focused on the dramatic gestures of the lecturer and his family's problems, as he was busy lecturing. I subsequently had a problem learning and eventually failed. As a result of the illness I could not 'see' anything when I was supposed to attend the classes, but when I left the class I was 'able to see far'. At night I dreamt of a person who would come and kill me because I would not listen. When I consulted the medical practitioners in Durban, they could not find anything wrong with my health, even though I had several X–Rays and many other tests.

When I reported my experiences to my parents, they ordered me to come back home where they took me to a healer who through his divining bones revealed that my

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ancestors had called me. The healer performed the *u suma* ritual (reporting to the ancestral spirits that she accepted the calling) and advised that I should undergo the healing process of *malombo*. The consulted *maine* (the healer) elaborated that the reason I was chosen, was because I was identified as an ideal member of the family to look after the health status of the rest of the family. During the *malombo* healing session it became apparent that the invoked ancestral spirit was a healer. After the process, the ancestral spirits indicated that I should be trained to become a healer. After undergoing the process of training, I was cured and I was able to return to the technical school and indeed I successfully acquired my diploma certificate."

CASE STUDY 3

There are many different ways that people are called to become healers. In addition, people are called to become healers at all stages in their lives, from young children to the elderly. For example, Vho Maine Vho Thinavhuyo Mukwevho a renowned healer at Vhurivhuri – Matovha, was called to be a healer while he was working in Johannesburg from 1965-1966 (Personal interview 11/07/2008). After a succession of serious warnings, which were evoked through a series of dreams and manifested through problems in his life, he finally accepted the call.

3.12. STAGES OF HEALING

Vhavenda healing ceremonies take place through a series of stages. During fieldwork on the 11/07/2011, a *tshele* session at Vho Nyawa's place was observed and a person was healed by progressing through the following stages to guide her from illness to spiritual health. In order to further examine the musical aspects of the healing process, the general stages of healing must be outlined.

Pre ceremony
During this stage, the ill person goes for a consultation and the diagnosis takes place and the ritual dance that is required is announced by the healer. The preparation for the *tshele* session starts.

Move into the room used for healing
At this stage the room is cleansed and the setting is arranged for a *tshele* session where the healer, the patient, and the *malombe* sit in a circle and start to sing *malombo* songs.

Liminal dancing
At this point the patient is in a sitting position for the purpose of inviting the ancestral spirits. The patient begins to dance in this position and the dance will lead the patient to trance. This is a stage of in-between, where the patient straddles both the living and ancestral worlds.

Trance
During a period of a trance state, vigorous dancing is conducted where the patient is no longer feeling anything but all he listens to is the music of *malombe* and the movements continue to go on and on. During the trance state, the patient dances vigorously, unaware of her surroundings, responsive only to the music which continues uninterrupted.

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Break
At this point, around 00h40, the *malombe* rest and are served cool drinks, and beer. The patient is taken to the consultation room where some medicine is burnt before the dancing is resumed at approximately 02h10.

Return to Trance
The patient returns to dancing in trance for a long period until at 04h05 when the ancestral spirit arrives.

Possession
When the ancestral spirit arrives, the patient becomes possessed and falls to the ground facing down and groaning. An assistant of Vho Maine starts to communicate with the patient and tells the person whom she was representing, and she was given *palu* material to indicate the *mudzimu* had arrived.

According to my observation of the ritual three major aspects are important: music, instruments (drums or rattles/ shakers) and the singers (the power of '*mato*').

As the singing, together with the use of rattles is taking place, the *mato* (lyrics and rhythm) leads the patient to react more vigorously and to share the spirit of the deceased. It is in the art and singing with *mato* that the person forgets everything and starts to enter trance because of the sound (music) and the instruments. During this period the patient experiences the nature and feelings of belonging to the world of ancestors. When the patient reaches the state of experiencing or meeting the ancestral spirits, the patient falls while communicating with the ancestors. The patient also begins to speak the Kalanga language. After some time the patient emerges from the trance state.

Completion of ceremony
At the end the patient demands to dance and sing a song, *Ndo vhidzwa musanda Tshifulanani*. After this song the patient seems tired and the event is complete.

This version of stages during the healing ceremony has been endorsed by the healer Vho Shumani during a follow-up interview (Personal interview 15/08/2011).

3.13. PURPOSE OF THE *NGOMA DZA VHADZIMU* (or *MALOMBO*) HEALING PRACTICE

Vho maine Vho-Joyce Madzivhandila explained the purpose of *malombo* at her place of residence at Matavha in Tshakhuma (Personal interview 12/12/2007). "In Vhavenda society (as in other African cultures), a variety of rituals are performed in order for the patient to arrive at the psychophysical manifestation of the juncture of the world of the living and the world of the ancestral spirits. All experiences must undergo *u sumiwa*, a ritual reporting to the ancestral spirits about the occurrences.

Vho Maine Vho-Namadzavho (Personal interview 02/02/2008) indicated that *ngoma dza malombo* is also an event that announces to the community that their healer has graduated if the ancestral spirit that possessed him/her was a healer. The community witnesses the ceremony as confirmation that a new healer is born among them. The ritual may then also be a process by which healers are created when the spirit of a

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deceased healer possesses a potential healer who, once fully restored, is trained to take on the responsibilities of the healing science.

A *malombo* ceremony is deemed necessary in contemporary times and up to this day when someone is suffering from a disease which neither medical practitioners nor herbal healers can ordinarily diagnose and heal, and which is often psychological in nature. Diallo and Hall (1989:82) define such disease as an:

> Emotional disturbance . . . expressed in irregularity of muscle tone and blocked, disharmonious neuromuscular and physiological rhythmic processes. An emotionally unbalanced person experiences shallow or irregular breathing, heart symptoms such as tachycardia, functional digestive disturbances, and distressed thinking that is reflected in an excited brain wave pattern.

Usually family members consider that the condition of the patient (who may be a brother, sister, mother, father, child, or other kin) requires them to consult Vho Maine (the healer) to cure him/her with the use of African medicines. After throwing the divining bones, Vho Maine could refer them to Vho Maine *vha tshele* for healing through *tshele* (rattles). *Tshele* here refers to the rattles that are used as the rhythmic accompaniment to the chanting and dancing during the *malombo* healing ritual. Vho Maine *vha tshele* is the healer who uses *malombo* to treat patients, and it is the task of Vho Maine *vha tshele* to confirm the illness as being due to some dissatisfaction of the ancestral spirits with the patient or the family/clan.

Early in the 20th century, Van Warmelo (1932:141) documented how he had observed the healing process among the Vhavenda:

> The spirit of a departed ancestor is believed occasionally to make ill one of the descendants, almost invariably a girl or a woman. The divining dice, when consulted, says the illness is due to *malombo*. This means that the spirits want to take possession of the patient. Such visitation is looked upon as an honour and the subsequent proceedings are designed, not to exorcise the spirit, but on the contrary to let it in. The help of the medium (*maine*) is sought to this end . . . the "treatment" consists of singing, sometimes night and day for a week, by the bedside of the patient, to the accompaniment of rattles *(tshele*) until she sits up and commences swaying her body round and round and nodding her head, with ever increasing violence. Then suddenly she falls straightforward and remains stiff and unconscious for quite a while. At that point it is said *mudzimu o wa* "the spirit has fallen", i.e. the spirit has taken possession of the patient.

Formerly, as the writings of both Van Warmelo and Blacking reflect, the rattle dance would take place in the patient's home, but the interviewees indicated that currently it is performed at the home of Vho Maine *vha tshele* because of the high demand for the healing dance. Vho Maine *vha tshele* invites members particularly privileged to be her children known as *malombe* (those patients she has healed through *malombo* in the past), while the patient's family members also invite their relatives. Participants consist of the intangible *malombe* whose role is to possess the dancers, along with the 'children *malombe*.'

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Van Warmelo (1932) and Stayt (1968) have both documented their observation of *ngoma dza vhadzimu* and confirm that the primary purpose of the ritual is to ensure the emotional healing of the patient, which then aids the physical healing of the body. It is used for the healing of all critical sufferings. An essential element of the healing practice is that the inner person must come into contact with his/her ancestral spirits in order to live in peace with the universe.

Equally important is that the community members must support the healing, since the process is considered to be communal, it involves healing the whole clan. Through this healing process, the society as a whole derives security, protection and a safe living environment, as the traditional practitioners are capable of cleansing the area where they live. One of the informants observed that *ngoma dza vhadzimu (malombo)* are able to quell all natural adversaries that may from time to time disadvantage the society.

The ritual name *Ngoma dza vhadzimu*, means the ritual for the ancestral spirits. *Ngoma dza vhadzimu* is divided into two important sessions: the *tshele* (rattle) session and *ngoma dza malombo* (drum of *malombo*) session, often abbreviated to *malombo* session. It is during these two sessions that the ancestral spirits come into contact with their chosen progeny and find a haven in the mind of the patient. This automatically affects the patient's behaviour. Should the response of the person be negative, then healing does not take place, and another form of illness may also result, such as experiencing loss of concentration. *Malombo* is a spiritually powerful force that can disorientate those who reject its call.

According to Vho Maine Vho Mavis (Personal interview 12/08/2011): "Musi nyimbo dza malombo dzo tanganedzana, vhadzimu vha tshi swika vha dzhia ndango ya mulwadze vhone vhane." That is, during *tshele* or *malombo* process of songs, the ancestral spirit finds a haven in the mind of the patient.

3.14. ILLNESSES THAT NEED MALOMBO FOR HEALING

During an interview with Vho Maine Vho Musetsho (Personal interview 14/10/2010, Tshitomboni), after the *tshele* healing dance of the day, he stated the following:

> It is difficult to provide a definitive list of diseases that are healed by indigenous curative practices. In African tradition, 'sickness' is regarded as the result of a lack of wellbeing of both the physical and spiritual sides of a person. The lack of physical wellbeing is interpreted as indicating a breakdown in the connection between the person and his/her ancestral spirits. It is felt that there will be little success in attempts to heal the physical side without also attending to the spiritual side. There is also a strong sense that the disorders of afflicted persons escalate because they ignore their inner consciences.

Traditional healers consider the engagement of the whole body and soul in the healing practice to be of the utmost importance, and the musical arts are seen as integral to the process. It is then that through *malombo,* which makes the most direct use of the musical arts, spiritual healing is primarily addressed.

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The most burdensome disease people today experience shows an absence of peace with the inner self. The majority of the illnesses that are healed through *malombo* are regarded as being spiritual in origin. These include psychic disorders, depression, hallucination, delusion, stubbornness, aggressiveness, restlessness, solitude and pains throughout the whole body. (These diseases and conditions appear like those that Olivier (1985:2) describes as:

> Swelling of feet, eczema, tendency to roam about, tendency to talk to oneself, disorientation, tendency to neglect children or house chores, aggressiveness, restlessness, pains in the body, decreased level of activity, seizures (conscious level decrease), loss of appetite, with many more related ailments.

Vho Maine Vho-Mavis (Personal interview 02/04/2008) listed some of the symptoms of critical illnesses and ill fortunes that require the *ngoma dza vhadzimu* (or *malombo*) healing practice:

Table 3.2: *Types of illnesses and misfortunes that require malombo*

Description of illness (Vhavenda)	Translation of illness
U vhavha ha muvhili wothe	pain throughout the whole body
U vhengwa nga vhathu	unreasonable hatred from other people
A hu na zwi mu nakelaho	no visible progress in the individual's life
Mishumo i sokou fhela	unfair dismissals
Dzikhombo hothe-hothe na zwinwe vho	unreasonable and indiscriminate accidents and general misfortunes

If a physical illness has occurred, the patient will consult doctors as well as traditional healers with no progress, and finally a *malombo* or *tshele* session will be recommended as an alternative route for healing.

3.14.1 EXAMPLES OF ILLNESSES HEALED THROUGH *MALOMBO*

CASE STUDY 1

During research it was observed that most patients were adults who were suffering from psychological disturbances, spiritual imbalances, and conditions such as stress, depression, loneliness, aggressiveness and suicidal tendencies.

One of the young women the researcher interviewed (Personal interview 10/08/2007) was stricken by the psychological and emotional illness known as *swili* (bad manners). This illness is characterized by a person's total disregard for others, and a chronic inclination to treat others badly and to be rude and disrespectful. Before she underwent *malombo* treatment she treated her husband and in-laws with disrespect, but after the ritual of *tshele* session was performed by Vho Maine Vho Nyawasedza Netshifhire, everything changed and she started to miss her husband and had new-found love for her in-laws. In a healing spiritual setting, a person's condition can become unlocked and remedied, and life can return to normality and happiness.

When she arrived at the ceremony the woman was rude, stubborn, cheeky, and argumentative. The healing ceremony took place as follows:

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- At 7:40 the pre-ceremony started by entering the house, getting the shakers, and finding a place a place to sit.
- Everyone then moved into the room that is mostly a kitchen (*tshitangani*) and sat in a circle. The patient was sleeping.
- They started with the singing and shakers, at which time Vho Maine ordered the patient to be brought to the middle of the circle to start with the dancing in a seated position.
- While dancing in this manner the patient fell into trance and danced shaking the hands to and fro, side ways and forward for a long time.
- At 01h17 a break where beer and cool drinks were served, took place. During this time the patient was sleeping in the consulting room.
- At 02h19 the dancing resumed with songs and shakers while the patient was in trance and the dance continued.
- At 03h14 the patient was possessed and fell down with her face down and covered in a blanket while Vho Maine's assistant asked her some questions. *Malombe* were ululating and very happy about the arrival of the ancestral spirits. After the questioning they dressed her with a blue scotched material *(palu)*.
- The session ended shortly after dawn.

CASE STUDY 2

Children do not often undergo ritual healing practices, so this is a particularly interesting case on the power of the ancestral spirits. This was the case related to the researcher in Tshakhuma by the grandmother of a 6-year-old girl called Akonaho (Personal interview 03/09/2009).

The grandmother's story, which the research has translated into English, is as follows:

> You will never know when the ancestral spirits take control of you, there is nothing you can do. I still remember when the mother of Akonaho came here to report that the child no longer answers anybody who talks to her, she just looks at him or her.
>
> I went to her and greeted her by calling her name Akonaho, and she simply would not respond. Then I proceeded to Vho Maine to ask what the problem might be, and the healer indicated that a ritual including the *tshele* session should be performed, as the ancestral spirits would like to give her a new name.
>
> Indeed after the ritual was performed, the child was given a new name, Dzannduma, which was the name of the great grandmother of the child. When I called her by the new name she answered me happily.
>
> I then went to the pre-school the following day to tell them that they must never call her by the old name as the new name was the one given to her by the ancestral spirits. Ever since that she has been called Dzannduma and she responds to that name only.

What these case studies demonstrate is that the ancestral spirits can communicate with

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those who are ready to listen to them. Music is the bridge, the link and the connection to ritual spirituality where musical arts, together with community participation, gives the hopeless hope and the possibility of physical healing and psychological health.

3.15. OBSERVATIONS OF PERFOMANCE PRACTICES OF *MALOMBO*

Tshele sessions use what may best be described as 'musical theatre' to invite the ancestral spirits to bring peace into the family. By 'musical theatre' is meant that music (including songs with texts and instrumental accompaniment), dance and dramatic performance are used in combination. The diagram below illustrates the basic setting for the *tshele* as well as the *malombo* sessions. In this setting, the *mudzimu* is invited to take control of the patient.

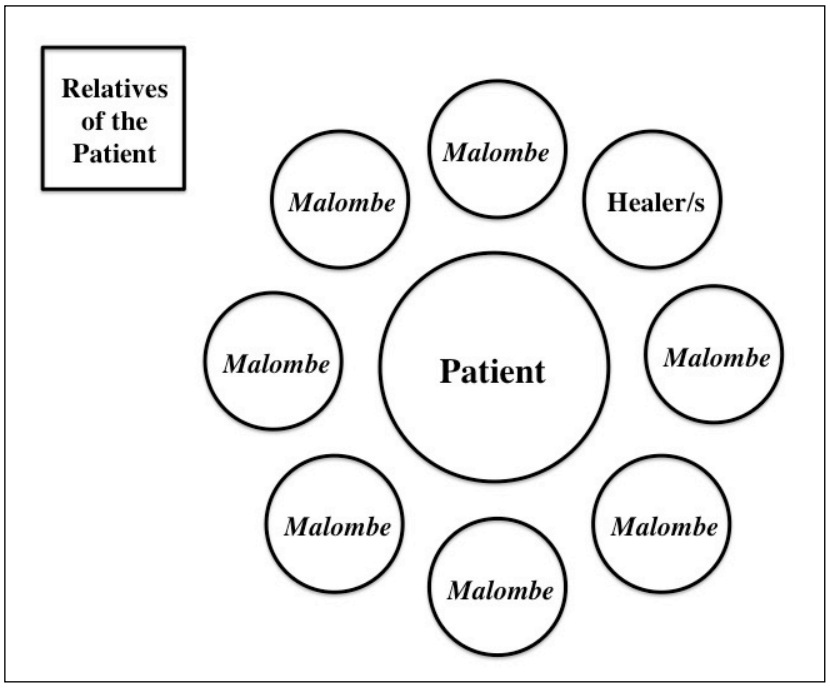

Figure 3.12: *Basic setting for the tshele and malombo sessions*

The following description is based on a session observed on 11/07/2004 at Vho Maine Vho Nyawasedza' residence at Luvhalani. Similar processes were observed on 18/08/2006 at Lukau village at Vho Maine Vho Mavis' residence, and at Tshitomboni at Vho Maine Vho Musetsho's residence 14/08/2006. The style and procedures of all ceremonies were very similar.

The first part of the dance is a performance occurrence that takes place inside Vho Maine *vha tshele's* hut, and the researcher had to witness this part of the ritual at the first *tshele* session observed. When Vho Maine Vho Mutshekwa Nekhudzhiga was asked about the procedure she answered: "*hovhu vhunanga ro fhiwa nga nwali a ri ri itise zwenezwi*" – this healing power we were given by *Nwali* (our god) and as such, we must do it like this".

This particular event started at 20h05. Vho Maine Vho Nyawasedza began the ritual at her shrine that is situated in a second separate hut, where she used the following

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items: adze, horn, divining bones, herbs, her whip, snuff and water for spitting. She began the healing process by checking the behaviour of the human audience using *thangu* (divining bones) that she threw on a mat. She then consulted her own ancestral spirits to give answers to her questions. Vho Maine Nyawasedza (Personal interview 11/07/2004) explained that: *ndi vhudzisa midzimu ya thohoni na ya tshisadzini uri* (I ask the ancestral spirits of my father's and my mother's whether):

> *Hu do vha na thaidzo afha tsheleni naa?*
> Will there be a problem during the healing process?
>
> *Hu na vhavhi kana midzimu mivhi ya manwe malombe afha naa?*
> Are there bad people or people with bad spirits amongst the *malombe* and relatives?
>
> *Vhadzimu vhanga vha do ima na nne naa? na zwinwe vho….*
> Will her own (the healer's) ancestors support her? With others (Vho Maine Vho Nyawasedza and her assistant)

Vho Maine consulted her divining bones at 20:15, when I asked her what she is doing with the bones alone, she said "*uri vhadzimu ndi vha sume vhaeni vho ndalelaho, uri vha ntsumbedze vhavhi kana vhavhuya"* – so that the ancestral spirits may show me the type of audience that visited, whether bad or good.

The healer then informed the ancestral spirits about the audience who were about twenty–one, including the patient and the purpose of their presence by spitting water on her ancestors' stone inside her hut and also on some of her own heirlooms and adze and a bag of rattles that the people will be using.

She sprinkled herbs/medicine over the rattles for protection against *vhavhi* (people with evil spirits) and lastly offered her ancestors snuff and told them her wishes. One of her wishes was: "*zwi nge zwa vhanwe*" – 'it must be like others".

3.15.1. VENUE SET UP

All the participants are invited to the *malombo* hut where the sitting style will be like a circle (see **Figure 3.12** above), although not specifically organized in a pattern.

The healer Vho Maine Vho Nyawasedza and I proceeded to the first hut where the patient was still sleeping under her blanket. Vho Maine's assistant came to take the bag of rattles to the healing hut (healing theatre). Members of the *malombe* fraternity were seated in a circle, waiting for Vho Maine *vha tshele* to arrive with the rattles. This session took place indoors, and required numerous rituals for the ancestral spirits to be appeased. Before Vho Maine *vha tshele* was able to begin with her work, some herbs were burnt as *tsemo* (incense) in the middle of the hut. The purpose for this exercise was to cleanse everyone inside the hut and to expel unwanted malevolent spirits.

Vho Maine Vho Nyawasedza gave those who were present the *tshele* (rattles) so that the session could start.

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3.15.2. PARTICIPANTS

The participants for *tshele/ngoma dza vhadzimu* form a three-fold structure.

The healer is the facilitator of the whole healing session. During *malombe* they are there to lead the procedure of the ritual and the music together with the dance of *malombo* for both sessions.
The participants, as with the *tshele* session, were the patient, his wife, his mother and two aunts and two younger sisters of his mother. Also present were Vho Maine Vho Musetsho and Vho Maine Vho Nyawa, the mother of the healer in training. The other people present were *malombe* coming from Tshitomboni and Tswinga villages, totaling twenty-six in number.

The singing of *malombo* songs and shaking of the rattles began at 21:05, and songs were sung one after another to the accompaniment of the rattles.

3.15.3. SEQUENCE AND ORGANIZATION OF PERFORMANCE

In the *malombo* healing ritual, spirit possession takes place during the two major performance sessions. The first of these is the *tshele* (rattle) session and *ngoma dza vhadzimu/malombo* is a second session. Both sessions always take place at night for the session to be more successful, a performance starts in the evening and continues until the arrival of the ancestral spirits. This may be followed by a public performance that will also start in the evening and continue until daylight.

The first session takes place in the healing arena, inside the hut while dancing in a sitting style. “The first session of the ritual, *tshele*, is named after the hand-rattles that are shaken to rouse a trance state in the person who is possessed” (Levine 2005:189).

The *malombe* hold *tshele* (rattles) that they shake continuously while singing. The patient or progeny is placed in the center of the circle and moves to the music while in a sitting position. These movement gestures are regarded as ‘dancing’, and they involve moving the body and hands from side to side, forwards and backwards, following the rhythm of the songs. This continues until the ancestral spirit possesses the patient. The patient then falls down, facing down.

In the *malombo* session that follows, all participants are in a standing position. The patient is now called *lilombe* (since he/she was possessed by the ancestral spirit) and dances in a standing position. The patient has, at this stage, been healed.

Blacking (1976:38) has observed that, “Venda people regard the ritual significance and effects of performance more highly than the content of the music”. Blacking does not define what he considers this ‘content’ of the music to be. This is indeed difficult to define, since the content is bound to the words of the songs, and these are metaphorical, but the significance of the music structure cannot be doubted. According to Vho Maine Vho-Mavis (Personal interview 18/02/2010) at her home at Lukau village she stated that ‘*a hu na hune malombo kana tshele zwa nga ya phanda hu sin a u imba*.’ That is, “there is no way that *tshele* or *malombo* can be done in the absence of music.”

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At a *tshele* session the researcher attended at Tshitomboni on 14/10/2010, the patient was so sick that she could not even sit up, let alone dance. But as the singers sang more powerfully over a period of two hours and fifteen minutes, the patient started shaking and the Vho Maine ordered him to wake up and to sit up straight. He then started moving/dancing for four hours and forty minutes, when the ancestral spirits arrived. The patient began screaming and groaning on the arrival of the spirits, and then proceed to speak in the Kalanga language. The sentence heard was *'Ndo ku pinda ku pi"* that is, 'Where do I get in here'. It was clear that the music provided the pathway to the possession by the ancestors.

During the *malombo* dance, ill persons receive their spiritual connection and healing primarily through singing and dancing. Shabangu (2004:163-164) states thus, "Africans celebrate their religion. They dance it, sing it and act it. A lot of visible demonstrations of African religion occur in rituals and festivals." Since *malombo* is an important facet of religious practice of the Vhavenda, my study points to a close relationship between the music performed during the *malombo* ritual, the dance and the dramatic involvement of those present – the elements that are collectively termed the musical arts – and the healing process of the individuals: a clear manifestation of Shabangu's more general observation.

Blacking by Byron (1995:181) indicates that "though for some members of the cult possession music seemed to have played a very minor role, the idea of a possession cult without music was rejected as inconceivable, just as music without concomitant sets of symbols could not have been of any significance in Venda life." This statement has been confirmed again by Vho Maine Vho-Mavis in her assertion that *"A huna malombo a si na nyimbo, nyimbo dzi ita uri mudzimu a swike a kone u tshina. Mudzimu u kungwa nga nyimbo."* "There can be no malombo spiritual dance without music as music is the source to call the ancestors and to summon the patient to dance. The songs lure the ancestors" (Personal interview 10/07/2009).

Nzewi (2003) states in an unpublished article "Acquiring knowledge of the musical Arts in traditional society":

> The indigenous African medical practice is holistic, and combines two cardinal principles of wellness – health-care (public health) and health-cure (individual health) that prioritize preventive health management. The science of healing relies on inter-structuring and inter-acting the four cardinal curative agencies that operate in concert: spirituality, community, musical arts and medicine. Indigenous medical practice in Africa then entails the rehabilitation of psychical health, community health, physiological health, and impaired life force. An average member of a culture group grows up acquiring knowledge of basic health cure: common curative herbs/elements for treating minor ailments as well as partaking actively in healing musical arts activities.

Nzewi's comments confirm that music remains a primary source of spiritual healing since most of the illnesses the Vhavenda encounter necessitate the implementation of curative measures through *malombo* spiritual healing.

Van Warmelo (1932:141) offers evidence that Vhavenda men, women, and children can fall ill to the point that the illness requires the *malombo* dance for healing.

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However, the researcher's fieldwork observations are that children never undergo this ritual (she used an example of a child earlier, case study 2). Instead, the elders will conduct a cleansing ceremony during which a request is made to the ancestral spirits to allow the affected child time to grow up and reach the point where he/she can assume responsibility.

3.15.4. THE *TSHELE* SESSION OF SPIRIT POSSESSION

On hearing the music the patient began to shake, and Vho Maine ordered her to sit up and to place herself in the middle of the circle in a kneeling position. As the songs continued to be sung, the patient started swaying her hands round and round, moving her body backwards and forwards, and sometimes round and round while also nodding her head. But she did not get entranced normally, if the ancestral spirits delay their arrival at the ritual, *malombe* singers and other supporters will offer *mahafhe* (an African traditional beer) and *mabundu* (a drink made of soft porridge and malt which is non-alcoholic). On this particular occasion, we encountered a delay, and the question arose about what the reason for the delay of the ancestral spirit's arrival could be, since such a situation poses a challenge for the patient.

In such circumstances, where the arrival of the ancestral spirit is delayed, the connection with the ancestors is usually considered to be failing because of the procedures and the effort put into the singing. According to Rouget (1985:73), "it is a general rule that the trance is accompanied by music, and music is almost regarded as being more or less responsible for its onset". In essence, music is responsible for inducing the state of trance, during which the spirits arrive in the patient, a state referred to by Dagan (1997:239) as an 'ecstatic state'.

Since the music provides the connection between the patient and the ancestral spirits, Vho Maine Vho Nyawasedza exhorted the *malombe* to sing powerfully. Four hours after the start of the ritual, at 00h20, the *malombe* called for a refreshment interval. The activities resumed at 01h48. During the time of waiting for the arrival of the spirit, Vho Maine pulverized and burnt *dzikhumela*, the berry of the *mututulwa* plant, a hallucinogenic aid, and the patient inhaled the smoke. The intention was to induce the patient to get closer to her ancestors. After the inhalation of the smoke by the patient, Vho Maine ordered that the singing and rattles should increase in intensity to hasten the invocation of the ancestral spirits.

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Figure 3.13: *Tshele rattles*

Figure 3.14: *Vho Mavis demonstrating how to play tshele rattles*

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The *malombe* group sang with greater intensity, causing the patient to dance in a more vigorous way. At 04h15 she shivered, seemed unaware of those around her, screamed and collapsed in a face- down style. When she started groaning and her limbs became stiff she was covered with a blanket. There were ushers at the ceremony who were ready to support her and prevent her from sustaining physical injury.

Possession is the indication that the ancestral spirit has taken control. During this state the individual no longer knows herself, so that from the possession (indicated by falling down) to the departure of the spirit (indicated by the sneezing point; see below), she is not aware of what is happening. During this time she is in a state of altered consciousness or being possessed by her own spirits.

3.15.5. ANCESTRAL SPIRITS REVEALING THEIR IDENTITIES

When Vho Maine spoke to the patient at Lukau's *tshele*, she did not reply in Tshivenda (the language spoken by the Vhavenda) but Shona/Kalanga, a language of southern Zimbabwe. This was the sign that the ancestral spirits had possessed her, as she herself could not speak this language previously. When the researcher inquired about the change of language, she pointed out that the Vho Makhulu, the great ancestors of the Vhavenda tribe, had come from Zimbabwe. The words *nyadala, mudzimu* and *makhulu* are all synonyms to designate the ancestral spirit who has arrived.

While the patient was possessed, Vho Maine proceeded to the stage of smearing the body of the patient with herbs, *u vumbela mulwadze*. She smeared the whole body, starting at her toes and moving towards the head. The mixture was also smeared under the armpits of the patient, on her hands, and some was rubbed into the ears. This smearing is intended to facilitate communication with the arrived ancestral spirit. The patient was then dressed in a *tshilemba* (a spiritual hat) and *palu* (cloth). This dress identified the *nyadala* (the possessed person), and also that *mudzimu* (an ancestral spirit) was part of the gathering. If the ancestral spirit is identified as having been a healer, then *nyadala* - the patient healed by *tshele* dance would be dressed in a *nzheti* cloth, a material which is in the characteristic black, white and red colours that indicate a healer. The colour of the clothing of *nyadala* is significant because it indicates the origin of the ancestral spirit by which the patient is possessed.

It is difficult to determine during when coloured cloths started being used to identify the relationship between the ancestral spirit and the *nyadala*. In earlier times animal skins were commonly used, and an informant told me that she recalled seeing traditional healers wearing these during the early 1960s. One can surmise that a combination of circumstances – including economic, environmental and practical considerations – impacted on the start of a new tradition whereby cloth colour would play an important role. Research is scant and this area requires further investigation.

When the patient was in a trance Vho Maine requested the ancestral spirit to reveal its identity. The visiting ancestral spirit may be from either the paternal or maternal lineage; only Vho Maine would know where it comes from. Vho Maine then announced the name of the *mudzimu* so that the family would know which ancestor was present. When *mudzimu* was further interrogated, it told the gathering what was causing its unhappiness, and what its expectations were from then onward.

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At that particular stage, Vho Maine was communicating with the ancestral spirit in Shona/Kalanga as the Vhavenda *mudzimu* can speak and follow this language. Maraire (1990:78) has documented the link between Kalanga and Tshivenda words, and the researcher could identify the following, which are clearly of Kalanga origin, while Vho Maine was communicating with the patient immediately after the trance state arrived:

Table 3.3: *Translation of words communicated during malombo session*

Tshivenda	Kalanga	English
Lufu	rufu/rufo	to die
U fa	kufa	to die
muthu o fa	munhu wafa	a person is dead
o tuwa	waenda	a person is dead/gone

During the state of trance the researcher tried to ask the patient some questions, but she could not respond, even to simple questions such as where she lives. It was clear that her mind was in an altered state.

From the patient's responses, it is obvious that during this state, the patient is not aware of anything that is happening to her. The patient is in an altered state, and answers as though the ancestor is being questioned. When asked of the healed patient after the departure of the ancestral spirits what the words above meant, she did not recognize them. The total lack of recall of the events by the patient has been widely documented, including by Cohen and Barrette (2008) who describe the state as follows:

- During the possession episode, the agency of the host is completely replaced by an agency other than the host's.
- No trace of the host's agency remains or fuses with the possessing agency.
- The entity that possesses (i.e. the possessing agent) completely controls behaviours of the host's body.
- The possessing agent is wholly responsible for all behaviours for the duration of the episode.

The researcher's observations at the *tshele* session in Tshakhuma concur with those of Cohen and Barrette, as well as with Blacking's documentation (1995:188) that:

> At Magidi, the returning to normality of some of the malombe was more dramatic. For instance Vho Tsanwane rushed out of the hut where her ancestor had left her, and into her own kitchen. She looked in all her pots for the sweet potatoes that she remembered she had been cooking on Saturday evening when she was "called" by the drum. "Who has eaten my sweet potatoes?" she complained to Vho-Masindi, who laughed and replied: "I don't know. And where were you in any case when you think they were taken?" Vho Tsanwane replied: "I went to Tshitahala to see tshele. I shall find the thief when I catch her."

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Vho Maine and the other *malombe* spoke for some time to the ancestral spirit, and then the patient sneezed, which served as an indication that *mudzimu* had departed. This marked the end of the possession state for the patient. After the state of possession it was already dawn and the participants rested. During the hours that followed, Vho Maine attended to the demands of *nyadala*, dressing the patient according to *nyadala's* wishes by, for example, giving over her amulets.
At Tshitomboni when Vho Maine Vho Nyawasedza was possessed on the *tshele* session of 14/10/2010, after the ancestral spirit left, the researcher asked her where she was during that night. She said, "I do not know as I was shaking the rattles for the patient, and it was very difficult for this patient to arrive at his ancestors." She could not recall what happened to her thereafter (Personal interview 14/10/2010).

3.16. *NGOMA DZA VHADZIMU*: THE PUBLIC SESSION

Ngoma dza vhadzimu is a public, spiritual dance where the healing ritual is accompanied by drums. The songs are now sung being accompanied by three drums and dancing takes place in a standing position. The biggest drum is known as *dumbula* for the rhythm, *mutungwa* and *tshitutulu*.

Figure 3.15: *Two mirumba drums (L & R) with a mutungwa (mother drum)*

After the private session is over, all *malombe* must at some stage perform the *ngoma dza vhadzimu* (public spiritual dance). This is sometimes called by acronym *dzingoma* but there is a possibility that before the *mudzimu* leaves, he/she may demand *ngoma dza vhadzimu* immediately. In such cases, *nyadala* (the spirit that has entered the patient's body) is informed by Vho Maine that the request has been heard but a suitable time will be chosen for the drums (*dzingoma*) as that needs preparation.

A public performance has a significant role to play in the sequence of events of the healing procedure. This can be:

- Joining the medium with the people singing and dancing that will be an acceptance and validation of healing. This process is called *u kanda luvhande* (to step on the ground).
- Introduction of the new healer to the community she is intended to serve, because in the process of her healing she has received a healing spirit and

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the training.

- To heal the entire community, hence the ending which should be reported at the chief's place, and that no other dance can be performed if the drums of ancestral spirits are taking place.

It is this public performance that may best be described as *malombo* that is in a standing position. It requires sufficient time for preparation. On this occasion it started on the following night. The *malombe* who had been members of the fraternity invited to the private ceremony, were present together with their spirits. They sang to the accompaniment of rattles and drums, dancing in a standing position through the night and into the next morning, when the spirits departed just before dawn.

The public *malombo* is an auspicious occasion and celebration. Vho Maine *vha tshele*, as the organizer, ensures that the Chief or the Headman of the community where she lives is informed, and permission is sought and granted for the performance to take place. Because this is a significant event, it must never be in conflict with the society's initiation schools such as *domba, murundu, tshikanda* and the royal *thevhula*. The event is deliberately scheduled so that the whole community may be present.

3.16.1. ATTIRE

The attire worn in a *malombo* performance is "an effective costume that must virtually convey ideas about the dancers, by quickly and efficiently differentiating them" (Dagan 1997:94). The original attire of the healers until approximately 50 years ago was a loincloth and the skins of different animals. Today they have adopted a clothing style as seen in the photograph below:

Typical attire worn by Vhavenda traditional healers:

Figure 3.16: *Vho Maine Nyawasedza (R) wearing her healing attire*

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Figure 3.17: *Carrying the dunzwu (container with medicine)*

Figure 3.18: *Nyadala is dressed in her matongo attire for the performance in the public malombo dance*

An individual of a specific clan wears clothing that can be identified with an ancestral spirit. One patient could wear a *palu* (a checked blue and red cloth) with a red and

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white strip of cloth tied around her waist, while another one might wear a *palu* with a yellow and blue cloth strip, also tied around her waist. When the spirit takes possession of *nyadala* who is the medium, she wishes to be seen by the audience in her special attire, known as *matongo*.

The *nyadala* must be dressed according to her visionary wishes by Vho Maine and her helpers. The family of the patient prepares the required clothes, including strips of cloth and amulets, for the great day, and brings them to Vho Maine as an indication that they have completed the preparations.

In recent times, cloth strips of different colours, including black (*mutswu*), blue (*lutombo*), red (*mutswuku*), white (*mutshena*), green (*mudala*) and yellow (*dzivha la mutada*), have been substituted for animal skins. The colours used are the *nyadala*'s spirit's choice. These cloth strips are tied around the torso just above waist level and knotted at the back of the body so that they hang down, as in the photograph below:

There are also two patterned cloths that are worn like the traditional Vhavenda *salampores*: *nzheti* cloth, which has a red, black and white design, and is an indication that the candidate can become a healer; and *palu* cloth (a blue and red cloth, see **Figure 3.17** below), which is an indication that the candidate has received her *mudzimu* (ancestral spirit).

3.16.2. TSHILEMBA HAT

The *tshilemba* hat (a hat in multiple colours of yellow, red, green and black) is worn by all the *mudzimu* (of which the plural form is *vhadzimu*).

Figure 3.19: *Wearing palu and tshilemba hat*

In the same way the *malombe* are also identified by their *matongo* (ancestral attire). This dress is the same dress worn at their first public dance, and remains their individual and particular attire for life. When it will be old or torn it will be replaced

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after the ancestors have been informed of the replacement according to the interview with Vho Mavis (Personal interview 11/07/2011).

3.16.3. AMULETS AND HEIRLOOMS

Amulets and heirlooms are inherited by *nyadala* from the ancestors and are symbols of the ancestor's possession of the clan or lineage. The amulets of a *nyadala* in the Vhavenda *malombo* possession fraternity for a male or a female ancestral spirit could include the following:

- *Mafumo* (spears)
- *Malembe* (flattened wire bent into an axe shape small enough to be part of the beads which are hung around the neck)
- *Tsanga* (adze)
- *Vhulungu ha madi* (spiritual water beads)

Other symbols may also be included.

Figure 3.20: *Nyadala/mudzimu with her heirlooms: walking stick, adze and vhulungu (ancestor beads).*

3.16.4. AUDIENCE FOR THE DANCE

The invited audience will include family members, friends, healers and *malombe* who have been healed by the same Vho Maine. They will participate actively in the singing and dancing, and, through this, will be cleansed for the coming year. When

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they are dancing to the powerful and lively music, their ancestral spirits will manifest. They participate because, through their dance, they are connecting to their ancestral spirits and they are also supporting the healed patient.

Figure 3.21: *Celebrating the malombo session*

3.16.5. DRUMMER

The selection of the drummer (*matsige)* is important, as the drums play a sensitive and critical role in the ritual music. It is the drum that will ensure that the spirits are satisfied especially in the public *malombo* performance and the performance must be lively and inspiring in order to do so. The *malombo* dance is exceptional in that the drummer will be a male although in some situations women may play the drums. The big drum needs more energy, hence *matsige* a male. In all other dances of the Vhavenda society, women play the drums as a way of honouring Vho Makhadzi (the chief's sister or any aunt of a family). It is important to locate an energetic *matsige* and powerful singers, because the intensity of the music will determine the success of the healing process.

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Figure 3.22: *Drummer playing the ngoma khulu drum during a public malombo performance*

3.16.6. FOOD

The time-consuming preparation of the food for the invited guests and members of the community is done by the family members and *malombe*. The public *malombo* is a momentous occasion that will be attended by visitors from different backgrounds and places, and there must be enough to eat. Usually the feast includes slaughtering a goat and a number of chickens to cater for all the guests.

The guests are given a full menu consisting of porridge and meat with *mahafhe* (African beer) and *mabundu* (a non-alcoholic drink made of soft porridge and malt). The provision of food and drink is the responsibility of the patient and her relatives, as all the visitors are considered to be coming for her reunion with her ancestors. Traditionally, all the people brought to the knowledge of *malombo* by the same *maine* (who are known as Vho Maine's children) come with a gift of food, especially a chicken. The drummer's payment is a goat, which is provided by the patient's family. Beer is brewed for this *u vumbela mulwadze* (the patient's ritual).

3.16.7. *THOTSHE* (Cutting of hair)

While the patient is ill, the environment around her is considered to be unclean. After performing the *tshele* ritual dance one of the important cleansing rituals that must be performed is *thotshe,* during which the patient's hair is cut off. The cut hair is laid in the mud. The patient is now clean and can proceed with *ngoma dza vhadzimu*.

3.16.8. *MALOMBO* PUBLIC HEALING DANCE PERFORMANCE

The *malombo* public dance performance is the climax of the *ngoma dza vhadzimu*. The performance takes place outside in the courtyard. As observed during the

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researcher's fieldwork, *nyadala* was dressed in her complete attire for the performance. Since she was a patient whose ancestral spirit was a healer, the main attire was *palu* together with *nzheti* and other colourful cloths, according to the wish of the spirit that possessed her. She also had an heirloom inherited from her ancestral spirits. In the public dance performance *nyadala* danced in an energetic manner.

Figure 3.23: *Playing the ngoma dza malombo (drums of malombo) during a public performance*

In this performance three drums were used, two *mirumba* (conical drums), which are named as follows: one *mutungwa/tshitutulu/tshilala madini* (at Khubvi), the second one *dumbula* and *ngoma khulu* (the Mother drum). In addition there were *tshele* as well as the singing by the participating *malombe*.

In all the other dances in which the *mirumba* known as *tshitutulu/ tshilala madini* according to Vho Elisa Razwiedani (Personal interview 05/09/2011) are used, they are played with the hands. In the possession dance, however, these drums are played using one drumstick while the *dumbula* is played by two drumsticks. Another unusual aspect is that a man plays the *ngoma khulu* whereas women play drums for other dances.

The drums are added to the dance for the standing *malombo* dance for the healed patient to step the ground – that is *u kanda luvhande*. Drums are healers in the performance; they are the best medicine for psychological pressure and enrich the melodic development of the performance. There are three drums used:

- The mother drum – *ngoma khulu* – According to Van Warmelo (1989:274) *ngoma* is "a large pot-shaped wooden drum which is beaten on all occasions, as in war, for Tshikona and Domba." *Ngoma khulu* as being called for the possession performance, with the adjective *–khulu*, that means big, that means the 'big drum' that needs a drummer to be played well, preferably a man who will even be paid for the performance.

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- The first conical drum – *dumbula* – According to Van Warmelo (1989:33) it is one of the three drums of *malombo* possession dance.
- The second conical drum – *mutungwa/tshitutulu* – is the smallest conical drum played when the possession drums are danced during the public performance.

In a healing ritual at Luvhalani in Tshakhuma village observed on 15/08/2010, the performance began at 21h45 with powerful drumming and singing. The effect of this music was felt in the expressive emotion and energy of the patient's dance.

Diallo and Hall (1989:85) articulate the physical and physiological components of the ritual dance of the Minianka in Nigeria:

> Dancing symbolizes the rhythmic, patterned movements of life itself. Music and dance amplify and make manifest to our senses the unheard tones and unseen waves that weave together the matter of existence. Even when we are sitting most still or resting in deepest sleep, the atoms, molecules, cells, tissues, organs, and system of our bodies dance in astounding harmony and exchange ambient energies from air, water, food, and invisible electromagnetic radiation. The beat, the rhythm, the timing, the orchestration, the flow, the balance between action and rest must all be within well-defined, organic limits for us to be vital. The Minianka practice a healing art that helps restore emotionally and psychologically disturbed people to harmonious human functioning through appropriately pulsating music.

This also draws a parallel with the drums of the *Shangaans*. As folklore tells, a Vho, once back from training a certain Lilombe of Shangaan**,** was behaving like a thief or psychologically disturbed person but they were restored by the beating of the *machomane* (*mandhlozi*), *swikwembu* drums. The Vhavenda practice on these drums, which also helps restore emotionally and psychologically disturbed people to harmonious human functioning through appropriately pulsating music. For example, in the healing of the woman observed by the researcher in Lukau, the *malombe* were very quiet, and remained seated on a mat while only one person at a time danced. The drummer used the beating sticks to play the drums; the group members played the rattles and sang. The combination of all these elements together created a unique, mystical music language.

In the performance by the *malombe*, they took turns to come to the centre of the circle for dancing. Dancers first kneel as a sign of respect to Vho Maine and the other *malombe* before they begin to dance. Blacking (1985:92) writes that:

> A similar alternation between circular and display movement was observed by each solo dancer in the possession dance, *ngoma dza midzimu* (lit. drums of the departed ancestor-spirits). *Malombo* public dance is a ceremony shared by the community.

This may be compared to *malopo* possession group (dance) of the Pedi of South Africa ceremonies where, according to Hammond-Tooke (1979:54):

> Treatment consists of dancing under the supervision of a cult leader who has

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herself become affected. It is the dance that enables possessing spirit to come out and express themselves.

According to Vho Maine Vho Mutshekwa Nekhudzhigam during an interview at Tshitavhadulu Village, in singing and dancing the possession dance ceremonies, the body moves within an expanded social universe, a cosmos in motion (Personal interview 10/06/2013).

When the *nyadala* has to dance for the first time, Vho Maine holds her hands and introduces her to the *luvhande* (courtyard). In most cases, the spirit manifested in *nyadala* will respond easily to the dancing and drums ensemble. Diallo and Hall's (1989:12) statement serves to describe the dance: "When one is truly taken by the music, one becomes capable of movements that one could not have willingly done otherwise."

When the patient is taken by the music the increasing movement of hands and the nodding of the head lead to the taking over of the ancestral spirits in Vhavenda spiritual dance. The *nyadala* is happy that a request for her to dance publicly was made and so body and spirit are surrendered to her ancestors. Some of the *malombe* dancing with the *nyadala* are visited by their ancestor spirits. During the performance at Luvhalani they ran into the house where they had a short period of trance during which they were given messages in Kalanga. They then returned to the courtyard to continue the dance.

The performance of the *malombo* started in the evening and ran through to a morning break for breakfast and then continued through the following day, thus running from Saturday evening through Sunday. On the Sunday, because the dancing permission for the event was obtained from the Chief, all the *malombe* as well as Vho Maine went to the Chief's kraal courtyard to perform *u losha*: a sign that tells the Chief 'we are now done'. This is called *ngoma dzo fhalala*, a signal that the public possession ceremony has come to an end. The clan is now healthy, and the people's souls are at peace with the universe.

3.17. FUNCTIONS OF *MALOMBO* MUSICAL ARTS IN THE HEALING OF THE PATIENT

After all the observation of the performances of *tshele* session and *ngoma dza vhadzimu* it has been found that musical arts contributed to healing of the patient as follows:

- Musical arts function to "wash the heart clean."
- It encourages the patient to be positive and gain self-esteem.
- The patient feels as if she is communicating with the unknown persons, the ancestral spirits.
- The patient is no longer suffering in isolation with a state of stress, depression, uneasiness of the mind and thus vulnerable to illnesses of various kinds.
- Patients come to realize that there are people who are *malombe*, relatives who care and, upon hearing the music accompanied by instruments, these supporters automatically became a source of relief.
- The singing (with people) and the instruments create a rhythm that leads a

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patient into trance.

- Musical arts relieve the mind of stress, depression, and mental illness. Therefore, issues that contribute to these deficiencies can be mended through musical engagement. Hence, singing songs that are not common and easily heard in any ceremonies or performances of traditional dances, can contribute to healing.
- Music may function like a lullaby that can bring the child to a deep peaceful sleep.
- Music brings the state of mind into trance which leads the affected individual to lose contact with the normal world, gone to the realm of the higher gods, thus ancestral spirits, hence spirit possession.
- Music closes the mind to current events, that is why the person falls for approximately 30 minutes in their own world where they can only communicate with the healer who is leading *malombe* so that they can even speak their wishes directly to their ancestral spirits.
- After healing a person might identify himself or herself with the true outcome that might lead him or her to a specific duty or healed state such as s/he may become a healer. Therefore s/he may be in a healed state because he or she may become permanently healed and live a normal life again.
- Musical arts can be viewed as the carrier that leads the patient to permanent healing.

As demonstrated in this chapter, songs give commands to members of the *malombe* with regard to the needs of the ancestors and guide the healer in how to venerate them. *Malombo* songs generate energy to give impetus to the sick to help them to recover by healing both the physical body and the soul, otherwise referred to as psychophysical therapy. The soloist (*musimi*) or leader is an important person as s/he is the one who composes the message of the song.

The *malombo* songs are accented by the rhythm of the rattles and, in the case of the public *ngoma dza vhadzimu* ceremony, the drum patterns inspire the pattern and spiritual state of the dance. The singers and dancers are given energy by the drums and the rattles that drive and sustain the healing ritual ceremony. As such, it is understood that musical arts are fundamental to the healing practice and of central importance to *malombo* musical healing. *Malombo* musical arts can affect the patient physically and also affect and transform their spiritual and state of being. It is also important to note that in the absence of musical arts or singing, *malombo* trance does not take place. For it is music that precipitates trance and enables the effective accomplishment of the objective of the entire performance event.

From the interviews that were conducted with healers, it has been demonstrated that they regard musical arts as the sole means to call up the ancestral spirits, which in turn results in the healing of the patient. It is important to note that possessed people do not join in the singing of the songs as they are only concerned with dancing. People who know *malombo* songs, very often provide music or singing, and most of these people (not always) have also been possessed *malombe* dancers.

As noted by ethnomusicologist Catherine Ellis (1985), in her discussion of central Australian Aboriginal songs, “through correct interlocking the power of the ancestor, being drawn out of the earth by the strength of the song, is present” (Ellis 1985:109).

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The following figure depicts the interlocking of the structures of song, music and meaning that are necessary for the ancestors to be evoked.

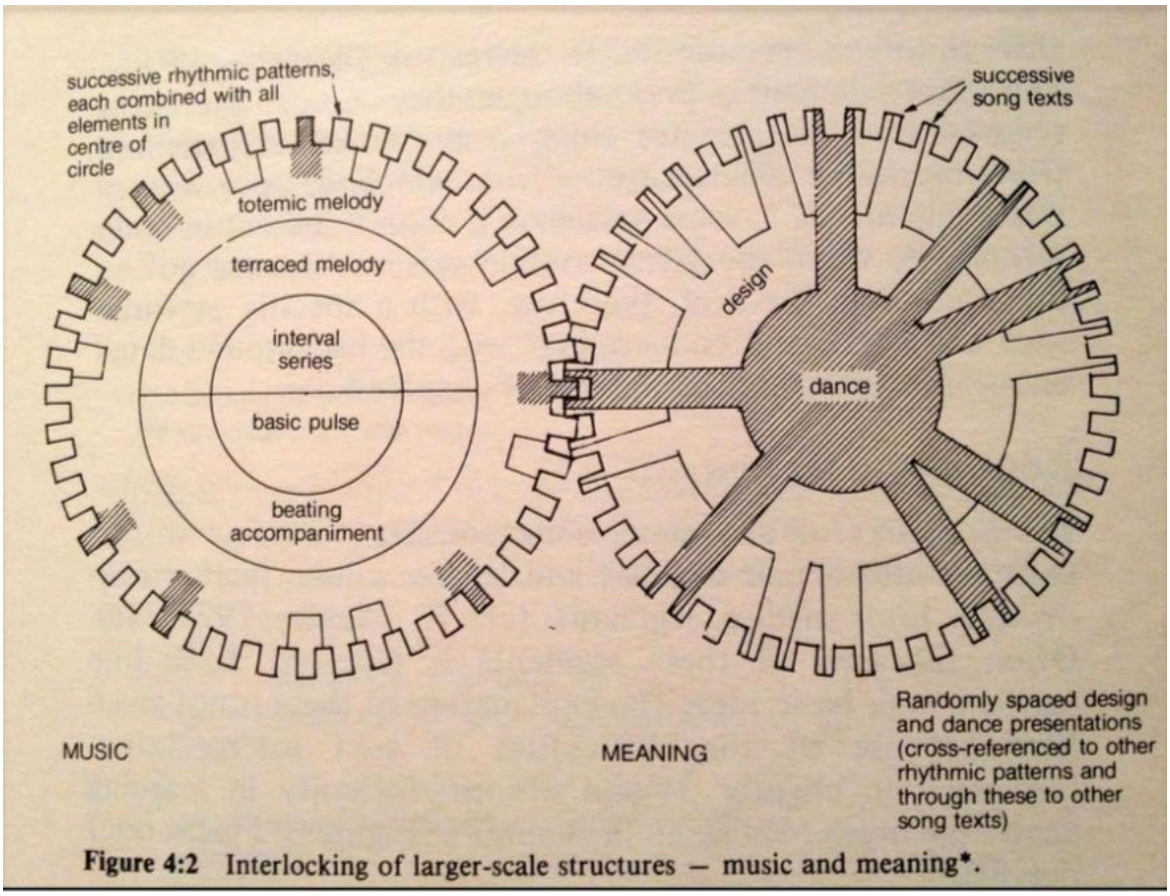

Figure 3.24: *Interlocking cogs by Ellis (1985:109)*

As with *malombo* songs, all of the described elements in this chapter are necessary to motivate the cogs into action, which in turn evoke the ancestral spirits. Without the music, the ancestral spirits will not arrive.

3.18. CONCLUSION

Music acts as the metaphorical bridge by way of which the ancestors cross over to the living. After undergoing the entire *malombo* therapeutic dance, the patient, her siblings, and her entire clan will be cured of the misfortunes, diseases and illnesses that were afflicting them. In the researcher's observation of *malombo,* it was clear that both singing and dancing play an integral role in healing the patient. When the ancestral spirits joined the dance, it was clear that they had heard and responded to the language of the music, including the instruments (*tshele, ngoma* drums and *mirumba).* Music is the heart and soul of the *malombo* healing ritual.

When the researcher interviewed the patient in Lukau on 20/09/2011, she disclosed that the spirits would have been unable to participate in the absence of music. She also indicated that when the ensemble was playing, she felt the reverberation of the music throughout her entire body.

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Another interesting observation was that the young *nyadala* who was taken to the courtyard for the first time, surprisingly was able to dance the peculiar possession dance remarkably well. That indicated to the researcher that the music had penetrated her, and that the ancestor was dancing through her physical body.

In this regard, Nzewi (2003:5) has emphasized the profound importance of people's elders, and the necessity for honouring those who pass on:

> To bury our dead is not to dispose of their meaning. If our roots die off, our lives cease to inspire . . . A mighty tree that rejects nourishment from its buried roots condemns its outward bloom to blemish and breathe no more.

Spirit possession provides a means to perceive the critical role music plays as an agency that enables the invocation of the ancestral spirit. Music is the medium that provides access to the healing power of the ancestral spirits, without which the psychophysical wellness of the Vhavenda people would be severely impaired.

In addition to the individual and familial healing that occurs during *malombo* healing ceremony, community is positively affected and this ceremony leads to greater public health. The support of all the stakeholders experienced by the patient during the healing session is a healing source to the patient. Realising the commitment of all the relatives and the *malombe* and the community involvement is also a powerful healing source. Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis, the relationship between healing and public health is an important aspect of traditional healing practices when considering current health concerns in the community.

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CHAPTER FOUR

MALOMBO MUSIC: TRANSLATION AND ANALYSIS OF SONGS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, samples of the documented and translated songs from the *malombo/nyimbo dza vhadzimu* repertoire will be discussed. The significant role that *malombo* music plays when the ancestral spirits are called to rescue the living is described throughout this chapter. The emphasis is placed on the classification, textual analysis, language implication, content and context of the songs. Textual transcriptions of all songs discussed within the chapter are included. Nineteen song examples from the *malombo* repertoire are included on the accompanying CD. Seven musical transcriptions are also included in this chapter to demonstrate the relationship between the melody, text, and rhythm of the song genre.

4.1.1. THE *MATO* PROCESS

While describing the music it is clear that the ***mato*** plays an important role in the form of the music and its structure. *Mato* is a word recorded by the researcher and it is not present in the Venda dictionary by N. J. Van Warmelo (1989). The word was utilized heavily while doing field research in Tshakhuma, and in particular in an interview with Vho Mutshekwa Madzunya (Personal interview 17/05/2006). This word is significant in understanding the relationship between music and possession and perhaps more significant given that this is the first instance that it has been described in a written text.

Mato is a Vhavenda concept that denotes creative agency by the performer, which in turn informs the compositional outcome and the musical content of a song. The performer musically interprets the meaning and sense of a performance event and edits the words of a song to weave into the base melody. The *mato* process requires the lead singer to introduce evocations and perceptions of a current event, situation, emotion, etc., into the basic text in order to entice the ancestors to avail themselves in time. Therefore, the song may be further transformed by contextualization and omission of some of the original text, resulting in a gradual metamorphosis away from the original song text.

Mato features strongly, and is central, to the call and response songs of *malombo*. The person who calls the song will use her own words that are unique, pulling the spirits through the song text adapted to the melody of the song. This can often be found in several genres of Vhavenda songs and dances such as *malende*, *tshifasi* and *malombo*. Without *mato* the spirits cannot be called to heal the sick.

As an example, in one song performed during a field research recording there is a phrase: "*Vho Davhula vha ri vhonisa'ni*?" That is, "Mrs. Davhula, what is it that you want us to see". In this sense the singer is saying that we have never danced before the camera, nor have we recorded a video. Following this process to its logical conclusion, the researcher knows that the *mato* process is also applied to the songs that the researcher has recorded, and that, at some time in the future, another

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researcher would report that, while the melodies might be similar, the texts of the songs performed will be slightly different from what this researcher has cited. Because of the *mato* process you cannot expect to record one song from different groups of *malombo* and find the same text in subsequent recordings.

The *mato* process therefore impacts transcription and recording methodologies as these methods can contribute to the reification or freezing of traditions (see for example Knopoff 2004). Because tradition (and *mato)* is a creative and evolving process, ethnomusicologists have acknowledged that recording traditions can lead to "authoratative representations of songs and models for performance" (Knopoff 2004:183). This can also be applied to transcriptions, which may lead readers to view these reprsentations as singular artificats that represent the "song," rather than melodic frameworks from which the performers must base their creative processes. As noted by Treloyn "if a person learns a song from a single recording (or transcription), the concern is that the fit between melody and text/rhythm become fixed. If the power of the song is located in the turning of these cogs together, in the negotiation, renegotiation, and interlocking of music, text, and rhythm, we might become concerned that this fixing also has implications for the performance to wake up the spirits" (Treloyn 2012:6).

It is crucial for the tradition of *malombo* to honour its oral and creative tradition that does not reference a singular melody or lyric as authoritative. In respect of the *mato* process the researcher has utilised several methodologies (recording, transcription, description, analysis of text) to provide a comprehensive exploration of the role music plays in *malombo*. Rather than focusing on one specific method such as transcription and/or recording, the researcher has chosen to provide demonstrations of each methodology in order to respect the indigenous system of *mato* that forms the core of *malombo* and the creative processes involved in the performance system. In order for the tradition to continue into the future, the tradition of *mato* must be taught through indigenous learning systems that focus on oral teaching through participation.

4.1.2. SONGS OF *MALOMBO*

The songs have been categorized according to their content by the researcher, in consultation with some of the healers who participated in this study (Vho Maine Vho Mavis, Vho Nyawasedza, Vho Joyce Madzivhandila and Vho Maine Vho Neluvhola). There is no specific order for the songs to be sung during a healing ceremony. Some songs may be regarded as the "initial songs" because of the text and their typical use in performance as opening songs. These songs are often encountered as those that make the spirits avail themselves at different times to different people. The spirits may at times also indicate that a specific song must be sung. This is the primary reason one cannot state that a certain song will always be sung at a certain time during the ritual.

The *ngoma dza vhadzimu/malombo* songs are based on oral tradition. The songs discussed in this chapter were collected during field research and do not necessarily duplicate those made by John Blacking of similar rituals, which are available at:

http://www.music.washington.edu/ethno/blacking.html

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However, it is noted that some of the songs collected during this research are sung with the same lyrics as those found in the Blacking recordings although most are sung with different *mato*. What is of particular interest is that some melodies correspond to songs recorded by Blacking; however, some of the words are quite different to the texts that he cited (as a result of the *mato* process).

It is important to note that the music of possession uses a continuous (what Blacking refers to as a 'metronomic') rhythmic accompaniment on the rattles that plays a major role in establishing the spiritual atmosphere. After analyzing the songs, it became evident that music is the vehicle that leads the patients to healing, and that the effect of the music is expressed through dance.

The choice of the *mato* in these *malombo* songs is an impromptu affair; the singer randomly decides which text to sing without any formal sequence of order.

In *malombo,* the language of the texts is always of a more formal standard than the spoken Vhavenda language because of the use of *mato* that guides the creation of the text. The *mato* of the *malombo* songs is highly metaphorical because the songs are directed to the ancestral spirits in various ways. Sometimes the language used will include Tshikalanga, as the spirits are believed to understand this language. When explained by Vho Maine Vho Neluvhola (Personal interview 27/03/2010) he stated that: "*Vho makhulu washu ndi vha Vhukalanga, a vha vhoni ri tshi vhea vhathu vho lavhelesa Vhukalanga!*" - "Our grandparents are the Kalanga, that is why we bury our dead facing Vhukalanga!" Therefore, language references to the Kalanga are embedded within the songs of *malombo*.

Throughout this thesis it is clear that the ancestral spirits can be evoked by the music sung by *malombe* and that the healers, the spirits, and the patient experience healing conferred by their ancestors. When the spirits reveal that they are dissatisfied with their descendants, or when misfortunes happen to their descendants, the language that provides the connection to their descendants is music. This language is most often expressed through singing, which is also a way of expressing the happiness or sadness of the people. The Vhavenda *malombo* songs are like prayers directed to the ancestors. In this chapter, the songs that are presented are sung in the initial stages of the healing ceremony and in the public *malombo* dance.

Blacking (in Byron, R. & Nettl, B. 1995:188) states that the words of the songs express many of the sentiments and symbols of the clan. Although some singers and their ancestral spirits were said to improvise phrases, the researcher found that many standard phrases were repeated several times during the course of a single *tshele* session and even later, at the *ngoma dza vhadzimu* session, and often by the same singer. Some commonly repeated phrases referred to the possession state and to the music and dance.

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4.2. TRANSLATION, ANALYSIS AND SONG TEXTS OF VHAVENDA *MALOMBO* SONGS

4.2.1. BACKGROUND

In general use, the word 'song' has a limited meaning in the English language. Commonly it refers to a relatively short musical composition consisting of words set to music, while in popular music it has recently come to refer to any musical work, including instrumental music. The Vhavenda, however, have a broader understanding of *luimbo* (song). Blacking in the book edited by Tunley (1982:92) indicated that:

> The Venda concept of 'song' (luimbo) included patterns of words that were recited to a regular metre, because it was metrical organization that distinguished 'singing' (u imba) from 'talking' (u amba). A 'song' could be in responsorial form, with a soloist 'sowing' (- u sima) the opening phrase and a chorus 'thundering' (- u bvumela) in response. The songs could grow like a plant, as members of the chorus added counterpoint and harmonic texture to the basic melody. Songs were accompanied by handclaps and by drumming according to the type of song and the social occasion. Instrument melodies were also referred to as 'songs' but not all were associated with texts or derived from songs. Their shape could be derived from the properties of different instruments and the way they were played, just as vocal melodies were influenced by the speech-tone patterns of the words.

Likewise the Vhavenda music of *malombo* is made up of call and response patterns. The songs share a continuous rhythmic accompaniment of the rattles, which play a major role in establishing the spiritual atmosphere. The rhythm of the *tshele* (rattle) provides a soothing texture.

> The inclusion of non-melodic patterns of words that are recited to a regular meter makes the notation of many songs complicated. Any Western system of notation is seldom completely satisfactory for this type of song. Furthermore, the strong influence of speech-tone patterns – which in many instances cause the songs to be closer to free incantations rather than to the conventional notion of singing – also create challenges of notating pitch accurately, as required by formal notation. These factors cause a situation where notation can, at best, only be approximate, and it is the recording itself that is the ultimate authority (Blacking 1976:28).

It should be recognized that when *malombo/ngoma dza vhadzimu* songs are notated, we can only approximate pitch and rhythm due to the use of *mato* and the constantly shifting use of pitch and melody throughout the performance. Therefore, the transcriptions function as an aid to bring the reader to a closer understanding of the performance rather than an absolute representation of a song.

What is of particular interest is that some melodies correspond to songs recorded by Blacking; however, some of the texts are quite different to the texts that he cited. This is a manifestation of the Vhavenda practice of *mato* that may best be described as contextualizing the text, which Blacking (1976:28) partially referred to as "added counterpoint and harmonic texture".

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The following important concepts need to be clarified briefly before proceeding, as they are all dances of ancestral spirits performed by the Vhavenda from different areas. These are *malombo, madzhukwa, malombe, tshilombo, mashavhi* and *tshigwasha*.

Malombo refers to the specific ritual ceremony, during which healing takes place through singing and dancing to honour the spirit of the departed ancestors (See the quotation of van Warmelo 1932:141 in chapter 1). We can divide the ritual ceremony of *malombo* into two categories: The initial ceremony performed inside the house known as *tshele* session and the second session called *ngoma dza malombo/dza vhadzimu (dza u ima)* is performed outside, where the drums will also be played.

In *madzhukwa* possession the *malombe* and the patient dance at one spot, digging their toes into the ground. In *malombo* dance the feet movement goes back and forth, with the patient moving to various spots while dancing.

Malombe (plural), (*lilombe* - singular) are a special group of people who attend the ceremony, who were previously possessed by the spirit, and become spirit mediums when they talk on behalf of the spirits. They may also participate when the singing and dancing takes place.

Zwilombo (plural), (*tshilombo* – singular) van Warmelo (1989:411) refers to *tshilombo* as "stranger spirit of a deceased (i.e. non–kin, not ancestral-*mudzimu*) neglected or rejected by its own, seeking to take possession of person and causing misfortune and sickness." It can reside in an object that becomes possessed by a bad spirit. By picking up or by touching the object, the residing bad spirit might then affect the one who touched the object. This can sometimes be mistaken for *malombo*. An example of such a bad omen is in the interview I had with Professor Ralushai 03/08/2011. He stated that Vho Nthangeni, his cousin, who was a woman, who did not have a child, one day was busy collecting firewood in the bush. She saw a shiny beautiful gourd and tried to pick it up but the gourd vanished. There after she became very ill. After some time when they consulted the healer, he indicated that she had a foreign *mudzimu (tshilombo)*. They then took her to a healer who trained her for *mudzimu wa matzhomane* (Shangaan ancestral spirits). Thereafter she became a very great healer.

Before documenting the songs, the following should be explained.

- The lyrics of the songs do not stick to one subject because the sower very often, but not always, changes the theme. For example in the song *Vho Madevha* (**Figure 4.4**).
- The themes in the songs are not related. The singing and the *tshele* rhythm helps the dancer to not make mistakes with the foot /beat work.
- When possessed, the *nyadala* some of the times speaks Tshikaranga, and some use the Ssssss sound.
- Possession and Morals: During the period of *malombo* session, the healers do not discuss lovemaking or show any indication of being interested in illicit intercourse. For example, according to Ralushai, at a casual drinking gathering a man may propose love to a *malombo* woman and all of a sudden, the woman

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who had shown no sign of having been possessed may start behaving like a possessed person. (Personal interview 28/08/2011).

- When possessed, the *nyadala* does not typically speak Venda but speaks Tshikalanga, and some use the Ssssss sound.

4.2.2. DISCUSSION OF *MALOMBO* SONGS

For the sake of clarity, the researcher has classified the *malombo* songs collected during fieldwork into the following categories according to the purpose for which they are used. The researcher established this classification after discussing the songs with different Vho Maine and *malombe*. Although they believed that there was no distinctive classification, some songs were being directed to the living in order to support their relatives, while other songs were sung to indicate to the healers that people are suffering and they are the solution. They also accepted that some songs might be sung by *mudzimu* after a person is possessed, like at Tshitomboni when Vho Maine Vho Nyawasedza was possessed, she started a *murundu* song '*hogo*', as a farewell song where *mudzimu* was singing.

The songs described in this chapter come from several different *malombo* events, some of the same songs were sung at different events with different *mato*. However, one version of the song was chosen for analysis. Songs that are sacred and/or secrative were not included here for public discussion.

With these factors in mind, the researcher shall group the songs according to the following criteria for analysis purposes:

Group 1: Songs that are directed to the healers

These are the songs by the *malombe* directed at the healers as an awakening call for their urgent assistance.

Group 2: Songs that are directed to the living

These are the songs summoning the living to observe some of the healing procedures as well as to pass on some important communication that can urge the ancestors to hasten their intervention.

Group 3: Songs that are sung by the possessed/*nyadala*/*mudzimu*

These songs are the songs that are sung by the possessed (*mudzimu or nyadala)*, sometimes presenting the message that is sent by the ancestors. When singing these songs they can even bid farewell to *malombe* as they would be leaving, returning to normalcy, an indication of the end of the trance state.

As far as the texts are concerned, most are cryptic and symbolic or metaphorical in their use of language. It is within this context and use of language that the ancestral spirits and *malombe* respond. The result is that those who are outsiders to the dance ritual will more than likely not understand what the participants and *vhadzimu* are communicating. The musicians, too, are unaware of the message that is being communicated, but they do know that if they do not sing powerfully the message will

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not reach its destination. The more powerfully they perform, the more rapidly the ancestral spirits will arrive.

Structurally, *malombo* music commonly consists of a lead singer and chorus structure by the respondants, and the melodic contour is influenced by the tone pattern of the *mato* text and its specific function.

Blacking (1976:28) states:

> … with [a] soloist 'sowing' (u -sima) the opening phrase and a chorus 'thundering' (u -bvumela) in response. Those thundering are in most cases the malombe, [who] respond by the refrain, while the main text is being sown by who is the leading soloist. In the songs in which this structure is present, the refrain will be indicated.

For the purpose of this thesis, in category 1 (4.2.3) three songs were transcribed, category 2 (4.2.4) two songs were transcribed, and in category 3 (4.2.5) two songs were transcribed. The songs chosen were the most commonly sung in many *tshele* ceremonies in each particular category.

In each category, several songs were described and analysed. The researcher chose songs in each category which were representative of the corresponding category. The researcher recognises that western notation can be viewed as culturally irrelevant as it freezes the *mato* process. However, the researcher also recognises the benefits of musical transcription for the purpose of this thesis. In order to truly represent the rich mato process, transcription is coupled with recordings as this more accurately represents the musical genre. The following are transcribed representations of each category: in category 1 four songs are discussed; in category 2 nine songs are discussed; in category 4 six songs are discussed. Additional songs in all the categories are supplied on the accompanying CD. All song texts are included with the acknowledgement that these texts are not concrete and that *mato* was applied in each example. Therefore, future recordings may have the same melody but different text, thus exemplifying the core of the *malombo* tradition that relies on the creative *mato* process. It is also acknowledged that these songs do not make up the entire repertoire of *malombo* songs, some songs are sacred and not permitted to be discussed in public, and others use language that is highly metaphorical and often untranslatable. Therefore, this core of nineteen songs was chosen as they accurately represent the melodies, categories of songs, and processes that enable the evocation of the ancestors through *malombo*.

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4.2.3. SONGS DIRECTED TO THE HEALERS

4.2.3.1. *Vho Maine ri a fa ra fhela tavhanyani* (CD Track 1)
You Maine hurry, we are all going to die
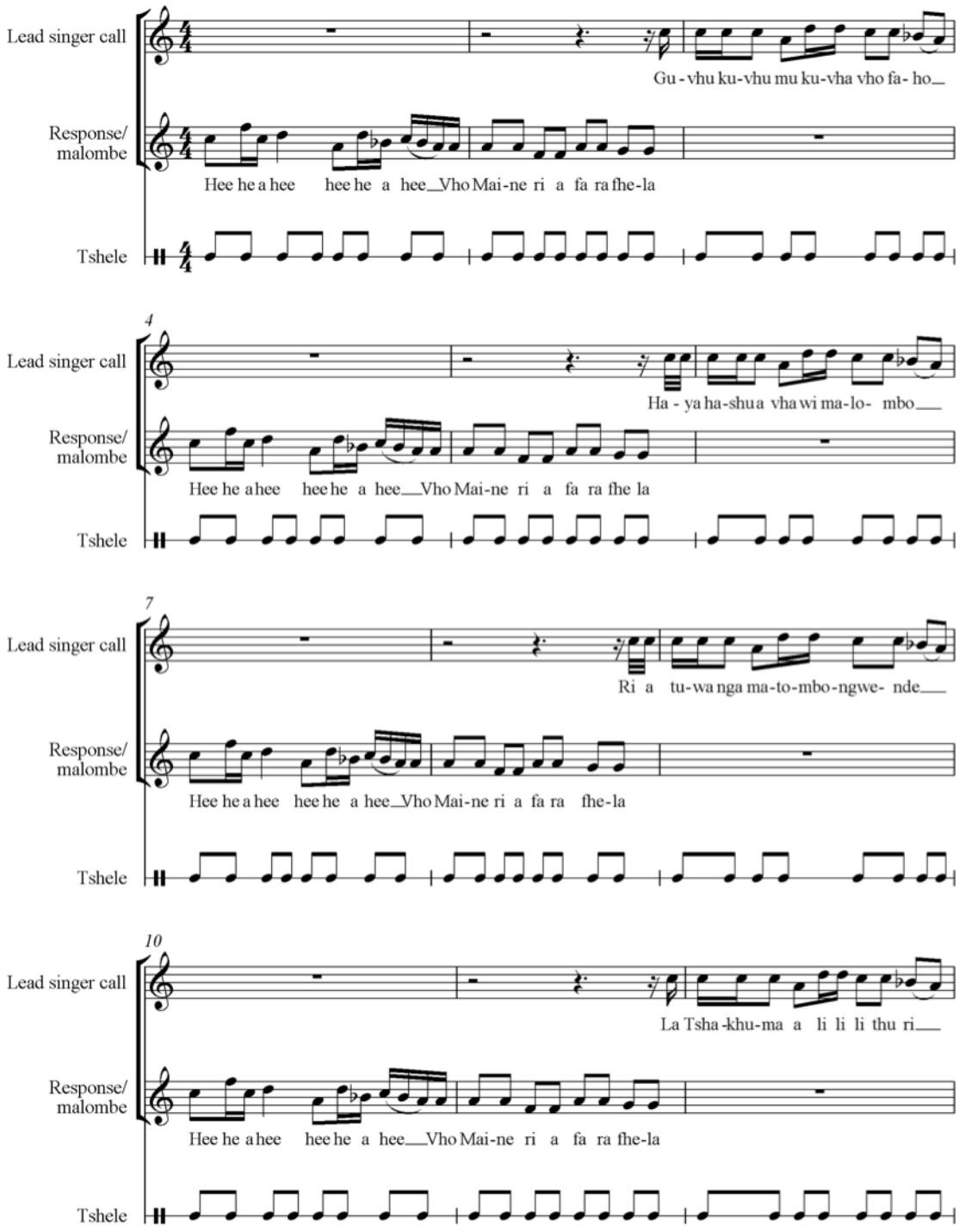
Figure 4.1: *Musical transcription of Vho Maine ri a fa ra fhela tavhanyani. Transcription by researcher, in collaboration with Marianne Feenstra.*

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The song established an introductory spiritual setting for the *malombo* ceremony the researcher witnessed at Tshakhuma at the *tshele* of Vho Maine Vho Nyawasedza-Netshifhire as well as in Tshitomboni at the *tshele* of Vho Maine Vho Masotsha. It contains many strategic repetitions as the family members are entreating Vho Maine to evoke their ancestral spirits speedily. The researcher has classified this song as the primary song because it has a text that is urging Vho Maine to hurry before it will be too late.

It is in this instance where the process of *mato* plays its part when *malombo* songs are sung. *'Mato'* is a significant term used to understand the pairing of music and dance in Vhavenda music. The word *mato* was recorded for the very first time by the researcher and has not previously been recorded in any Venda dictionaries, including the one written by N. J. Van Warmelo (1989).

As Blacking (1976:91) has indicated, "the 'growing' of the song here depends upon the soloist or the lead singer."

Analysis of text

It is typical that the melodies of the songs found in this thesis may sound off pitch, especially to people who are not Vhavenda. This is where *mato* plays its part. The structure of this song is a clear call and response. There is no overlapping.

Some of the songs become extended as the basic melody is being enlarged through the adaptation of *mato*. The leader may extend the song when needed, and may use the song to raise or address any issues that arise.

Culturally, in the Vhavenda context, no one owns the ancestors or is the sole heir to an ancestor; the ancestors are responsible for the wellbeing of the whole clan. That is the reason that some of the songs call for unity, to hasten the manifestation of the ancestral spirits.

The first session will always be danced by the patient sitting on their knees and dancing by swaying their hands and their head with the ultimate goal of enabling intangible ancestral presence.

The text of the song reveals how desperate the family is for ancestral assistance. It is clear that the *malombe,* or singers, cannot help themselves and therefore must communicate with their ancestral spirits. This communication can only be mediated by Vho Maine. The first song, as transcribed above, is sung for eight minutes in the ceremony that the researcher witnessed at Tshakhuma Vho Maine Vho Nyawasedza's home on 11/07/2004. The songs continued one after the other until 23:10 when there was a break in the ritual. During break the patient was taken to the consulting room where she was attended by Vho Maine with a member of the family. During that time, *Malombe* where busy having refreshments of African beer and soft drinks. The singing and dancing resumed at 01:10. After the break, Vho Maine urged the audience to sing in a livelier manner and also more powerfully in order to hasten the manifestation of the ancestral spirits.

The texts of the songs are complex because the leader may be referring to illness, but she might also be making reference to country locations. When questioned as to the

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origin of these references, one of the soloists, Vho Mutshekwa Madzunya, replied that, when she is calling, there are times that she might not be conscious about what she is saying because *vhadzimu* can "put words in her mouth." The other reason that lyric references might be unknown is that "it is long since I started attending the ancestral ceremonies, as our mothers would take us along when they went there for supporting Vho Maine during those times." The theme, however, remains the same: Vho Maine must hurry to facilitate ancestral intervention or the *malombe* shall die/perish.

After the initial call, one *malombe* took over, singing the words, while the refrain, sung by the other *malombe,* remained constant. This created a call and response structure, with the consistent response being *'Hee, huwee, aha ri a fa ra fhela'*.

1. Solo: *Vho-Maine ri a fa ra fhela tavhanyani*
You Maine hurry, we are all going to die,

Refrain: *Hee, huwee, aha ri a fa ra fhel*
Oh, what, yes we are all going to perish

2. Solo*:* *Na midzimu a vha tendi nayo;*
They are even refusing that the gods can have contact with us;

3. Solo*:* *Mifhululu a vha tendi nayo,*
They are refusing with their ululations (praises),

4. Solo*:* *Aha Vho – Maine ri a fa ra fhela*.
Oh, what, *Vho - Maine* we are all going to perish.

Line 1 is the first line of the desperate call for Vho Maine to come and rescue them or they will perish. The word *tavhanyani* means 'hurry up', an indication of the critical urgency of the matter at hand.

In line 2 'na' is a conjunction showing that they pleaded with intangible agencies for better health but in vain – *midzimu* are 'the ancestor spirits'. Na *midzimu a vha tendi nayo* is then a phrase telling us that, besides the problem of the medicines failing to cure the patient, even when we call for the help of the ancestors it could be difficult for them to arrive. A good example is when, on one occasion during a ceremony in Tshakhuma, it took nineteen hours waiting for the ancestors to arrive.

Lines 2 and 3 show how exhausting it was to wait for the invocation of the ancestral spirits. *Mifhululu* – ululation indicating cheers or joyous moments and happiness, which the ancestors seem to be withholding by delaying the joyous moment.

Mifhululu a vha tendi nayo – this phrase tells us that *malombe,* or singers, will not be hearing the ululations because the ancestral spirits are delaying.

In line 4 the lead singer is pleading that Vho Maine should hurry up the accomplishment of the invocation.

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Contextual Significance

The significance of the song is the acceptance on the part of the *malombe* that they are aware that if they do not address the illness they will perish. While singing the song, the patient gained momentum and started to dance, swaying the hands from side to side and to and fro. The *malombe* were making the same dance gestures as soon as the song started.

As is demonstrated in this example, music gives life, having the potency to infuse life into a lifeless but not dead body. The robust singing of the empathic crowd gives strength to the patient, and the communal support of the patient underscores the connection with the spirits that triggered her movements. Music is the vehicle, driven by a connection to the spiritual and ancestral realm.

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4.2.3.2. *Ramasaga mukalaha* (CD Track 3)
Ramasaga, the old man
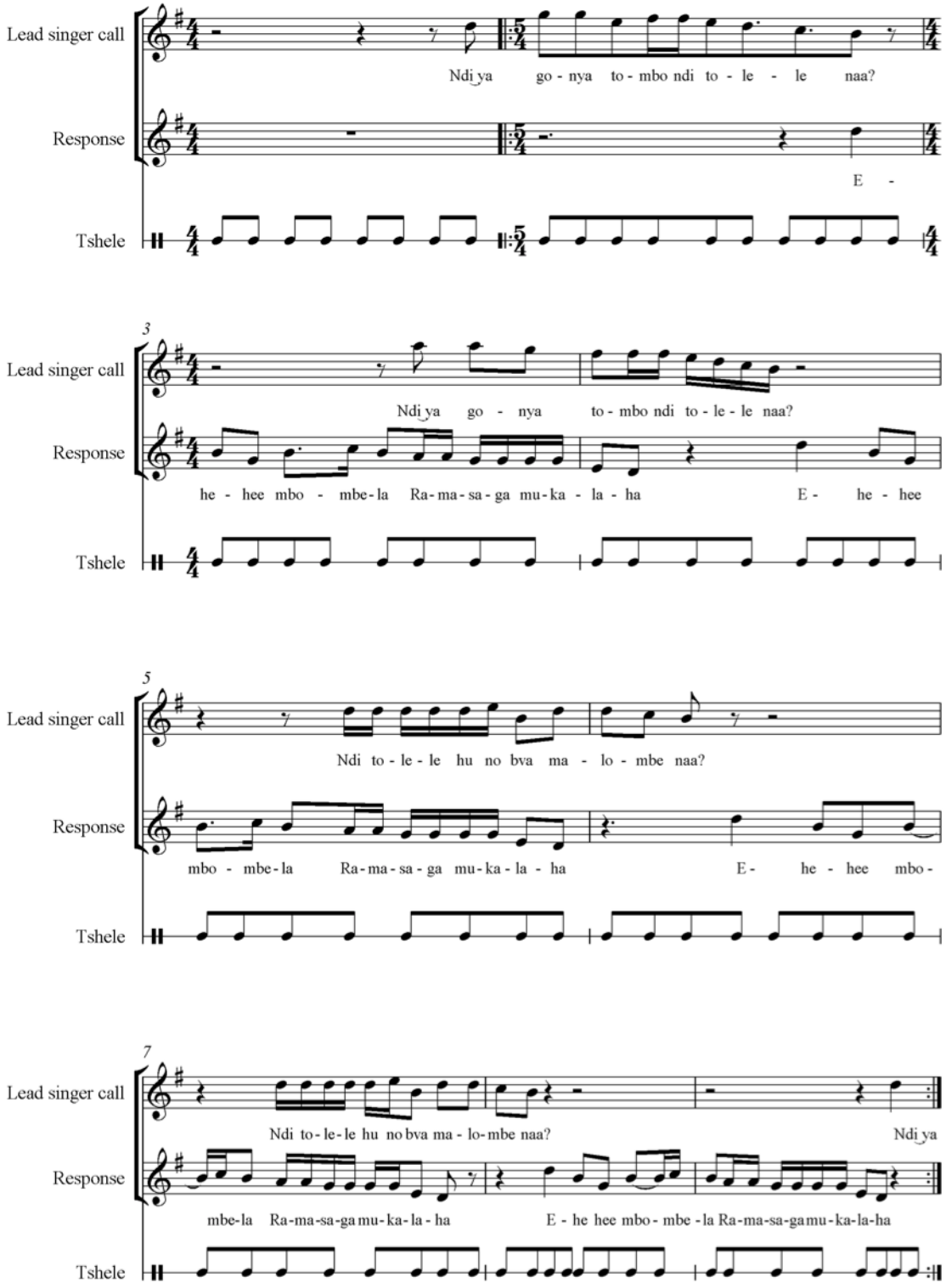
Figure 4.2: *Musical transcription of Ramasaga mukalaha. Transcription by researcher, in collaboration with Marianne Feenstra*

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The concept of *mukalaha* Ramasaga originated from the first store that was found at Ha Ramasaga (Palmary village). This was the first store to introduce mealie-meal packed in bags (*saga*) in the Vhavenda area. That is why in the song we hear of *Matshonono*, a Shangaan person who is also coming for mealie-meal. This was a new development at the time and that is why the *malombe* sower may have used *mato* to introduce this in her song.

The text is an historical account of Ramasaga, an old man who was well known for his powerful singing. Ramasaga was very proud that he was known to the white (Europeans); but in the same breath he was humiliated at Tshitandani, when he bowed to a white man.

It is important to note that in Vhavenda music, including *malombo* songs, a textual line could be sung twice. In order to shorten the songs, only one line of the lyric is written down here.

1. Solo: *Ndi a gonya tombo ndi tolele naa?*
Can I climb the stone and peep there?

Refrain: *Ahee he hee, Mbombela Ramasaga mukalaha*
Oh, Ye! Ye! Oh Mbombela Ramasaga, the old man

2. Solo: *Ndi a gonya tombo ndi tolele naa?*
Can I climb the stone and peep there?

3. Solo: *Ndi tolele hu no bva malombe wee*
To peep where the possessed dancers come from

4. Solo: *Ndi tolele hu no bva malombe wee*
To peep where the possessed dancers come from

5. Solo: *Ndi a gonya tombo ndi tolele naa?*
Can I climb the stone and peep there?

6. Solo: *Ndi a gonya tombo ndi tolele naa?*
Can I climb the stone and peep there?

7. Solo: *Ndi tolele hu no bva malombe wee*
To peep where the possessed dancers come from

8. Solo: *Ndi a gonya tombo ndi tolele naa?*
Can I climb the stone and peep there?

9. Solo: *Ndi tolele hu no bva malombe wee*
To peep where the possessed dancers come from

10. Solo: *Nwana wanga o vha tshinya mini wee?*
What did my child do to wrong you?

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11. Solo: *Nwana wanga o vha tshinya mini wee?*
What did my child do to wrong you?

12. Solo: *Ndi a tuwa vhusiku honohu wee*
I shall leave just in this night

13. Solo: *Ndi a tuwa vhusiku honohu wee*
I shall leave just in this night

14. Solo: *Ndi tshi tuwa a vha nga mmboni wee*
When I leave you won't see me

15. Solo: *Ndi tshi tuwa a vha nga mmboni wee*
When I leave you won't see me

16. Solo: *Ndi do tuwa nga 'matombo – ngwende' wee*
I shall leave through 'mato'mbo ngwende

17. Solo: *Ndi do tuwa nga 'matombo – ngwende' wee*
I shall leave through 'mato'mbo ngwende

18. Solo: *Nwana wanga ndi muthihi fhedzi wee*
My child is the only one

19. Solo: *Ndi a tuwa vhusiku honohu wee*
I shall leave just in this night

20. Solo: *Ndi tshi tuwa a vha nga mmboni wee*
When I leave you won't see me

21. Solo: *Vho vha vha tshi ri ngomani hu liwa'ni wee?*
What did you expect to eat at the *malombo?*

22. Solo: *Hu liwa nyumo na magwadi*
Only wild sap fruit and squashmelon

23. Solo: *Ndo tangana na* Matshonono
I met with Matshonono

24. Solo Matshonono *o bva* Luvuvhu
Matshonono was from Luvuvhu

25. Solo: Matshangana *ndi maphula ndevhe*
Shangaan people punch holes into their ears

26. Solo: Mutandanyi *ndi vho Raluvhimba*
Mutandanyi is the god Raluvhimba

27. Solo: *No fa nothe no fhela naa?*
Are you all dead and perish?

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28. Solo: Tshitandani *ndo khotha mukhuwa ahe*
Tshitandani is where I worshipped a European

29. Solo: *Ndi tshi mu khotha ndi mukhuwa wanga*
I worshipped him because he is my European

30. Solo: Tshitandani *ndo beba pholisa*.
Tshitandani (town) I carried a policeman (on my back)

The song has thirty solo/leader lines, with the refrain after each and every solo text.

The lyrics and melody will not change dramatically, but with *mato* there may be an expansion of the texts. The transcription has only taken lines 1, 2, 3 and 4, although the melody of each solo line is the same up to line 30.

Analysis of text

In lines 1, 2, 5, 6 and 8 the leader is repeating the same text, which is the same *mato* that is extending the song. Here the *malombe* is a question: 'Can I climb the stone and peep there?' meaning if I had the powers I will know where you are coming from and the distance of your journey, so that I shall know why you are delaying. These lines 1, 2, 5, 6 and 8 demonstrate the inquisitiveness of the patient to get a glimpse of what is happening on the other side of life. She metaphorically asks whether she should climb the rock to have a good view of the origin of the possessed dancers.

In lines 3, 4, 7 and 9 s/he is amazed at the presence of the dancers and would like to know more about their places of origin as well as their significance, more so because they seem to threaten the life of her child. On these lines the song goes further to compare the ancestral spirits of the Vhavenda and the Shangaan where it was indicated that the ancestral spirits of the Shangaan come from the water (Luvuvhu – a river). Note that the rattles accompany all the songs, this is why the dance was named after these rattles. The line 'to peep where the possessed dancers come from,' means I must know why the dancers are being possessed and what is it that changed their state. This is quiet an impossible question as the possessed will not remember what happened in the state they were possessed.

Lines 10 and 11 are also the same text, the soloist wonders what the dancers/*malombe* want to do with her child, who honestly did not do them any harm. After the repetition that lasted for a long time, the *nyadala* (ancestral spirit), in lines 12, 13 and 19, avails in a surprise arrival and indicates that she came for a short time for she will be leaving the same night: 'I shall leave just in this night'. The ancestor that possessed the patient is responding that he will leave the same night as the mission of availing himself to the possessed is accomplished.

In lines 14, 15 and 20 the ancestral spirit vows that when she leaves they will not see her: 'When I leave you won't see me.' According to an interview with Vho Mutshekwa on 18/05/2010: "as the ancestors are the air they cannot be seen nor be touched."

Line 16 and 17 are the same text: 'I shall leave through *matombo ngwende*. This is a difficult path to walk, but it is where the ancestor will be walking. The ancestral spirit

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is bidding farewell and giving the *malombe* the direction of the path that she will be taking when she leaves, i.e. she will take the *matombo - ngwende* route. According to an interview with Vho Mutshekwa on 18/05/2010:

> The route is at the foot of the Mangwele Mountain. Anyone taking this path should be aware of the shaky and slippery rocks on which people walk, so it would be very difficult for the patient to follow should the ancestral spirit disappear. *Matombo ngwende* is a reference to the path to a huge cave in the mountain in Tshakhuma called Mangwele in which the Vhavenda hid during the Zulu invasions of the late 1800s. To get to the cave, one has to go through an area with loose, slippery stones, making it very difficult to access. The entire area is known as *matombo ngwende* and it has very important historical and spiritual significance for the Vhavenḓa.

Line 18 'my child is the only one,' is where the ancestral spirit emphasizes the degree of love she has for the patient, whom she regards as the one and only child. 'What did my child do to wrong you?' This means my child is suffering and asks what did she do to deserve what is happening to her? *Malombe* were desperate that they then give a command and a question: "can't you see that I don't have another child?"

In line 21, after the question 'what did you expect to eat where the *malombo* dance takes place,' the answer emerges immediately on line 22: 'only wild sap, fruit and squash melon.' The metaphorical message is that the ancestral spirits arrive through endurance and hard work that can mean fasting; a full stomach does not make them arrive.

As arrival of the ancestral spirits was delayed, from line 26 until 30, the song was sung without repeating the texts so that the spirits would continue to hear music. The audience is hungry and this is why there are references to food and eating in line 22 in the text. The song represents a typical use of *mato*, where references are made to a current situation within the ritual.

The reference of Ramasaga carrying a policeman is an excellent example of the metaphorical use of language. Ramasaga did not physically pick up and carry a policeman. Rather, his singing at the *malombo* ritual was so powerful that even someone who was not part of the Vhavenda culture (like a policeman or a European; figures that started representing power, strength and foreignness in the indigenous culture) would be spiritually picked up and carried along by his performance presence. It is for this reason that he was a great man.

Contextual significance

The indication of *matombo–ngwende* reveals how difficult it could be for the ancestor spirits to arrive where the people are waiting for them.

With the *tshele* session, the *tshele* maintain a steady beat. Some *malombe* were playing two *tshele* at a time while others played only one. The combined rhythmic structure of the *tshele* depends on the energy that the singer exhibits, and the knowledge of the dance that he/she can display. Expertise plays a critical role as far as the shaking of the rattles is concerned. It is also noted that the ancestral spirits of

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the other *malombe* might avail themselves when the awaited particular ancestral spirit of the patient is delaying.

The relationship between *tshele*, voices, and the dance, that is the movement (swaying) of the hands, are harmonized, all controlling the tempo of the dance. Through observation, it was observed that increasing the tempo of the rattles gives energy to both the patient and the *malombe* to sing more powerfully. The energy of the singing and texture of the *tshele* play a major role in calling up of the spirits and exemplify compositional differentiation as per *mato* principles.

It was found that in Itsani village the song *Ramasaga mukalaha* was first sung up to the end and then more lyrics, which start from line 21 up to the end were added. Here, it also tells of how Ramasaga praised Mutandanyi as Raluvhimba, the high god of the Vhavenda people.

Another example of *mato* is found in the line recounting the meeting between Ramasaga and Matshonono, a man from Luvuvhu, who is identified as a Shangaan because the word in line 5 *maphula nḓevhe* indicates that he has holes punched in his ears: a mocking description that identifies the people that may be attending the ceremony who are foreigners to the Vhavenda. Such people cannot be allowed to join the ritual dance in which ancestral spirits are being evoked. This figure is not historical, but is included almost as incidental information: it is illustrative of who is entitled to dance.

The word *nyumo* – wild sap fruit in line 22, is a fruit that is poisonous, which is not edible. These words show that the gods can eat the things that the living may not eat. In other words no one knows what the ancestors eat. 'Squash melon' in line 22 is also a fruit that is not sweet like the watermelon, and is also not eaten by people. The phrase *ndo khotha mukhuwa* in line 8 is a metaphor, which instructs that I shall never come close to my enemy, I should avoid coming face to face with him. This is a type of *mato* where the singer demonstrates that he/she is so powerful that he/she is infused with ancestral capabilities, and can do impossible things.

Another phrase of interest is in line 30, *ndo beba pholisa*, which is a metaphor to demonstrate that I can carry the person who is well trained and very strong. It indicates the power of the *malombe*. This makes known the power that the ancestor spirits can give to their people/*malombe* to execute the duties that seem humanly impossible but are made possible by ancestral spirits.

In the real sense *u beba pholisa* is how even the policemen who are on duty could also be drawn into the dance in a way that makes them forget their jobs. The power of *malombo* can even make the powerful people partake in rituals first and conform to their duties later. According to *mato* process, the lyrics can be the same but the text changes according to the leading soloist. The leading soloist is also a *lilombe* who can communicate with the ancestors, her use of *mato* is informed by the spirits, the emotions and the event, and current issues.

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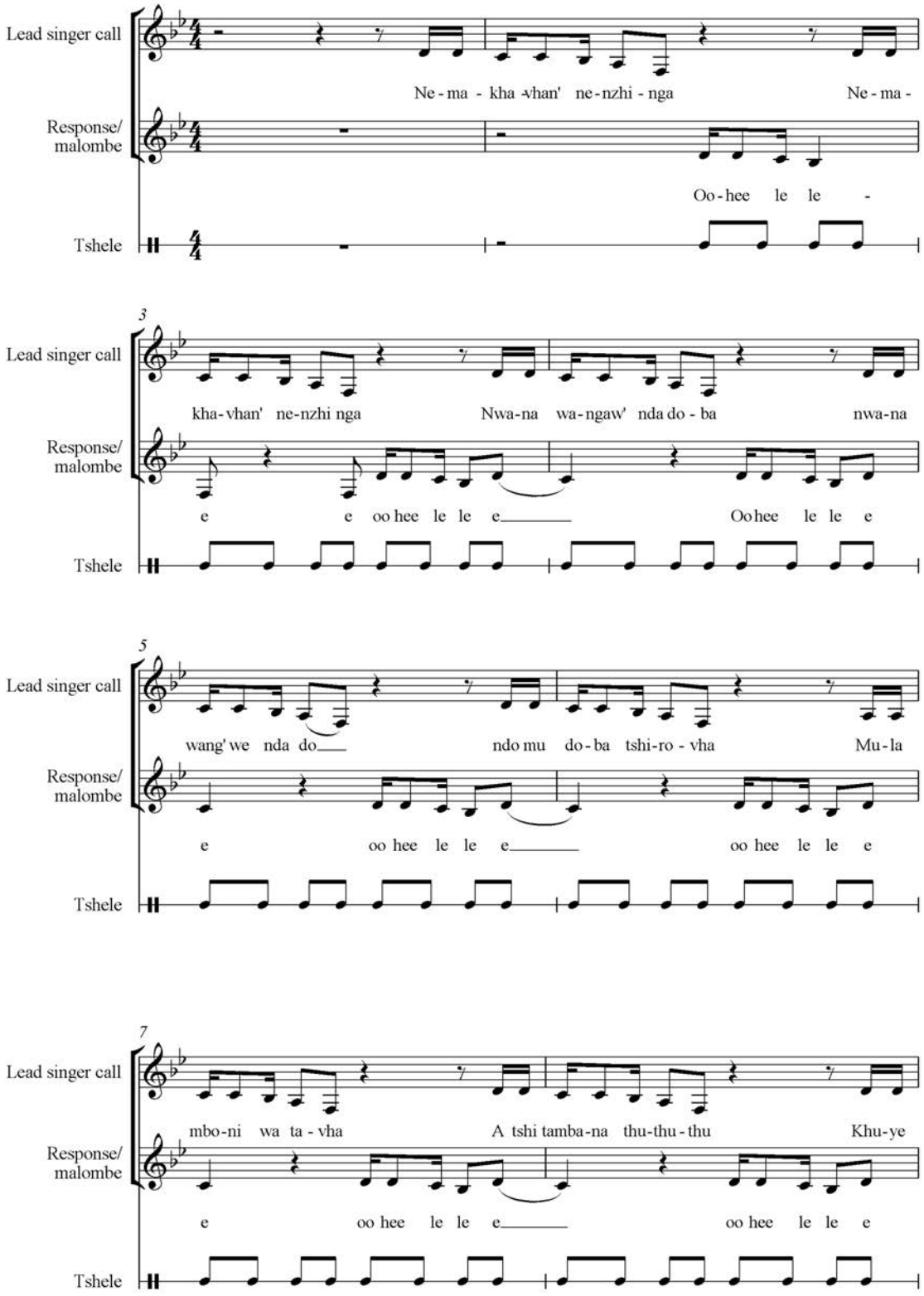
4.2.3.3. *Ṋemakhavhani Ṋenzhinga* (CD Track 5)

Nemakhavhani the neat one

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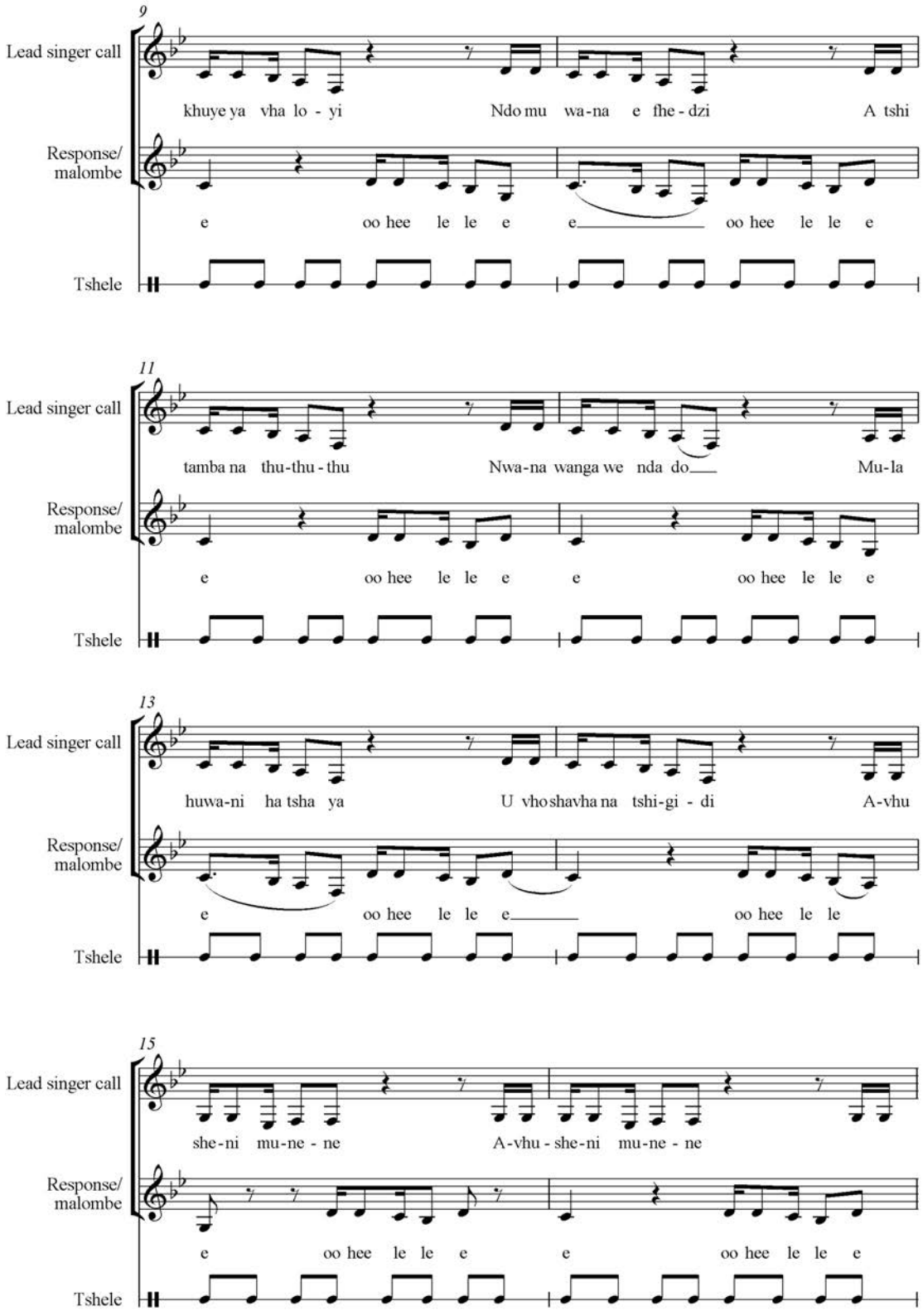

Figure 4.3: *Musical transcription of Ṇemakhavhani Ṇenzhinga. Transcription by researcher, in collaboration with Marianne Feenstra.*

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1. Solo: Ṋemakhavhani *Ṋenzhinga*
Ṋemakhavhani the neat one

Refrain: *Huwee le lee*
Yes Oh Yes

2. Solo: *Nwana wanga we nda doba*
My child whom I picked up

3. Solo: *Ndo mu doba Tshirovha*
I found him at the Tshirovha river

4. Solo: *Mulamboni wa* Tavha,
The river of sand

5. Solo: *A tshi tamba na thuthuthu*
Playing with a scooter

6. Solo: *Khuye – khuye ya vhaloyi*
Shake shake of the witches

7. Solo: *Ndo mu wana e fhedzi*
I found him naked

8. Solo: *Nwana wanga wa mutuka*
My child who is a baby boy

9. Solo: *Makhuwani ha tsha ya*
He no longer pays a visit to the reef (town)

10. Solo: *U vho shavha na tshigidi*
He is afraid of the rifle (gun)

11. Solo: *Avhusheni munene*
How are you the kind one

12. Solo: *Nwana wanga we nda doba*
My child whom I picked up

13. Solo: *Ndo mu doba* Tshirovha
I found him at the Tshirovha river

14. Solo: *Mulamboni wa* Tavha,
The river of sand

15. Solo: *A tshi tamba na thuthuthu*
Playing with a scooter

16. Solo: *Khuye – khuye ya vhaloyi*
Shake shake of the witches

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17. Solo: *Ndo mu wana e fhedzi*
I found him naked

18. Solo: *Nwana wanga wa mutuka*
My child who is a baby boy

19. Solo: *Makhuwani ha tsha ya*
He no longer pays a visit to the reef (town)

20. Solo: *U vho shavha na tshigidi*
He is afraid of the rifle (gun)

21. Solo: *Avhusheni munene*
How are you the kind one

Makhavhani is a village that is found near Tshakhuma village. Ne-Makhavhani means the owner or headman of the Makhavhani village. The word Ṋenzhinga, is made up of a prefix Ṋe – that means "the owner of," plus the suffix - *nzhinga* that is "neatness," implying a very clean and smart looking gentleman. Ṋemakhavhani Ṋenzhinga then means the owner of Makhavhani who is a very neat looking gentleman.

This song example is from the group of the songs sung in the middle of the night, when *malombe* were so tired waiting for the ancestral spirits to arrive that they randomly sang any song that the ancestral spirit might respond to. They commenced with the particular ritual at 20h48, and at about 00h23 they were still evoking the ancestral spirits from the *tshele* of Lukau (Tshakhuma) who were late in arriving. By their actions one was able to see that the participants were exhausted, tired, and some were even sleeping while others continued to call the ancestors.

Analysis of the text

Vho Sylvia started this song *Ṋemakhavhani Ṋenzhinga* to describe how they revere and value the ancestors.

Line 2: *Ṅwana wanga we nda doba* – 'my child whom I picked up' is a metaphor: picking up a person here means 'I made him to be my real child, I adopted him as my child.' This is why in line 3 he is giving us the place Tshirovha where Ṋemakhavhani was found.

Line 4 *mulamboni wa Tavha* means 'in the Tavha river.' The line of text implies that he was confused because he was living in the river rather than at his home because of the presence of the ancestral spirit.

Line 8 '*Nwana wanga wa mutuka,* 'my child who is a baby boy' and Line 9, *U vho shavha na tshigidi*, 'he is now even afraid of the gun,' further demonstrates abnormality. With the gentleman like Nemakhavhani, something unusual is going on, *makhuwani ha tsha ya* – 'he is no longer ready to go to his work in Johannesburg *(makhuwani*).' This is a sign of the ancestral spirit that possesses him, as the ancestors did not know about the modern things like towns and guns.

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Line 12, until the penultimate line of the song, is a repetition of line 2.

Contextual significance

When a person is chosen to be a healer by ancestral spirits there are some unusual things that happens to him/her that are visible to those who know him/her. Ṋemakhavhani was a gentleman who was avoiding dancing with the ancestral spirits', and so will no longer be able to continue with his work. Nothing seemed to interest him. The hidden message is that if you try to ignore the ancestral spirits calling you, you will never prosper, as they will interrupt or disrupt your life in an amazing way. The interruption of the ancestral spirits in his life was clear as the gentleman no longer wanted to go to town for work and was afraid of everything in town. Therefore, the song notes that if you dishonor the ancestors' call and disregard their wishes you will never prosper and you will be frustrated and be confused. Another example of this trope is the gourd seen by Vho Professor Ralushai's cousin as he became so ill until he accepted the spirits and was well again (Personal interview 15/06/2011).

This is a very bright and cheerful song and the voices, rattles and the lyrics blend together to encourage dancing. The dancing involving swaying of hands, sometimes it is fast and the music and rattles make hands swing up and around.

4.2.3.4. ***Vha (Vhakalanga) ni langane*** (CD Track 6)
(Vhakalanga) Come into an agreement

1. Solo: *Hee, vha langane*
Oh, they should discuss

Refrain: *Hee vha langane heee! ee, vha langane.*
Oh, they should discuss and reach an agreement.

2. Solo: *Vho Maine ni dzule ni langane.*
Vho Maine sit down and discuss.

3. Solo*:* *Khuuvha ni do vhona tshi laho nwana.*
Indeed you will see what has burdened the child.

4. Solo: *Ni do vhona tshira tshirambelwa.*
You will see the invitee monster.

5. Solo: *Vho Magodi thoho ndi ludongo.*
Vho Magodi, the head is hairless.

6. Solo: *Ndi ludongo nga u* la *govhole.*
It is hairless because of eating govhole.

7. Solo: *Hovhu vhusiwana ndi vhuhulu.*
This type of poverty is too much.

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8. Solo: *Nwana uyu o tou tshinya mini?*
What wrong did this child do?

9. Solo: *Vho Maine takuwani ni langane (hune midzimu ya khou da nga mivhili)*
Vho Maine stand up and discuss.

10. Solo: *Vhusiwana a ni vhu vhoni naa?*
Don't you see the poverty?

11. Solo: *Vhusiwana ndi vhuṅwe na ku fa.*
Poverty is the same as death.

12. Solo: *Vhakalanga ni langane,*
Vhakalanga, come to an agreement,

13. Solo: *Ni langane ni zukwa zukwa*
You should agree and collect five cents, five cents each,

14. Solo: *Ni zukwa zukwa* ri do *renga halwa*
Contribute five cents so we can buy African beer/brew beer

15. Solo: *Havha Vhakalanga ni langane*
You, Vhakalanga, come into an agreement

Analysis of the text

This version of *Vhakalanga and Vhomaine ni langane* was sung in Khubvi Muṱikini and in Tshakhuma communities. This song is a call to come together for an issue. Line 3 *ni do vhona tshi laho nwana* means when you are together you can consult and know what is troubling the child. Another phrase *tshi ḽaho*, means that 'there is no way that the child can be eaten by anything.' The ancestors are known as entities that have answers that will resolve the problem. This song summons all involved as parents, relatives and all worried about the illness of the child to come together and meet to agree about this serious issues to be investigated.

Line 4 *Ni do vhona tshira tshirambelwa – tshira* – the monster and *tshirambelwa* – invited by the evil people. *Tshira-tshirambelwa* is a euphemism because it is supposed to be a bad spirit who is invited by the evil people. Someone must have invited the unfavorable spirits, which is why we are suffering.

When the relatives and the healer come together, they will be able to identify the evil one when the patient will be possessed. The patient will be able to tell where the problem is coming from.

Line 5 - *Vho Magodi thoho ndi ludongo* – 'Vho Magodi, the head is hairless' and line 6 - *Ndi ludongo nga u la govhole* – 'It is hairless because of eating govhole,' concerns a rather humorous account that a certain Mr. Magodi's head is hairless because he consumed *govhole* (fermented marula juice). Here they want to warn the child about the monster, as he/she will see what will happen to them, much like what happened to

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Mr. Magodi.

Line 7 states that: *Hovhu vhusiwana ndi vhuhulu* – 'This type of poverty is too much.' The ancestors were asking what is the cause of this illness and that is the delay of the invocation of the ancestral spirits? The parents implore Vho Maine to come together with them to discuss the child's illness, as there seems to be two ancestral spirits in one person. They need Vho Maine to meet and to tell them what to do or to suppress the one spirit so as to deal with the first one accordingly. They are very poor; their poverty is like death and their confusion is great.

Line 8 speaks to concern about what is befalling the patient - *Nwana uyu o tou tshinya mini? ''*What wrong did this child do? They have more questions than answers, which is why they ended up resorting to handing over the child to the ancestors.

Line 9 - *Vho Maine takuwani ni langane,* 'Vho Maine stand up and discuss,' is an example of when the ancestors might be coming being more than one for one person. It is then that the family will beg the healers to come together for a negotiation with the ancestors to come one at a time, as having two ancestors that are different means it will be difficult to satisfy both of them at the same time. During this time the patient will become extremely violent and the swaying will be vigorous.

Line 10 is a question - *vhusiwana a ni vhu vhoni naa'* – 'don't you see the poverty?' This is a rhetorical question that does not have an answer. The leader is desperate as the ancestors are slow to manifest. The child is doing the best to cope with the assembled community of supporters but the ancestral spirits seem to be unresponsive.

Line 11 *vhusiwana ndi vhuṅwe na ku fa* meaning, 'poverty is like dying,' is a phrase that has words from the Kalanga language. *Ku fa* (Kalanga language), that is 'to die,' implies that the failure of a ceremony will result in regrets or the deterioration of the health of the patient. The same song was sung with different *mato* in another possession dance in Itsani village.

In this version, the song text indicates that *malombo* is not a personal event, rather a coming together by all clan members who share the same ancestral spirits with the patient. The financial requirement for the dance to be staged is onerous for *ḽilombe* (the possessed member of the clan). Because *ḽilombe* represents the entire clan whom she/he will serve, all clan members must be active participants and contribute some money towards the success of the healing induction ritual.

The word *Galanga* in the refrain indicates the 'Great north' where the Vhakalanga live. The ancestor spirits of the Vhavenda come from Vhakalanga. When the Vhakalanga help call on the ancestor spirits, the spirits will avail themselves without difficulties.

The word in line 13 *zukwa zukwa*, 'the contribution of five cents', and line 14 - *Ni zukwa zukwa ri do renga halwa* – 'contribute five cents so we can buy African beer/brew beer' refers to traditional brew and emphasizes how essential the drink is to the ritual. The beer is made of the products from the indigenous seed, sorghum, healthy food given to the ancestral spirits, as an indication of honour by the living and in return, waiting for the healthy life.

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The final line, *Havha Vhakalanga ni langane* – 'You, Vhakalanga, come into an agreement' marks the coming together of the clan members and supporters. This indicates that it is needed for the ancestor spirits to avail themselves realizing the unity displayed by their clan. As such, the ancestors can come to their rescue immediately. The, phrase *Vho Maine ni dzule ni langane* tells that the meeting is specifically for the healers who can resolve the problem that there is a patient who has two different ancestors wishing to take control.

The *mato* process has resulted in variations in the text, but the basic meaning and melody remains. This song summons all involved in the illness of the child to come together and agree on a course of action.

Contextual significance

Sometimes when the *malombe* call the ancestral spirits to manifest, the healer discovers that the ancestral presence is delayed because there are two ancestral spirits who wish to come out at the same time, which is impossible. This is where the song *vha langane* (come to an agreement) emanates from. The healer has to consult and give direction about the first ancestral spirit to make way for only one spirit. During this song, the healer will incense in a clay dish to physically separate the ancestral spirits with smoke so that they come at different times.

A difficult part of a healing ceremony is when the two ancestral spirits are vastly different, a *tshilombo* - unfavorable spirit, and a favorable - *mudzimu* spirit. This is a difficult situation for the healer to deal with. This is why there is a struggle to call the real ancestral spirits for protection against the harm of the undesired spirit. It is only the healers that can deal with the emerging, and sometimes clashing, ancestral spirits.

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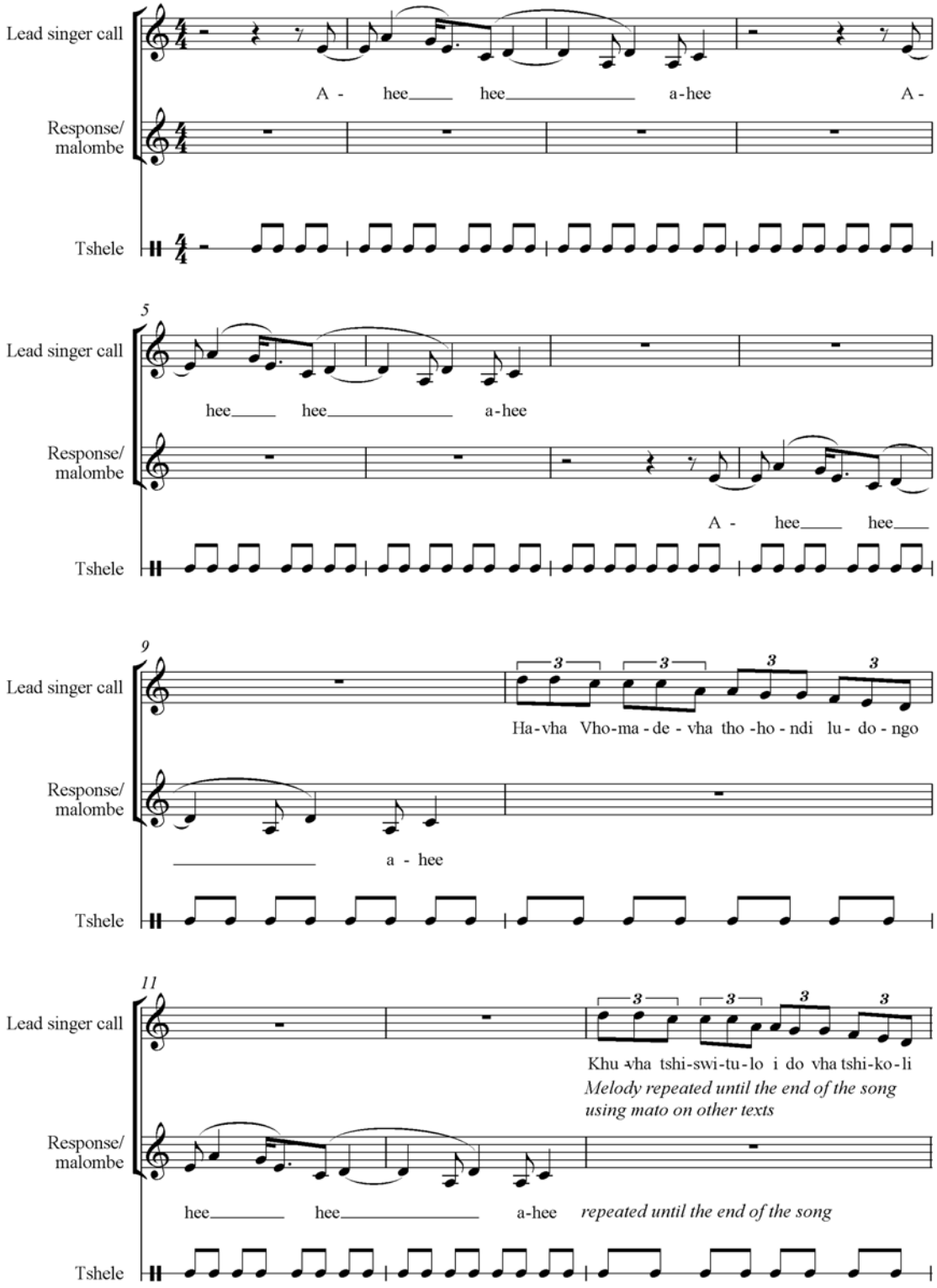
4.2.4. SONGS DIRECTED TO THE LIVING

4.2.4.1. *Vho Madevha* (CD Track 7)

Name of a man (Mr. Madevha)

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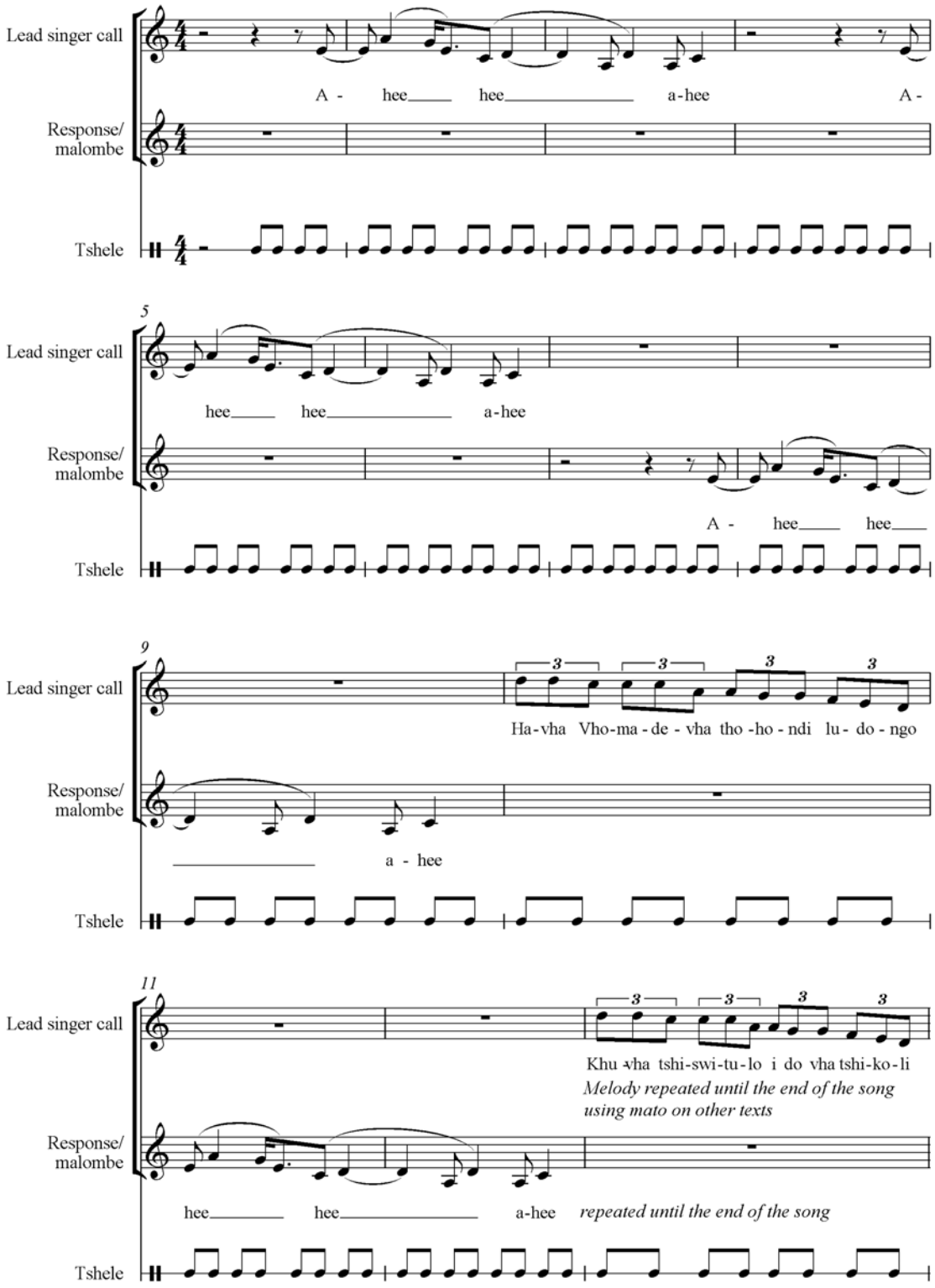
Figure 4.4: *Musical transcription of Vho Madevha. Transcription by the researcher, in collaboration with Marianne Feenstra.*

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1. Solo: *Vho Madevha thoho ndi ludongo.*
Vho Madevha, the head is a clay frying pan.

Refrain: *Ahee ahee hee, hee zwi a vhavha*
Oh, oh yes, it is painful.

2. Solo: *Khuuvha tshiswitulo I do vha tshikoli.*
Indeed for lunch mealies will be served.

3. Solo: *Nwana u a lila Vho Mme vho ya'fhi?*
The child is crying – where has the mother gone?

4. Solo*:* *Vho ya mitangani vho ya u ka tshikoli wee!*
She has gone to the mealie fields to fetch mealie cobs!

5. Solo: *Khuuvha vha tshi vhuya vha mu khophele vho.*
Indeed when she returns she should break her a piece of cob.

6. Solo: *Ro kanda muhavho wa mavhele maswa.*
We have put our feet where new mealie - cobs are ready.

7. Solo: *Khuuvha ngugubane I a bwa migodi.*
Indeed a determined person can dig up a mine.

8. Solo: *Khuuvha vhasidzana imani ri lingane.*
Indeed girls stand up and measure our heights.

9. Solo: *Vhasidzana kha ri ye ri kha*dane.
Girls let us shake hands.

10. Solo: *Ri yo luka mulala nga temba.*
So we could knit with a piece of the mulala plant with the temba.

11. Solo: *Mutshundu*di *zwidudu – mutembe, vhakegulu.*
The river Mutshundudi lined up with clay pots.

12. Solo: *Vho Madevha thoho ndi ludongo.*
Vho Madevha the head is hairless.

13. Solo: *Ndi ludongo nga u nwa govhole.*
It is hairless because of drinking thick juice at the bottom of the *marula* fruit.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, during the course of this field research, it was found that there are some songs that may sound similar but have different texts because they originate from different areas and under different circumstances. During the *mato* process, some texts created during a specific ceremony could in fact refer to special circumstances in the wider community affairs. Vho Madevha is a clear demonstration of such a song.

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This iteration of this song was recorded during a ceremony on 12/05/2008 at Ha Mutsha village.

Analysis of the text

In line 1 the words *thoho ndi ludongo* mock the lonely male amongst the women. The head that is the 'clay frying pan' refers to his head as being hairless due to his consumption of fermented, marula juice.

In line 2 we have the answer to the problem of getting food. Vho Madevha is a man who is encountering problems. Food seems to be scarce and as such he imagines eating grilled corn as the main dish for lunch.

In lines 3 to line 5 all of a sudden the ancestor started asking for the child's mother as the child is crying and she wonders where the mother might have gone. Possibly, the child is crying because he is hungry as some women decided to go to the garden to fetch corncobs so that they could eat during a break in the proceedings. These lines are a sign that the *malombe* community must share the corn as they cannot eat the typical food. In actual sense the mother has gone to *malombo* dance that is why she is missing.

Line 6 'we have put our feet where new mealie cobs are ready.' The *malombe* cannot eat any new fruit or any newly planted crop before they have the ritual completed first. This line is telling us that the *malombe* were happy as the new crops, like mealie cobs, will be enjoyed peacefully. This is a promising year with a good harvest, as the fields are promising to yield the first mealies. The hardworking ones shall reap more from their lands. Vho Madevha advised the girls to realize that they should strive to work harder and achieve more in life, so that they will be able to make enough for their families.

Line 7 - *Khuuvha ngugubane I a bwa migodi* – 'indeed a determined person can dig up a mine' means that the patient who is dancing and waiting for the arrival of ancestral spirits, is like a person who is digging up a mine. This demonstrates that it is not easy to dance *malombo*.

In line 8 and line 9 the girls are further invited to shake hands with him as a sign of blessing them during the harvest season.

In line 10 the singer would like us to know that, although it is difficult to knit the *mulala* (wild banana plant) threads using the *temba* tool, one has to do it to avoid hunger.

In line 11 the singer shows the urgency of the matter as people do not seem to take it seriously by showing how women who use the pots along the Mutshundudi river leave them there for the use of others – demonstrating how to share with others.

During this particular event, the arrival of the ancestral spirits was unduly delayed and many questions were asked concerning this until 03 h 05 in the morning when the ancestral spirits arrived. Lines 12 and 13 are a repetition of lines 1 and 2.

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Contextual analysis

The song is an awakening call for those who take *malombo* and *tshele* for granted. The songs demonstrates that one of these days they will be sorry, like the man Madevha whose head turns to be like a clay frying pan, for expecting women to give him fermented marula without going to work. This is an indication of the problems that can evoke bad things in life because the ancestral spirits are undermined.

4.2.4.2. *Mbanzhe Vhakoma* (CD Track 9)
Marijuana Headman
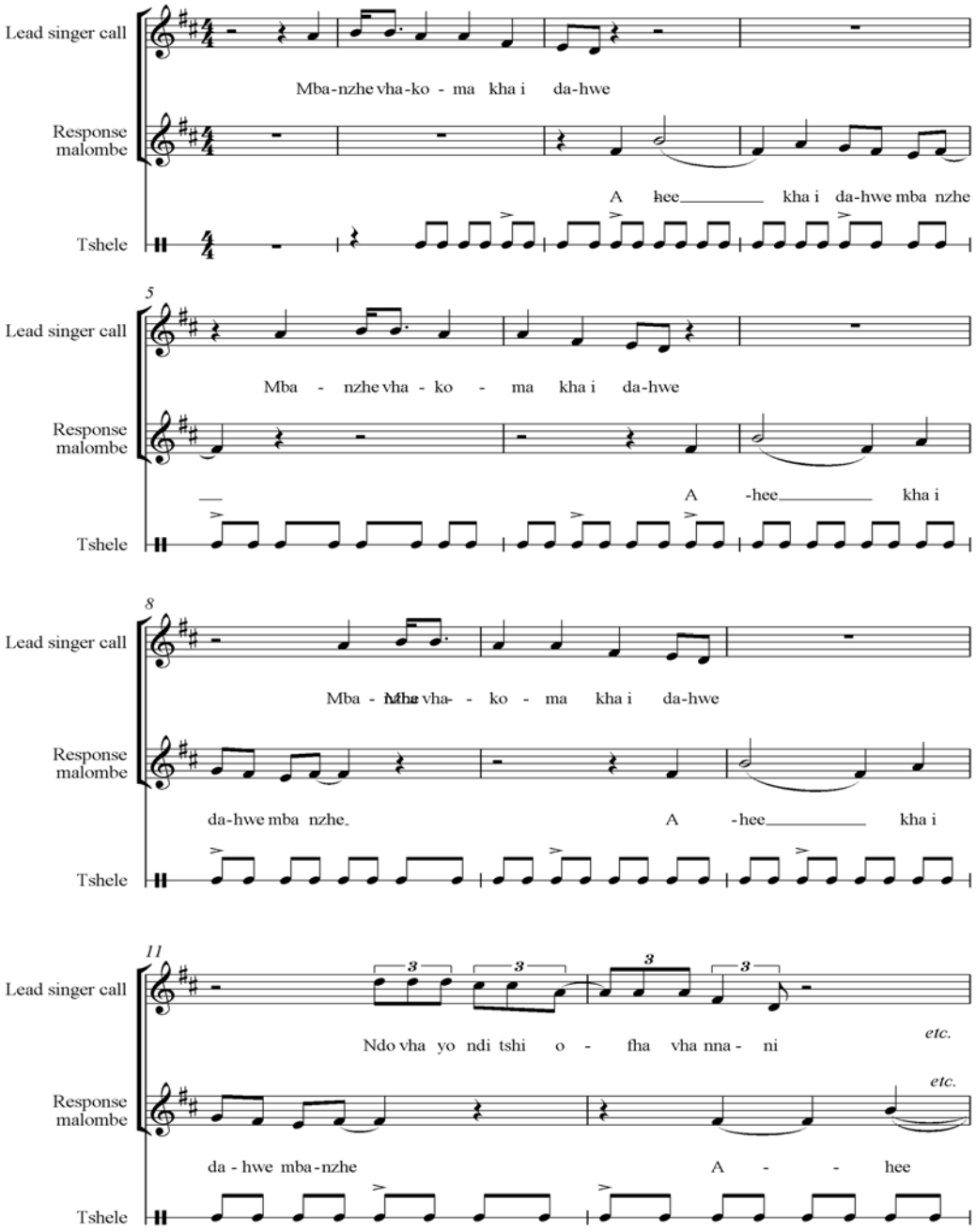
Figure 4.5: *Musical transcription of Mbanzhe Vhakoma. Transcription by researcher, in collaboration with Marianne Feenstra.*

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1. Solo: *Mbanzhe Vhakoma kha I dahwe*
Headman let marijuana be smoked

Refrain: *Aa ahee kha i dahwe mbanzhe*
Oh – Yes, let it be smoked marijuana

The call and refrain are repeated five times before the other solo lines can be sung.

2. Solo: *Ndi do daha na Vho Nevuwari.*
I shall smoke with Vho Nevuwari

3. Solo: *Kha vha dahe ri vhone haa hee!*
Do smoke let us see

4. Solo: *Tshirongana ndi'we mbidzeleli*
Tshirongana (copper wrist string) you are the caller

5. Solo: *Kudya kwa vha vea kupakula (Kalanga)*
Eat little and put some food aside

6. Solo: *Ngoho, ngoho Lowani o fa naa?*
Truly, truly it is that Lowani has passed away?

7. Solo: *Tenda o fa e mukhuwa*
As long as she died being a European

8. Solo: *Mbanzhe Vhakoma kha I dahwe*
Headman let marijuana be smoked

9. Solo: *Ida u vhone dembe nne ndi vhona'ni*?
Come and see miracles, what do I see?

10. Solo: *Ri vho do fa vhulenga sa phala*
We could as well die being unaware like a buck.

11. Solo: *Mbanzhe Vhakoma kha I dahwe*
Headman let marijuana be smoked

12. Solo: *Madandila kulila ndi kwa'ni? (Kalanga)*
Madandila why are you crying?

13. Solo: *Nne ndi tuwe ndi ye haya hanga*
Let me leave and go to my own home

14. Solo: *Mbanzhe Vhakoma kha I dahwe*
Headman let marijuana be smoked

15,16. Solo: *Lo kovhela Vho Khotsimunene.*
The sun has set dear uncle.

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17. Solo: *Mbanzhe Vhakoma kha I dahwe*
Headman let marijuana be smoked

18. Solo: *Madandila kulila ndi kwa'ni? (Kalanga)*
Madyandila why are you crying?

Analysis of the text

In this song, the ancestral spirits were already in control of the possessed. The Kalanga language spoken in-between is an indication of the presence of *makhulu* (this is another name for *nyadala*), which means granny, the grandmother or grandfather of the people.

Marijuana was a traditional drug/herb that was known historically, before the arrival of the missionaries, and was used as an energizer, a sign of happiness for those who smoked it.

The song tells us how happy the ancestral spirits were because of the powerful music they heard. This is why they compare their happiness with the happiness of a man who is smoking marijuana. Marijuana is a metaphor for a state of extreme of happiness. *Mbanzhe* is a very old plant that is said to cause a man to laugh and behave erratically so that he must be taken to the missionary house-jail. The singers urge Vhakoma, who is a messenger of the chief, to smoke it because the songs will be more powerful. When the music is powerful the *malombe* feel energetic. According to Vhavenda, *mbanzhe* (marijuana) was treated like any tobacco because whoever smoked it was harmless, jolly and energetic.

Vho Mutangwa Zanyele started this song at 02h14 during the *tshele* held at Vho Mavis's home. Vho Mutangwa started the song to jubilate after the invocation of the ancestral spirits became successful and everybody was in very high spirits.

Line 1 is repeated in lines 8, 11, 14 and 17 as an indication that it is so important to make the ancestors rejoice by smoking this *mbanzhe*/marijuana.

Line 2 *Ndi do daha na Vho Ṋevuwari* – 'I shall smoke with Vho Ṋevuwari goes further by indicating that Vho Ṋevuwari is the one he would like to smoke with. If they feel like they have smoked marijuana, they will be able to dance energetically.

Line 3 *Kha vha dahe ri vhone haa hee!* – 'Do smoke let us see' is a way of mocking those who cannot compete with him on the styles of smoking *mbanzhe*. This is why he is inviting them to smoke and let us see.

In line 4 *Tshirongana ndi'we mbidzeleli* – 'Tshirongana (copper wrist string) you are the caller' Nyadala would like to show that even when she no longer wants to dance, the ancestor bangle calls and there is no chance of denial. At last Nyadala would like to be given her *tshirongana* (copper wrist string) that can strengthen the relationship between herself and her ancestral spirits. *Tshirongana* is a symbol that shows everyone that a person is having *midzimu* (ancestral spirits).

In line 5 *Kudya kwa vha vea kupakula*, a Kalanga sentence, he cautioned others that food should be eaten with caution and it should not be consumed all at once – some

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should be left for the next time. During an interview with Vho Mutshekwa (Personal interview 18/07/2009), she indicated that *malombe* are caregivers. This was demonstrated during ceremonies at Tshitomboni and Tshakhuma Lukau, after the convocation, *nyadala* distributed *fola* (snuff) among the *malombe* and other people. By so doing I concluded that they are fond of sharing what they have when it is needed. It is necessary to emphasize that offering snuff to the ancestors is a very essential element of divination and healing processes.

The question in line 6 *Ngoho, ngoho Lowani o fa naa?* translates to 'truly, truly is it that Lowani has passed away?' He wonders if Lowani (a healer) has truly passed away. In line 7 Nyadala is happy that by the time of his death he was already a *mukhuwa* (translates literally to mean white man, but also refers to someone having the status of a white man). The term *mukhuwa* here refers to a person who is rich and has everything, according to local impressions of white people. Therefore, Lowani was very rich because of his work.

Line 9, *Ida u vhone dembe nne ndi vhona'ni*?, 'come and see miracles, what do I see?' invites others to come and watch the magic being witnessed by *nyadala* for them to realize that he is not mad. He wishes to demonstrate that when intangible spirits possesses one there is a significant change in behavior. That is why in line 10 he cautions that he does not want to die like a buck, which can be trapped-to-death without knowing.

In line 12 and 18 he asks *Madandila* why he is crying. *Madandila* is the name of a bird. These birds are taken as extraordinary. If they fly in a round circle, it is interpreted as a sign that something bad is about to happen. If the chief can summon Vho Makhadzi to perform the ritual of *u phasa* (spitting water for the ancestors) everything would become normal again. Why does he not just accept the position with which he is entrusted as a healer? He pleads with those who wield power over the patient to release her so she can go back to her own home. She yearns to find peace with herself in the caves.

In line 15 the healer informs his father's younger brother that the sun has now set. Something has to be done as the drums are calling. This is an awakening call that all *malombe* should take turns in dancing to support the patient in calling her ancestral spirit.

Contextual analysis

The song *mbanzhe vhakoma* is a mockery song. The 'sower' is a lady/woman who is worried about her aged husband's excessive jealous vigilance over her when he can no longer satisfy her zeal in bed. Hence in lines 12 and 18 she asked herself: 'Why are you crying Madandila?' The hidden message in the song is that the lady is inviting the husband to come and dance this unusual dance in bed, where the husband must act like he has smoked marijuana. He must be fit in bed rather than be jealous without any meaningful action in bed.

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4.2.4.3. ***Mmbwa yanga I pfi Vhalutani***[1] (CD Track 11)
My dog is called Vhalutani

This song was sung at Tshitomboni for the tshele session at Vho Maine Vho Musetsho (05/2008). Blacking also made recording of this song (Blacking 1995:190-191), although because of the process of *mato* there are slight differences in the text.

1. Solo: *Mmbwa yanga I pfi Vhaluṱani:*
My dog is called Vhaluṱani:

Refrain: *Ahee hee ahee*

2. Solo: *Nṋe vha no luṱa vha luṱanye nne,*
Let those people who want to fight create their discord,
3. Solo: *Nga tshanu khe ni sa pfani ha*
Why are you not united by yourselves?

4. Solo: *Inwi ni nanela mutsinda e si shaka.*
You are worried about the foreigner who is not your relative.

5. Solo: *Vhahulwane vhanga, ngoma madambi,*
My lords ngoma is for sickness,

6. Solo: *Hu netamalombe, matsige ha neti;*
The (possessed dancers) are tired, the master drummer is not tired;

7. Solo: *Ngoma dzaṋu dzi sa pfumbi dzi na'ni?*
Why don't your drums sound better?

8. Solo: *Ndo doba tshilombo, vhahulwane vhanga,*
I picked up a troubled ancestral spirit, my lords,

9. Solo: *Hu anda mazwila, ndele a dzi andi,*
There is too much careless singing, and not enough order in the singing,

10. Solo: *Ṯhangu yanga yo wa murorwana:*
My divining bone has fallen to show murorwana:

11. Solo: *Iyani Ngweṋani ha Vho Raḽiṋala!*
Go to Ngweṋani to the traditional healer Raḽiṋala!

12. Solo: *Ndo tambula ndo wa nga dekenya.*
I suffered I have fallen on my hip.

Analysis of the text

A dog is a symbolic animal to the Vhavenda because it lacks property and needs to be supported by the owner all the time. Hence the Vhavenda proverb *u tshi fuwa muthu u*

[1] This song can also be found in Blacking 1995:190–191.

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range u fuwa mmbwa, that is, 'if you intend to effectively rear and bring up a person you must start by rearing a dog.' A dog is used as an experiment in life for learning how to take care of others. When Vhavenda families have differences, it is revealed through the ironic names given to their dogs.

In this particular song, the dog's name *Vhaluṱani* indicates that there are problems that are supposed to be ironed out among the family members.

In line 1 the name *Vhaluṱani* symbolizes that these people are always in conflict and fighting amongst themselves. This ironical expression tells the family members how someone is feeling about their discord.

In line 2 the woman indicates that those who perpetuate conflict should raise it with her for resolution.

In line 3 *Nga tshanu khe ni sa pfani ha*, 'why are you not united by yourselves', the lady is worried that the family is not united, yet they are uncomfortable when outsiders do not take them seriously. According to the woman, unity is demonstrative of strength.

In lines 5 to 7 she focuses on the drums, meaning the *malombo* dance. To her elders, her ancestral spirits, she talks of the drum as magical, as it brings healing to the sick. Through observation, she realizes that the dancers are the ones who become tired and not the drummer. In a way the drummer cannot afford to become tired because he is being paid. If he does not perform well, they will not hire him again. In line 5 she questions the poor state of the drummer's drums, as they are not sounding as energetic as are expected. Then a rhetorical question follows: 'why is it so?' she asks.

In line 8 she complains that she has picked up a troublesome and stubborn ancestral spirit. These complaints are directed to her supportive ancestors so that they can help her to overcome the stubborn ancestral spirit.

In line 9 she further complains in this song that there seem to be too many careless people who are not focused and are less devoted to the ceremony. That is why she thought of the song *mmbwa yanga vhaluṱani*, to inspire the commitment of the *malombe*.

In line 10 she is perturbed by a bad omen when her divining bone fell, it indicates havoc. It prognosticates looming troubles. "What would this mean?" she wonders.

In line 11 she requests that people should travel all the way to Ngwenani to consult with the famous traditional healer by the name of Raḽiṋala to help her with this troublesome ancestral spirit.

Contextual significance

Mmbwa symbolizes an animal that is unbearable, if it vomits it can eat the vomit. To be able to keep this type of animal is not easy. Hence the proverb *u tshi fuwa muthu, ranga nga mmbwa* – 'before taking people under your patronage, try by a dog.' The art of handling people can be learnt (Van Warmelo Dictionary 1989:62).

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Caring for a dog is an indication of patience and dedication of the person who is willing. He/she uses the dog to indicate that if they care, like caring for dogs, the ancestral spirits will unveil themselves.

In the final line 12 she complains of suffering from deep pains that originated from her fall at the moment of being possessed, which resulted in a sprained hip. How is she going to dance with this pain? But amazingly *nyadala* stands up and is leaping - *u ṱudza,* and starts to give snuff to the *malombe* as a sign of reconciling with them.

4.2.4.4. *Iḓani ni do vhona thevhele mmembe* (CD Track 12)
Come and see the pouch, mmembe

This song indicates that you must be in full communion with your ancestral spirits in order to become a healer as only your ancestral spirits may guide you in handling the situation. It is like magic, some will return from the trance merely healed, while some will return as future healers (after having undergone the proper training), as well as healed. If the proper channels are not duly followed, you could become mentally disoriented. It is more advantageous to follow and listen to the language of your ancestors and then you may become a genuine healer.

1. Solo: *Ni do vhona dzi vho nga madambi,*
You will see, they now appear like magic,

Refrain: *Idani ni do vhona thevhele mmembe.*
Come and see the pouch mmembe.

2. Solo: *Alilali tsho no vha nanga naa?*
Is Alilali already a healer?

3. Solo: *Tsho vha tshinanga tsho lafha vhangana?*
He has been a petty healer and healed how many?

4. Solo: *Tsho vha tshinanga tsho lafha mashonzha?*
He has been a healer and healed the mopani worms?

5. Solo: *Zwa midzimu zwi dina henefha,*
Gods' affairs are troublesome when it comes to this point,

6. Solo: *Idani ni do vhona thevhele!*
Come and see the pouch Mmembe.

7. Solo: *Miluwani la Vho-Rasimphi*
Miluwani of chief Rasimphi

8. Solo: *Vhahulwane vhanga nne ndi vho do fa*
My lords, I will eventually even die,

9. Solo: *Ndi vho do fa nga nzhele madambi:*
I will die because of the knowledge (magic)

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10. Solo: *Ngoma dzanu dzi nea magome*
Your drum (songs) is giving me laziness in the knees.

11. Solo: *Thevhele ya mme-anga.*
The divining pouch of my mother.

12. Solo: *Tshinani, malombe!*
Dance, malombe!

13. Solo: *Rine ri malombe a tombo la tshai.*
We are malombe of the four cornered stone.

14. Solo: *Lidzani mutunwa ndi u hwe*
Play the thungwa drum so that I can hear it.

Analysis of text

In line 1 there is a phrase *'dzi vho nga madambi'* – 'they now appear like magic', this refers to a healer who is inadequately trained.

In line 2 there is a word *'tsho'* that is a diminutive, which is referring to the petty healer like Aḽilali. Aḽilali was not properly trained but then announced that she was a healer.

In line 3 the word *'tshiṅanga'* is a diminutive for a healer that also indicates fears about a healer who cannot execute any of the rituals. The song thus cautions against charlatans in the profession, as a healer is not trained overnight. In line 4 the phrase '*tsho lafha mashonzha*? – 'He has been a healer and healed the mopani worms?' is a rhetorical question because one cannot heal mopani worms. In other words, she is not a real healer as she has no divining bone. All these are the *mato* of the leader or soloist to motivate the group so that it can become energetic.

In line 5 the *malombe* indicates that the work of the ancestral spirits trouble some as it needs dedication from both oneself and the family members.

Certain songs recorded as a part of this research are similar to ones documented by both Van Warmelo and Blacking, however, the meanings of the lyrics are the same but with the difference in *mato*. This is clear in this recording as the song meaning remains the same as one recorded by Blacking, however the use of *mato* changes the melody, timing, and lyrics. A version of this song, *Iḓani ni do vhona thovhele Mmembe,* is listed by Blacking (1995:192). This is an indication that these songs, in general, have been used over many years to invoke the ancestral spirits. According to one of the healers interviewed Vho Neluvhola: "*malombo* has existed from antiquity" (Personal interview 15/06/2011).

In this song, *ḽilombe* indicates that she is concerned that the quality of the music is not up to the standard needed for the ancestral spirits to avail themselves. That is why she sings that she may die; it would be due to the inadequacy of the musicians, they must sing energetically. If the singers delay the process, she will not be able to get her mother's divining pouch; in other words, she will not be able to become a healer. The performers rallied to her plea. As the tempo and power of the music increased, she

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became possessed and included words from the Kalanga language. As the music became more powerful, it was possible for *ḽilombe* to communicate more easily with her ancestral spirits. The similarity with the first song was of the pouch that must be seen.

The words *'u hwe'* (underlined in line 9 of the text below) are from the Kalanga language, meaning 'can hear.' In line 6 the word *thevhele* refers to a pouch made from the mongoose or civet skin that is used to hold divining bones. In line 8 the soloist expresses her fear of dying if the ancestors do not come. The drums are not so active at this point in the performance and the word *'magome'* means to feel too tired and lazy to participate. The phrase symbolizes the lack of enthusiasm that the drums are causing. The singing and the drumming are not connecting together, thus the ancestors will not reveal themselves.

In line 11 the soloist is crying for the pouch of his/her mother that will not be given to him/her because of the inadequacy of the *malombe* music performance. In other words, the urgency of the music performance is critical for the success of a primary *malombe* objective. Phrase 13, *'riṋe ri malombe a tombo la tshai,'* is a challenge that the real *malombe* should be able to dance day and night without a rest in between. The last line 14 *'lidzani mutungwa ndi u hwe,'* you must play the mutungwa drum so that I can hear it, because if the drum is not powerful the ancestors will be slow to appear. The short phrase 'u hwe' is a Kalanga phrase that means to hear.

Contextual analysis

The patient, who is not feeling well because of the delay of the ancestral spirit to invocate, suffers because of the music that is not stimulating enough for the ancestral spirit to manifest in their time of need. The poor musical performance that she is complaining about is the problem.

The success of patient's healing is affected by the committed involvement of the categories of participants whose defined contextual roles would help her to arrive at her own destination (the invocation of the ancestral spirits). This is not an individual process; it entails the collective involvement of the group.

4.2.4.5 ***Mae-vhangu, ndo wa ndo wa dekenya*** (CD Track 13)
Mae-vhago I fell, I fell on my hip

1. Solo: *Mae-vhangu, ndo wa ndo wa dekenya*
Mae-vhago I fell, I fell on my hip

2. Solo: *Yowee mae-vhangu a vha tsha nngwanya vhannani*
Mae-vhangu, they no longer find me

Refrain: *Yowee ahee ee hee!*
Yowee ahee ee hee!

3. Solo: *Mmawe, haya hashu haya ha malombo*
Mother our home of malombo

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4. Solo: *Mmawe Tshakhuma a ni* li *litshi naa*
Mother leave Tshakhuma alone

5. Solo: *Mmawee ni songo fa sa Vho Maiwashe*
Mother don't die like Vho Maiwashe

6. Solo: *Mmawee haya hashu hu nga mukula nga khali*
Mother our home is like pot molder

7. Solo: *Mmawee na Muneri ro vhona a tshi fa*
Mother We also witnessed the death of the missionary

8. Solo: *Mmawee* la *Tshakhuma vha nga si* li *dzhie*
Mother you cannot take Tshakhuma village

9. Solo: *Mmawee lone hone* li *tou vha* la *mavhanga*
Mother this a country of rebelling rivals

10. Solo: *Mmawee tshisimani tsha mukuvhanyela*
Mother the fountain where the rude lady washes

11. Solo: *Mmawee ya vha nyela ndi* do *kuvha nayo*
Mother I shall wash with the rude lady

12. Solo: *Mmawee Tshisafhele tshitanga tshi a swa*
Mother Tshisafhele the kitchen is burning

13. Solo: *Mmawee ndo vhona nga vhuenda enda*
Mother I saw this by moving along

14. Solo: *Mmawee ndo lu vhona Elelwani ha* nali
Mother I saw this as Elelwani never get cross

15. Solo: *Mmawee ndi tsha limbo nga malingindingi*
Mother this is the song by moving sound

16. Solo: *Mmawee mukukulume u tula Vho Gole*
Mother the cock is whistling the chiefs

17. Solo: *Mmawee mukukulume u tula Vho Gole*
Mother the cock is whistling the chiefs

Analysis of text

Vho Mutshekwa Madzunya started this song at Lukau in Tshakhuma at the possession tshele of Vho Muta on the 6 August 2006. After her ancestral spirit arrived she described how she fell on her hip and was hurt. Her ancestral spirits had taken her to a town where a certain man was buried instead her. This man was returned home to be buried with his father in the Venda burial custom, so she only saw the bones. She also

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passed over the source (fountain) of the Vhembe (Limpopo) River, and at Mpumbulu she found mourners.

Vho Mutshekwa Madzunya had never visited the west side of the country. She is stating that she has been able to heal diseases by singing and using tshele for a long time, and that is why she has visited so many families. She is proud because most of the people are happy with her service, like Khavhagali where she spent two years, Maboho five years, Simali three years, Mawela four years and Ḽidzhade four years. She is a well-known tshele healer and is proud of the work she is doing for the communities.

In lines 1 and 2 *Mae-vhangu, ndo wa ndo wa dekenya* - Mae-vhago I fell, I fell on my hip and *Yowee mae-vhangu a vha tsha nngwanya vhannani* - Mae-vhangu, they no longer find me, the woman is doubtful whether her mother will be able to find her any longer.

In line 4 *Mmawe Tshakhuma a ni* li *litshi naa* - Mother leave Tshakhuma alone, never disturb the place I so like and love. This line is describing the place where she was born and where she now resides.

Line 5 *Mmawee ni songo fa sa Vho Maiwashe* - Mother don't die like Vho Maiwashe is indicating that Maiwashe died because of avoiding the ancestors. The plea is take good care and listened to the ancestors in order to be able to live longer.

Line 7 *Mmawee na Muneri ro vhona a tshi fa* - Mother we also witnessed the death of the missionary, is acknowledging that the missionaries were among the first whites who came to the area to spread the Gospel but they forgot their mission and acted as kings. However, at last they passed on.

Line 8 *Mmawee* la *Tshakhuma vha nga si* li *dzhie* – is translated to mean Mother you cannot take Tshakhuma village as I have indicated to you that is our land.

Line 9 *Mmawee lone hone li tou vha* la *mavhanga* – means Mother this a country of rebelling rivals. The patient is a resident of Tshakhuma, which is why in her *mato* there is the country name Tshakhuma. She knows the way the people in this community feel about one another, hence it is the country for rivals.

Line 10 *Mmawee tshisimani tsha mukuvhanyela* – translates to Mother the fountain where the rude lady washes.

Line 11 *Mmawee ya vha nyela ndi* do *kuvha nayo* - Mother I shall wash with the rude lady. These lines indicate how *mato* is used to demonstrate the work that must go on in-between the dance.

Line 12 *Mmawee Tshisafhele tshitanga tshi a swa* - Mother Tshisafhele the kitchen is burning. This line is indicating a new idea that is arising; the burning kitchen is in the memory of the singer as the kitchen is used to perform the dance of the ancestors.

Line 13 *Mmawee ndo vhona nga vhuenda enda* - Mother I saw this by moving along and line 14 *Mmawee ndo lu vhona Elelwani ha* nail - Mother I saw this as Elelwani,

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never get cross reference a person who likes to be away from home. It is because of the ancestral spirits that he was not settled at home.

Line15 *Mmawee ndi tsha limbo nga malingindingi* - Mother this is the song by moving sound. At this point in the song, at long last, the ancestral *tshele* session is moving in full force and very serious.

Line16 and 17 *Mmawee mukukulume u tula Vho Gole* - Mother the cock is whistling the chiefs. This line is referencing a foretelling made by the owner of the universe, Vho Gole.

A person who is one of the most important figures in the ceremony is the drummer who is always a man (unlike other Venda musical genres where the drums are typically played by women). The drummer, who is also a Ḽilombe, plays a major role as the drums motivate the dance and the dancers. The language used in line 18 *a ndi tsha,* is in Kalanga. The sentence *a ndi tsha zwi kona* indicates he won't be able to honour all the invitations as he is a well–known drummer who has received many invitations to villages like Khavhagali where he stayed for two years, Simali for three years, Mawele for four years, Ḽidzhade for four years and Maboho for five years.

Contextual significance

This song is an example of self-panegyric song in which a healer boosts her healing spirit by recounting her accomplishments as a tribute to her ancestors' support. The successes achieved as a healer in all the villages mentioned above are the result of the support given by her ancestors.

4.2.4.6. ***Vho Hangwani*** (CD Track 15)
The name of a woman (Mrs. Hangwani)

1. Solo: *Haya hanga a ri limi*
At my home we do not till the land

Refrain: *Hee! Haa, hee haa Vho Hangwani*
Oh, Yes ye yes Vho Hangwani

2. Solo: *Ri lima zwiguthe zwa muti*
We plough tree stumps

3. Solo: *Hu sa linwi mavhele haa hee!*
Where no mealies are sown!

4. Solo: *Haya hanga a vha wi malombo*
At my home they do not perform malombo dance

5. Solo: *Vho Hangwani vha a tungula naa?*
Does Vho Hangwani throw divining bones?

6. Solo: *Mutshinyalo vho mu la mafhuru*
Mutshinyalo has been robbed (deceived).

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7. Solo: *Ndo wanala ndo wa nga dekenya*
They found me having fallen on my hip

8. Solo: *Mutale Fundudzi wo bva nga vhukati*
In the Lake Fundudzi, Mutale flows

9. Solo: *Vhunambi hanga vhu tou lovha ahee!*
My ability to sing, should it be allowed to die away!

10. Solo: *Ndi vhu fha nnyi ndi si na khaladzi?*
To whom do I hand this ability, as I have no brother.

11. Solo: *Khaladzi ndi wa inwe nndu*
The brother belongs to another house

12. Solo: *Dabadaba la muunga nalo ahee!*
A directionless mad person

Analysis of text

This is another song that is sung in the middle of the night, by Nyadala after the arrival of the ancestral spirit. In Lukau they commenced with the ritual at 20h15, and 5 hours later, at about 01h12, they were still performing to invite the ancestral spirits who had not yet arrived.

Nyadala was complaining that, because she is a good singer, she is not sure of her successor in the spiritual arena. She does not even have a brother to carry on the tradition. The brother is an important person in the lineage. He might be young, but if anything goes wrong with the sister in her married life or in the *malombo* they are dancing, they have to inform him as the patrilineal head of the family.

In lines 1 to 3 the soloist explains that where Nyandala comes from people do not plough, instead they cultivate herbs for use as medicine. She further states that as spiritually imbued beings there is no need for them to grow mealies. In other words, she would like people to know that spiritually imbued beings do not eat mealies like ordinary people do.

In line 4 she suddenly turns around to say that at her home among her family members no one dances *malombo*.

In lines 5 and 6 Nyadala would like to know if Vho Hangwani does the throwing of divining bones (*ṱhangu*). As she talks about the divining bones, she remembers someone by the name Mutshinyalo who was deceived by Vho Hangwani's divining bones and was coaxed into paying without having received tangible results.

In lines 7 and 8 Nyadala tells others that she fell badly spraining her hips. Constant reference to falling and spraining hip in songs is a metaphor about the force of the dance that could dislocate an ordinary person's hip. She further mentioned that everywhere things happen differently. Mutale River visibly flows through the middle of Lake Fundudzi, the lake of the ancestral spirits of the N̂etshiavha clan.

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In lines 9 to 12 as she reflects on the deterioration of her singing, she wishes she could transfer her skills and singing ability to someone but becomes worried now that she has no brother. The non-existence of an actual brother comes into mind because traditionally he usually holds the senior position when her parents are deceased. Nyandala is aware that she has a half brother from her father's other wife. Thinking about this brother she despairs that her half brother cannot assist her in performing her ancestral duties because he lacks direction in life.

4.2.4.7. ***U a lila Nyawasedza*** (CD Track 17)
Nyawasedza is crying

Solo 1. *Khuvha* n*wana uyu o tshinya'ni?*
What wrong did this child do?

Refrain: *Ahee u lila Nyawasedza yowee, yowee!*
Yes yes she cries yeh, yeh!

Solo 2. *Vho Nyawasedza vha mu vhengela'ni?*
Why do people hate Nyawasedza?

Solo 3. *Vho Nyawasedza ndi muthu nda tenda.*
Nyawasedza is a person like others.

Solo 4. *Khuvha Nyawasedza tsha muthu ha dobi.*
Indeed Nyawasedza does not steal.

Solo 5. *Ndo lumbama vhusiw ana hanga.*
I lean on my poverty.

Solo 6. *Khuvha Mutshindu*di *zwidudu mutembe.*
Indeed Mutshundudi is lined up with clay pots.

Solo 7. *Fundudzi Mutale wo bva nga vhukati.*
In the middle of Lake Fundudzi Mutale the river flows.

Solo 8. *Ndi tivha* de l*i sa lili* n*wana.*
What nature of dam is it, where no child cries?

Solo 9. *Vhakegulu na vhunwa vha naho.*
Grandmothers are full of wickedness.

Solo 10. *U a lila Nyawasedza tenda n*ne.
Nyawasedza is crying I do agree.

Solo 11. *Zwa vhulinga* n*anga a ri nga zwi koni.*
We shall not be able to test traditional healers.

Solo 12. *Vha linga anga vha ri dzo tshinya'ni?*
Why test traditional healers, what wrong did they do?

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Analysis of text

A girl, Nyawasedza, is crying, because people seem to dislike her. It was proven beyond doubt that the people who are chosen are disliked and not well understood.

Line 1 starts with a rhetorical question seeking to know why people do not like Nyawasedza as she didn't do anything wrong.

In line 3 the singer explains that she is a good person and doesn't understand why people dislike her.

In line 6 the mood changes when the soloist recalls what she found at Mutshundudi River where she saw the pots lined up, ready to be filled with water.

Line 7 refers to Lake Fundudzi where you can see the river Mutale flowing in the middle of the lake.

Line 8 draws our attention to the fact that children are not allowed to come to the lakeside.

In line 9 she is amazed that even the supporters old ladies who are aware of the ancestral spirits, fail to give the proper advice.

In line 10 Nyawasedza is still crying, an indication that she had a calling from the ancestor spirits which was ignored from the beginning.

The two final lines of the text are a striking example of the *mato* process; the questioning of the traditional healers shows that those present doubt their powers and may be causing the slow response of the spirits.

4.2.4.8. Vho Nyamuofhe (CD Track 18)
The name of a woman (Mrs. Nyamuofhe)

1. Solo: *Ahaa daba-daba li a kovhelelwa*
Yes the sun has set for this stupid fellow

Refrain: *Ahaa ahee Vho Nyamuofhe*
Oh! Yes Vho Nyamuofhe

2. Solo: *Ndi a vhidzelela Vho Nyamuofhe*
I am calling upon Vho Nyamuofhe

3. Solo: *Tshe nda vhidzelela vho ima munangoni*
It is long time I was calling as you were at the door

4. Solo: *Tshe nda vhidzelela vho ima dangani*
It is long time I was calling as you were at the kraal

5. Solo: *Mufarekano u a tuwa*
My extra lover is leaving

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6. Solo: *Hee haa Ndi a fa zwanga*
Yes let me just die

7. Solo: *Nduni ya makhadzi hu na thuri*
In the house of the aunt there are possum

8. Solo: *Ndi ri ndi tshi fa ndi fela mini, Vho Nyamuofhe?*
But why if I have to, should I die Vho Nyamuofhe?

9. Solo: *Kha vha vhone ndi a fa zwanga*
Yes let me just die

10. Solo: *Hone ndi tshi fa ndi fela mini, Vho Nyamuofhe?*
If I die, why shall I be dying Vho Nyamuofhe?

Analysis of text

Vho Nyamuofhe is the name of the aunt who was called because her brother's child was ill. The mother was complaining that she was trying to call the aunt who seemed not to be available. She was complaining that as her aunt was not responding, the child was going to die. She asks the aunt why the child should die. Since the aunt is the one who brings the heirlooms of their family lineage, and she is not going to come, the mother believes that the child is going to die.

In line 1 the soloist is cautioning Vho Nyamuofhe that it is of no value to watch the sun. Vho Nyamuofhe is being called upon so she will be awake and observant.

In lines 3 and 4 the soloist states that Vho-Nyamuofhe does not respond.

Out of the blues in line 5 she warns against an extra marital affair that does not last, as the male friend often runs away.

In lines 6 up to line 9 the soloist surrenders to the suffering and accepts death saying "now I may pass on", this being a sign of giving up. Although she appears to accept death, she still queries the reason for her death asking why she has to die? This is a rhetorical question as there is no answer.

Contextual analysis

In Vhavenda tradition, a child cannot undergo any ritual in the absence of the aunt. The aunt was ignoring the call in a way that the mother explained it to the healer when the healer diagnosed the child as having the ancestral spirits. Vho Maine's helper Vho Tshinakaho Muedi, in the possession *tshele* of Vho Tshikosi, started the song. Through the song she was telling the aunt that she is delaying the invocation of ancestral spirits.

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4.2.4.9. ***Ntshavheni a vha mu funi*** (No recording on accompanying CD)
They don't like Ntshavheni

1. Solo: *Lo tsha Ntshavheni hae!*
It is morning, Ntshavheni!

Refrain: *A kholomo - Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.*
For her a kraal has been built, as though she is a cow.
Oh, Yes, I am in danger.

2. Solo: *Ndi amba Ntshavheni, Ntshavheni hae!*
I say Ntshavheni!

3. Solo: T*hoho yanga I a rema*
I say my head is aching,

4. Solo: *Nwana uyu ndi pfe*ne *naa?*
Is this child a baboon?

5. Solo: *U pwasha madanga a vhathu*
She is demolishing other people's kraals

6. Solo: N*wana uyu a ni nga mu wani*
You will not find the girl

7. Solo: *Idani ni vha nee zwavho*
Come and give them their few cents

8. Solo: *Ndi amba Ntshavheni, Ntshavheni hae!*
I say Ntshavheni!

Analysis of text

This song is about Ntshavheni, a girl who is vulnerable because the ancestral spirits calling on her are being ignored. The people do not like her because of her bad behavior; she has created disorder among the neighbouring families, she is damaging other peoples' property, and she does not respect the rules and regulations of the parents. This demonstrates that she is disoriented because she is a potential healer that needs to be redeemed through dancing the ancestral dance in *malombo*. It is for this reason that the leader sometimes asks whether the child is a baboon. Her mother sings the song, because the family members think that she is a spoilt child. However, it is the ignorance of the family in not being aware that it is the call of the ancestral spirits that has caused the suffering.

The song cautions that social misfits must be given deeper attention by parents and community members as such unusual behaviour could be a sign of super-ordinary affliction that should not be interpreted at surface level – they could be ancestral signs of a healer's calling.

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Lines 1 and 2 portray Ntshavheni as an individual disliked by all for no valid reason. Ntshavheni does not wake up early, there is need to awaken early in order to prepared her for the ritual that rescue her.

In lines 3 and 4 the caller is stressed and the seriousness of the call is highlighted when she poses a question as to whether the child is a baboon?

In line 5 the song caller is referred to as a person who demolishes other people's *kraals* (homesteads) because she does not seem to stay in one marriage. In other words, she becomes married today and the following day she is divorced.

In line 7 it is shown that once a person is divorced property offered in marriage should be returned to the in-laws.

Finally in line 8 the spirit urges Ntshavheni not to bother about other people and how they treat her. She is promised a brighter future when she is inducted and all people around her will turn to her for solutions to their problems.

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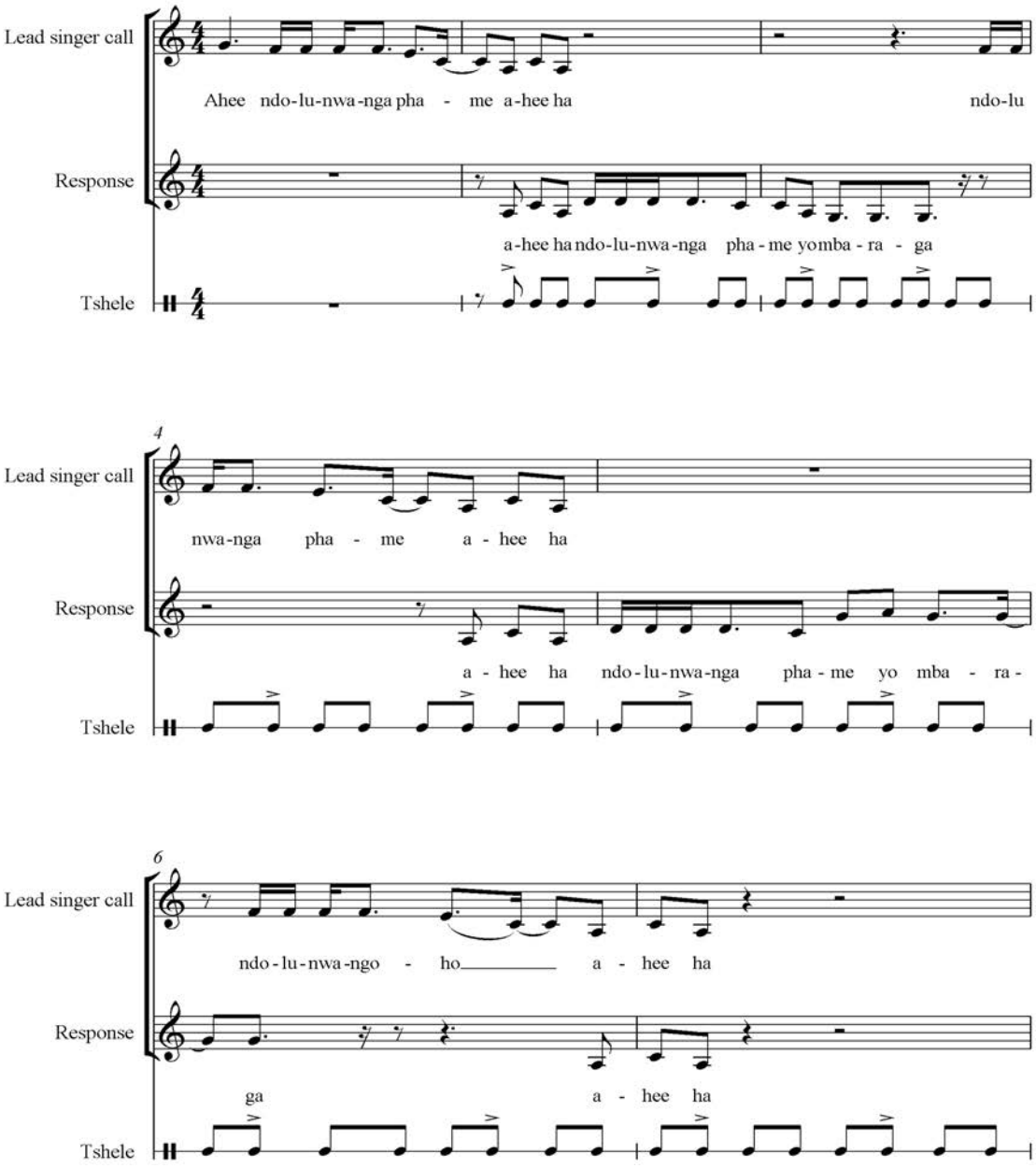
4.2.5. SONGS THAT ARE SUNG BY THE POSSESSED/*NYADALA/ MUDZIMU*

4.2.5.1. *Ndo lunwa nga phame* (CD Track 19)

I have been stung by a scorpion

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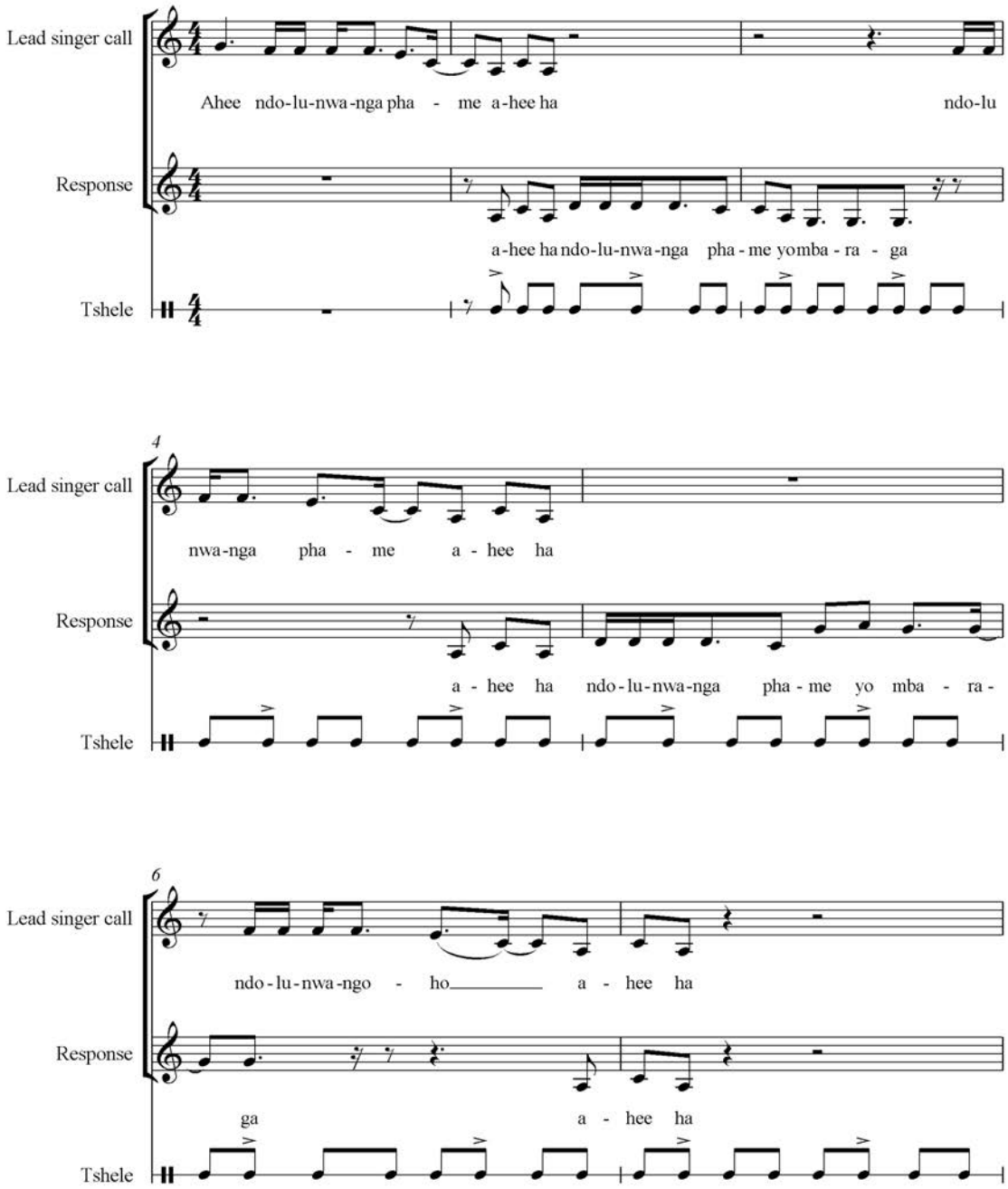
Figure 4.6: *Musical transcription of Ndo lunwa nga phame. Transcription by researcher, in collaboration with Marianne Feenstra.*

1. Solo: *Ndi tshi lunwa ndi tshi lumelwa'ni?*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
I have been stung for what good reason? –
Oh, Yes, I am in danger.

Refrain: *Ahee ahee ahelelee ndo lunwa nga phame*
Oh, Yes, I have been stung by a scorpion.

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2. Solo: *Khuuvha ya vha phame yo nduma tshikondo*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana
Indeed the scorpion stung me on my hip –
Oh, Yes, I am in danger.

3. Solo: *Khuuvha tshi no luma nkadzhi ndi tshi'ni?*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
Oh, what is it that stings a female person?
Oh,Yes, I am in danger

4. Solo: *Khuuvha ya vha phame yo nndendemedza*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
Oh, this scorpion injected (hurt) me.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

5. Solo: *Avha Vho Maine vha fhano vho ya'fhi?*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
Where has the local Maine gone?
Oh, Yes, I am in danger.

6. Solo: *Adzani mikumba ri tungule thangu*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
Stretch out the skins so we can throw divine bones.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

7. Solo: *Khuuvha ri yo vhona ho bvaho tshilombo*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
So we could locate where tshilombo (the bad spirit) originated.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

8. Solo: *Tshilombo ndi muya vha nga si tshi vhone –*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
Tshilombo is spirit you cannot see it
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

9. Solo: *Tshilombo ndi madi vha nga si a fare –*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
Tshilombo is water you cannot catch it. –
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

10. Solo: *Khuuvha zwo nyelisa zwo fara ene nyanenge*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
How good that it is the very clever one who is possessed.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

11. Solo: *Zwo tou fara lufara khambana Vho Maine*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
The real snuff custodian is the one possessed
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

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12. Solo: *Khuuvha ha Madzunya ro bva nga zwivhana*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
At Madzunya's place we used unauthorized exits.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

13. Solo: *Khuuvha ndo swifhala ndi vho nga funguvhu, kha vha vhone - Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.*
Indeed I am pitch black like crow, have a look.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

14. Solo: *Nne ndo sekena ndi vho nga nelete*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
I am thin like a needle Oh, yes.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

15. Solo: *Thangu dzanga dzo wa murorwane kha vha sedze.*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
My dolos have just scattered haphazardly.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

16. Solo: *Hone ya murubi ndi vhula ha Mma (midzimu ya damuni)*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
The 'murubi' one tells that it is the ancestor of the mother's lineage.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

17. Solo: *Ndi do gonya tombo ndi tolele.*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
I shall climb a rock and peep.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

18. Solo: *Khuuvha ndi yo vhona ho bvaho tshilombo*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
Indeed I am going to see the place where tshilombo comes from.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

19. Solo: *Tshilombo ndi muya vha nga si tshi vhone*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
Tshilombo is spirit - you can't see it.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

20. Solo: *Tshilombo ndi madi vha nga si tshi fare*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
Tshilombo is water – you cannot catch it.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

21. Solo: *Khuuvha ndi takala ndo fara nga mbili*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
Indeed I become happy when holding both of them.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

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22. Solo: *Havha dzi tshi lila dzi ntshela waya*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
When they rattle, I become perplexed.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

23. Solo: *Tavhanyani ni ri zhaku – zhaku*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
Hurry up and dance – dance.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

24. Solo: *Ni sa lidzi na mutsho u do tsha*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
If you do not shake them, it will become light.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

25. Solo: *Hone no da fhano no da u dzhiya'ni, vhakegulu?*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
But you are here, what for are you here, grannies?
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

26. Solo: *Ro da u vhona tshilombe tsha gole*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
We came here to see the celebrity of the god.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

27. Solo: *Khuuvha tsho fhatelwa danga sa kholomo*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
The kraal is built as for the cows.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

Analysis of text

A scorpion is dangerous and also poisonous. The song metaphorically compares the pain you experience if you are chosen to serve the ancestral spirits with the pain of being stung by a scorpion. It seems as if you are stung you have to undergo all the rigorous rituals in order to please your ancestors. That is why she is cautioned that *tshilombo* is not a visible thing; it is spiritual. For this reason she is suffering. However, the divining bones indicate that the beloved wife (patient) knows where the illness comes from.

The leader is thin like a rake because of the delay in the accomplishment of the invocation process, and dawn will break before the ritual can take place. Once dawn has arrived, they will have to wait for nightfall before starting all over again. Unless they can get rid of this *tshilombo*, there is no real healing that can take place.

In lines 1 and 2 the patient expresses that she has been stung on the hip by a scorpion and asks the rhetorical question what wrong she has done. She then openly admits that she is in a great danger.

In lines 5 to 7 she is desperately searching for the local Vho Maine as she would like to consult her due to the pain she is experiencing. She would like Vho Maine to

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stretch out the skin on which divining bones are thrown so that the divining bones can make known where the trouble originated. Her main aim is to find out where the *tshilombo* (wicked spirit) originated as it is so painful.

In lines 8 and 9 *tshilombo* is expressed as intangible, invisible like the air. Somehow, *tshilombo* can be tangibly likened to water, which no person can catch.

In line 10 and 11 Vho Maine is aware that the beloved (one of those who opposes *malombo*) has been possessed by *tshilombo*. The *tshilombo* has also entered the main custodian of the snuff container, and could inflict anybody. It is therefore necessary that all be careful to avoid being easily attacked.

In lines 13 to 16 she compares her loss to the color of pitch black, her skin appears to have turned black like the colour of a crow. She further realizes how thin (lean) she is. She likens herself to the size of a needle. The *ṱhangu* (divining bones) that are thrown on the skin are perplexing in that they have just scattered haphazardly without revealing what the problem is. She is aware that the *murubi* (the name of one of the divining bones) is the one that says much about the ancestors; that the looming ancestral spirit is of her mother's lineage. The *murorwane* divining bone is an indication that the problem comes from the mother's lineage. If it was *mahe a khadzi* it will be from the father's lineage.

In lines 17 and 18 she wishes to climb up a rock in order to see beyond. Indeed she is determined to see the place where *tshilombo* originated.

In lines 21 to 24 she rejoices while holding two rattles and shaking them vigorously. *Tshilombo* has to be chased out. When she plays the rattle they fill her with perplexity. She is inviting her ancestors to hasten. She has now become so excited that she can play well and instructs all involved in the *tshele* dance to speed up the process of invocation.

In lines 25 and 26 she seeks to find out why the grannies have come to the *tshele* session and what they want as in reality, they were supposed to be looking after the babies at home. In response the grannies say they are there to see the celebrity who is dancing *tshele*.

In line 27 the grannies further confess that the celebrity in question is in the centre of the circle surrounded by *malombe* while she is dancing.

Contextual analysis

The scorpion is used to demonstrate the pain that someone under goes because of ignoring the ancestral spirits and taking them for granted. Because the scorpion is a poisonous insect it needs to be taken care of to avoid disaster. If you are a perfect person you must honour and respect your mothers' lineage as well as your father's lineage.

Lastly the healers are people who are given the wisdom to guide and protect the nation in times of distress, so they must also be respected.

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4.2.5.2. ***Ndo vhidzwa musanda*** (CD Track 20)
I have been summoned to the chief's kraal, yes
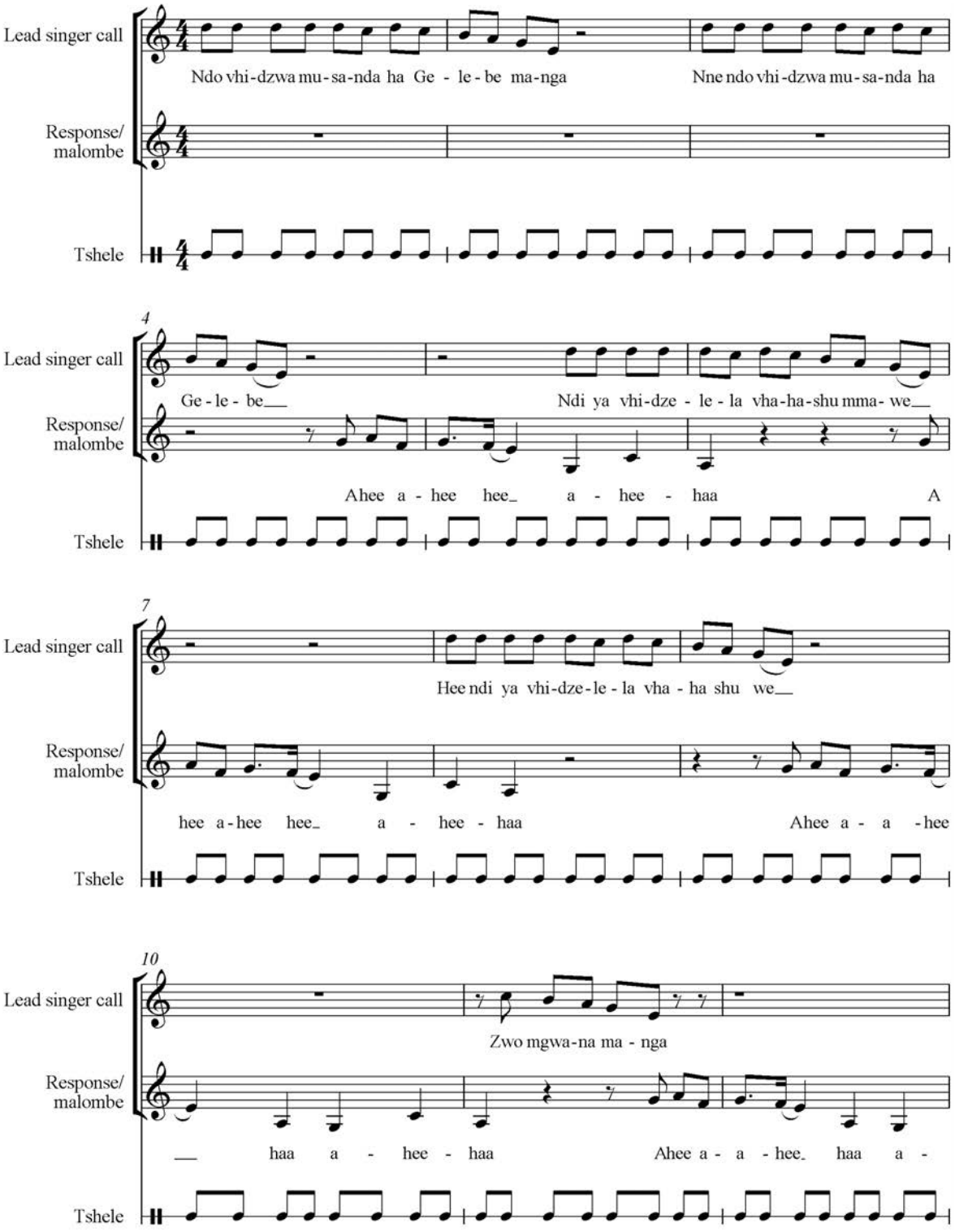
Figure 4.7: *Musical transcription of Ndo vhidzwa musanda. Transcription by researcher, in collaboration with Marianne Feenstra.*

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1 & 6. Solo: *Ndo vhidzwa musanda Tshifulanani ahee,*
I have been summoned to the chief's kraal yes,

Refrain: *Ahee ee uwee*
Yes, oh! Yes

2 &13. Solo: *Ndila thi I divhi yowee ahee hee ahee*
I don't know the way

3 &14. Solo: *Ndo hweswa muhwalo muhuluhulu yowee ahee*
I have been loaded with a big load (baggage) yes

4 &10. Solo: *Minwe thi i divhi ahee*
Some I do not know, yes

5. Solo: *Minwe thi nga ruli ahee*
Some (baggage) I shall not be able to off-load

7. Solo*:* *Ndi ri thi nga swiki ahee*
I say I shall not be able to make it (arriving there)

8. Solo: *Vhala vha hashu ahee*
All those who are my relatives, yes

9. Solo: *Ndo fhiwa muhwalo muhuluhulu ahee*
I have been given a big load (baggage) yes

11. Solo: *Minwe thi i koni ahee*
Some of them (are too heavy for me) I am unable to carry, yes

16. Solo: *Minwe thi nga ruli ahee*
Some (baggage) I shall not be able to off-load

18. Solo: *Ndi ri thi nga swiki ahee*
I say I shall not be able to make it (arriving there)

19. Solo: *Vhala vha hashu ahee*
All those who are my relatives, yes

22. Solo: *Minwe thi i koni ahee*
Some of them (are too heavy for me) I am unable to carry, yes

Analysis of text

This is an excellent example of the symbolic use of language in *malombo* lyrics. Here *nyadala/makhulu* (granny) says that she has been summoned to *musanda* (a chief's kraal), where she might not arrive if the singing is not energetic or powerful enough. Clearly here *musanda* refers to the place of meeting with the ancestral spirits, while the chief stands for the ancestral spirit that will possess her. The heavy baggage that

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she is carrying refers to the weight of the responsibility that she feels she is carrying a prospective healer.

In line 1 the patient is aware that she is invited/called or summoned by the chief of Tshifulanani. The closing expression 'ahee' reveals acceptance of the call. Although she accepts the summons, she expresses her problem of not knowing the path to Tshifulanani. She feels burdened with a massive load (baggage); *nyadala* is confused.

In lines 4 and 5 she indicates that some of this baggage is unknown to her (I know nothing about them). She invites assistance, as she feels humbled and defenseless and there seems to be no one to rescue her.

In line 7 she confesses that she may not arrive at her destination, she continues yearning for public support.

In line 8 she is calling for her relatives as she is in need of extra support. The full sentence is *avha vha hashu yowee vha na tshiangatela*! which means - you my relatives suffer from procrastination as you are delaying to carry on with the wishes of the ancestors. This shows that *mato*, can be in any key and any meter/time. There is no clear or fixed pattern as the singers may be in a trance state. Thematic recycling is used to maintain a trance state. Within that recycling the lead singer creates alteration of words that can bring slight changes in the meaning, hence the different topics addressed in one song.

In line 9 she is again calling for attention as she repeats that the load is so heavy. The shortening of the text is a creative element as well.

In line 11 it is clear that she is pleading with her ancestors to show her the way, they must assist with the undertaking she should take upon herself.

The final line 22 is a repetition of line 11, is a display of weakness and exhaustion desperately asking for any possible volunteers to come and assist her.

4.2.5.3. ***Ndi a sinda*** (CD Track 21)
I grind

1. Solo: *Ndi a sinda*
I grind

Refrain: *Sinda u mphe*.
Grind and then give me.

2. Solo: *Ndi mutuli wanga,*
The wooden mortar is mine,

3. Solo: *Ndi a sinda mutuli wanga,*
I grind, it is my wooden mortar

Refrain: *Sinda u mphe mutuli wanga*
I grind, it is my wooden mortar

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1.Solo: *Mpheni mutuli wanga!*
Give me my wooden mortar!

2. Solo: *Vhakegulu, a ni leli* n*wana:*
Old ladies, you are not bringing up the child:

3. Solo: N*wana uyu u no lilela'ni?*
Why is this child crying?

4. Solo: *Mme awe vho enda Tshalovha.*
Her mother has passed over to Tshalovha (the place of death).

5. Solo: *U sin*d*a vha rali* n*wananga.*
To pound is like this my child.

6. Solo: *Ndo humbula vhusukwa vhu li pi?*
I asked for some beer; where is it?

7. Solo: *Vho Maligwe vha enda Tshalovha.*
Vho – Maligwe has passed over.

8. Solo: *Bvumelani lombo* l*i tshine vho!*
Sing up for my spirit, so that it can dance as well!

9. Solo: *Nyamalwela ndi mufunza-vhana;*
Nyamalwela the teacher of children;

10. Solo: *Mpheni mutuli wanga,*
(Ancestral spirit) Give me my mortar,

11.Solo: *Mutuli wanga ndo fhiwa nga tate,*
I was given my mortar by my father,

12. Solo: *Ndo fhiwa vha tshi enda Tshalovha.*
I was given it when he passed over.

13. Solo: *Vhasikana galani malila.*
Girls, sit down and weep.

Analysis of text

The song *ndi a sinda* is sung with a lot of repetition and this song has the same lyrics as the song recorded by Blacking which he titled *Mpheni mutuli wanga* (Blacking (1995:192 & 193). The difference between the two recordings is found in the *mato*.

Blacking's recording can be found online:

http://www.music.washington.edu/ethno/blacking.html

The possessed makes known that she has to execute the requirements of her calling because she is the chosen one, which is an honour. The song also refers to the

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spiritual power that is accessible to those present. The ancestral spirits are appealing to the group, through the possessed person, to use the power of the possessed while it is still available, as they may decide to leave at any time. Take advantage of this opportunity to commune with the spirits through her. Ask whatever is puzzling you before their departure. That is why the singer refers to those who have already passed on, and who return through the state of trance at any time as personified by the person possessed by the spirit of the dead.

The short song *ndi a sinda* is an indication that the singer/*nyadala* is ready to execute all the duties as my ancestors call me.

Mpheni mutuli wanga! Give me my mortar!

The refrain Blacking documented of this song is the same refrain of the song recorded here, *sinda mphe mutuli wanga*.

The song is now started by *nyadala* who in lines 1 to 4 is determined to grind in her wooden mortar. *Nyadala* indicates that there is no one who can carry her burden other than herself.

In lines 5 to 7 *nyadala* is worried that the grannies are not taking care of the child, as the child is crying because the mother passed away in Tshalovha village.

In lines 9 to 11 she is recalling the African homemade brew as she is thirsty because of the hard work she is engaged in with her ancestral spirits. She thinks again of the lady Vho Maligwe who has passed on. She asks those present to sing the refrain so that the *lombo* spirit could dance as well. In a way she is also afraid of passing on if she does not honour the command of ancestral spirits.

Line 12 introduces the person who is referred to as Nyamalwela, the person responsible for teaching the children.

In lines 13 to 16 she commands the people to give her the wooden mortar as it was handed over to her when her father died. Lastly she orders the girls to sit down and lament as so many have passed on.

Contextual analysis

You must be patient at all times. Perseverance ensures success, and there is nothing that will come your way without labouring for it.

4.2.5.4. ***Vhasikana kha ri ye Khadane!*** (CD Track 22)
Girls, let's go to Khadane!

1. Solo: *Vhasikana kha ri ye Khadane!*
Girls let's go to Khadane!

Refrain: *Ahee aha helele ahee*
Oh yes, aha, oh yes

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2. Solo: *Ha Mutele a ku endi nwana,*
A child should not go to Mutele,

3. Solo: *U do vhuya a ka lukukula,*
It will come back and pick up dizziness,

4. Solo: *Zwa vhulombe zwi dina henefha.*
To be a good singer can be troublesome.

5. Solo: *Mmbwa yanga I pfi Vhalusani:*
My dog is called Vhalusani:

6. Solo: *Vha do lusa tshi no do la ne*
They will do all they can to "eat" (trouble) me

7. Solo: *Vhahulwanempheni tshilemba tshanga!*
Lords, give me my possession hat (tshilemba)!

8. Solo: *Idani malombe! vhusiku vhu a tsha;*
Come malombe, night becomes day;

9. Solo: *Vhusiwana vhu no nga sa lufu.*
Poverty is like death.

Analysis of text

After the arrival of the ancestral spirits, the *nyadala* 'sowing' the song invited the girls to accompany her to Khadane with the above song. She informed them that Mutele is a busy place for ancestral spirits, and they must keep the children away from the area as anything might take place when the ancestral spirits approach the place. Through the *mato* process the rhythm and melody did not change, but the text changed. Music, songs and the accompaniment of rattles play a significant role when the ancestral spirits present themselves. That is why she may fear death if her singers are not powerful or serious.

In lines 1 to 3 *nyadala* invites the girls (other *malombe*) to accompany her to a place called Khadane that is far away from Mutele. She is aware that at Mutele no child can freely walk about. According to *nyadala*, there is the danger of children coming in contact with the illness from the looming spirits there. The child will also join those who are suffering from *lukukula* (indication of illnesses that can cause *malombo*).

In line 4 she further blames obsession caused by the excessive love for *malombo* music. And in line 5, she mentions the name of her dog "Vhalusani" – personifying the dog as a person who is poor, meaning what do they want from a person who is so poor? In other words, *nyadala* begs for relief when her people will reconcile and be united. Her lineage or relatives are not united, that is why she is suffering. She concludes by begging her ancestors to give her a break and make her fit again.

In line 6, should they choose not to unite and not to reconcile, she expresses fear that they would end up eating her. In other words it will end up with her death.

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In line 7 and 8 *nyadala* begs for her *tshilemba* (a small hat worn by a person who is possessed) as a symbol of her contact with her ancestral spirit. She openly calls out and beckons to all expert dancers to immediately come and dance with her as the dawn is fast approaching. According to her, the presence and support given by the other *malombe*, community members and her relatives will make the ancestral spirit happy and leave satisfied.

In line 9, out of despair, she compares her poverty with death, a sign of helplessness and need. So the period of ancestral evocation is then filled with anxiety for the participants wishing a favourable outcome.

Contextual analysis

In the arena of ancestral spirits, cooperation of relatives, community members, and the healer are all critical. When a patient experiences encouragement and support, the burdens he/she is caring are relieved then the appropriate music performance enables healing.

4.2.5.5. ***Vhusiwana hanga vhu lidza nzhivha*** (No recording on CD)
Poverty has brought me misfortune

1. Solo: *Vhusiwana hanga vhu mpha madambi*.
My poverty has brought me misfortune.

Refrain: *Ahee heehee, vhu mpha madambi*
Yes, yes, it gives me misfortune

2. Solo: *Ho sungununwa mutundo wa gonwa wa mbo nukha*.
The semen of an impotent man splashed out and it smelt.

3. Solo: *Vhasikana vha kati matangwa ti mbo gaya*!
Girls play matangwa and I will also dance!

4. Solo: *Vha vhaluna, ndi peni-vho ŋanga ndi mbo daha*!
Men, give me a reed pipe and I will also take snuff!

5. Solo: *Vhahulwane vhanga nanga yanga ndi sia'fhi*?
My great ones where did I leave my reed pipe?

6. Solo: *Nne ndi a tuwa ndi ye Phalavhurwa*:
I am departing and go to Phalavhurwa:

7. Solo: *Vhe ri, Phalavhurwa a hu tuwelwi*.
They say Phalavhurwa is not to be crossed.

8. Solo: *Ha pfi a dzi lili musanda dzi na'ni*?
Why is it that they don't play (ngoma dza vhadzimu) at the musanda (Chief's kraal)?

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9. Solo: *Rine ri makhotho a ha nya shaya nwana*.
We are indeed strong men, but we have lived without children.

10. Solo: *Vho Madevha, tsindi ndi lukwati*;
Mr. Madevha's loincloth is wrinkled (has some mess up)

11. Solo: *Tsindi ndi lukwati nga u lesa govhole*.
The loincloth has wrinkled because of eating too much marula pulp.

12. Solo: *Nne ndi a tuwa ndi tevhele tate*.
I am departing so that I can follow my late father.

13. Solo: *Nwana uyu ndi Masholopote*;
This child is Masholopote;

14. Solo: *Ene u sholopota na zwila zwa Vho tate*.
The one who gathers the things of my father.

15. Solo: *Vhusiwana hanga ndi vhunwe na ku fa*.
My poverty makes me feel like dying.

16. Solo: *Hu do kona Vho–Mandule-ndule*,
Vho–Mandule-ndule can really dance well,

17. Solo: *Nyamuvhuya u vho gaya nadzo*.
Nyamuvhuya keeps on dancing with the drums.

Analysis of text

This entire song is sung in the possession stage. That is why there are many words that are not a part of the Tshivenda spoken language. The whole section informs that the messages are addressed to the clan and the *malombe*, because their own ancestral spirits abides with them. This is sung during the *ngoma dza vhadzimu* sessions only. This is the music that is sung only when they are beyond the bridge of the living.

In line 1 the possessed patient and the *nyadala* worry that the contact and influence of her ancestors has led her to poverty. It has entailed some misfortune.

In lines 2 to 4 the *nyadala* who is possessed starts speaking in the Kalanga language. The state of possession comes with a strange force whose power is difficult for one to ignore. She feels like sharing the joy she is filled with. As though out of her normal self, she feels like smoking as men do.

In lines 5 to 7 *nyadala* is pleading with her ancestral spirit that she would like to find out where she had left her reed pipe. With it (the reed pipe) in her possession, she would be able to join in the group of *matangwa* dance (a reed pipe dance performed by men) – blowing it like the rest of them do. As she sings, she reveals her wishes to leave for Phalavhurwa, although people always say Phalavhurwa is a place where people must not go.

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In lines 8 and 9 *nyadala* is worried now that people say reed pipes are not to be blown in the chief's kraal – why should it be so? As to her knowledge the reed pipes belong to the royal family who represent ancestral authority.

In lines 10 and 11 she turns to the condition of Mr. Madevha's *tsindi* (*tshidzivha* for elders) which is full of mess and as dry as biltong or a thin dry tree bark (*lukwati*). *Tsindi* is a strap of cloth, which is specifically made to be worn by little boys (*shedo* is for baby girls) of up to 7 years of age. This strap cloth is suspended around the waist by a binding line. The strap cloth is used only to cover the private area - a piece of cloth from the front side passed between the legs to the back side where it is secured on the suspending binding. Historically tanned (softened) skins were used for this purpose.

In line 12 *nyadala* cries in farewell with the hope of dying in order to be with her deceased father.

In the final lines 16 and 17 *nyadala* is reflecting at her position, she feels connected to *Mandule – ndule* is a person who dances by shaking the whole body round and round. *Nyamuvhuya* (the good one) portrays the ideal as he has intuitively commenced dancing to the tunes of the drums.

4.2.5.6. ***Vhe ndi a tuwa, vhahulwane vhanga*** (CD Track 23)
I am leaving, my elders

1. Solo: *Vhe ndi a ṱuwa, vhahulwane vhanga.*
They say I am going away, my great ones.

Refrain: *Ho ahee ho ahee haee eaa*
Oh yes oh yes yes yes

2. Solo: *Ndi tshi ṱuwa ndi vhuya ishaho.*
I am going away, but I shall return next year.

3. Solo*:* *Vhe ri maivhangu ndo wa nga dekenya.*
They say, "My mother I have fallen on my hip

4. Solo*:* *Hu neta malombe matsige ha neti.*
The (possessed) dancers are tired, the master drummer is not tired

5. Solo: *A thi tsha kona na ipfi ḽo no fa.*
I cannot sing any more; my voice has gone.

6. Solo: *Ndi ri vha ṱohola tshele sa mavhele.*
I say they are pounding the hand-rattles like maize in a mortar.

7. Solo: *Ahee! Ngoma kha dzi lile dzi mphe mulalo.*
Oh! Let the drums sound and bring me peace.

8. Solo: *Ni tshi fa ndi vhuteka-teka.*
When you die, you just wander about from village to village.

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9. Solo: *Vho-Makhulu ndo kambwa nga halwa.*
The old ladies, I am drunk with beer.

10. Solo: *Ngoma dzi tshi lila dzi re na magome.*
When the drums sound, they must be powerful not weak.

11. Solo: *Vhulombe vhu ro fhiwa nga Nwali.*
Possession is given to us by Nwali (the Vhavenda High God).

12. Solo: *Tshele yanga malisa mbilu.*
My rattle stirs up the feelings (lit. eater of my heart).

13. Solo: *Vhe'dzi ya gada bere dza Tshikhuwa.*
They are galloping (like) horses of the Europeans.

14. Solo: *Ri ngo tamba ngoma dza milimbe.*
We played the drums so that people danced very well indeed.

15. Solo: *Ro fhaṱelwa danga sa kholomo.*
A kraal has been built for us, as if we were cattle.

16. Solo: *Ka Mutele a Ku endi nwana;*
A child should not go to Mutele;

17. Solo: *Xunwa-xunwa dzi a pedza vhana, iwe vhathu.*
Locust finished the children, you people.

This song was performed at Tshitomboni and follows the pattern of the *mato* in Blacking's recording (Blacking 1995:188-189). Audio of Blacking's recording is available at:

http://www.music.washington.edu/ethno/blacking.html

During a recording at Tshitomboni this song was the farewell song of *nyadala*. Vho Nyawasedza Ṋetshifhire Vho Maine (*nyadala*) started this song at about 04:42 at Tshitomboni v̂illage, when the ancestral spirits were about to leave; this was their farewell song. The singing, dancing and the drumming, showed that the ancestor spirit was satisfied with the entire performance. Peacefully she bade farewell to the *malombe* and commended the drummer.

The performance was so satisfactory and the *nyadala* felt tired while *matsige* was still energetic. She was exhausted and her voice had weakened. The drummer and the rattle shakers were so powerful that they sounded like the pounding of maize in a mortar. Because she was pleased with the energy of the performers, she compared their energy to that of European horses galloping.

As the ancestor spirit was about to leave, she gave them advice about the children; she would like them to look after the children well. *Ngoma dzi a fhalala* (the possession dance ended satisfactorily). This was her farewell song, and she departed.

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Analysis of text

In lines 1 to 3 *nyadala* bids farewell to *malombe*. She is leaving as she was tired. *Nyadala*, emanating the ancestral spirit, goes further to indicate that when she leaves, she will return the following year. Unfortunately she fell on her hip on her way to visit them. This phrase about falling indicates that as the people (*malombe*) were singing, she was coming from a long way, which is why she was delayed.

In lines 4 and 5 she uses the expression, *hu neta malombe matsige ha neti*, meaning that the drummer will never say he is tired as he has been hired because of his good reputation.

In lines 6 to 8 the phrase *vha tohola tshele sa mavhele* is an indication of satisfaction as to how the music was played. That is why *nyadala* is commending the drummer (*matsige*) for playing so well that she is at peace.

In lines 9 to 12 *nyadala* is drunk because the ancestral spirit that have possessed her feel good and comfortable. The language usage of *Vho Makhulu* is a male expression for calling the mother of his wife when a man is in a happy mood.

In line 13 to 15 she was happy when the drums were gaining momentum that is why she is comparing them with the galloping of white horses.

The final lines 16 and 17 are the farewell when *nyadala* was singing in the Kalanga language *ka Mutele aku endi nwana* - giving a warning that no child should be allowed to visit the place because of the *xunwa – xunwa dzi a pedza vhana* is an insect that looks like a beetle and is dangerous to children. Finally the ancestral spirit left, and the *nyadala* emerged from the trance.

4.3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF *MALOMBO* MUSIC

The analyses of the songs and the performance of the possession ceremony reveal the following characteristics that mark *malombo* music.

One of the primary characteristics of *malombo* music is thematic recycling of melody and it is evident throughout all the songs found in this musical tradition. There is also strong evidence of strict repetition as a structural foundation for sole-improvisation in the chorus. These two common characteristics can be used to extend songs and, by their nature, have psychical implications that induce the dancers to dance energetically. The spontaneous creativity based on a known and recycled structural framework in certain performance situations such as *malombo*, induce state of trance or altered consciousness. It marks the principle of *mato* that accrues new meaning and power to the performance of known songs in contextual situations.

Another powerful characteristic of *malombo* performances is expressive movement. When Vhavenda people start a song, their bodies invariably respond the interpretative movement. When observing the *tshele* session, the dancing of the music for ancestral invocation entails considerable swaying of the hands. The song or sound energizes and informs the dance movements and, at the same time, inspires the energy and creativity in singing and playing of instruments.

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Group participation and co-operation is another primary characteristic of the performance of *malombo*. The essential principle of participation commands the group to support the performance. For *malombo* music, a group of the *malombe* has to be invited by the healer to support the patient through empathic, spiritual and theatrical activities. Therefore, participation is a critical feature of a successful performance. Participation goes hand in hand with co-operation because the invitees must co-operate in various ways to make the entire performance processes a success. This is clear when the ancestral spirits delay their manifestation and the *nyandala* has to urge the audience-participants to intensify their various theatrical contributions.

Complementation of one another in a performance is also an important element for the success of the event expectations or group objectives. This is clear when the leader or the person 'sowing' the song has a committed response from the whole group. If the response is not active and energetic the goal of calling up the ancestral presence that makes the event ineffectual.

4.4. CONCLUSION

Music is a human need; it is central to traditional existence. When music is sung effectively and continuously during the summoning of the intangible presence and action of ancestral spirits, the participants are able to fully engage themselves in dancing. It is only through music that their ancestral spirits make themselves available in order to relieve whatever burden, particularly spiritual, that their troubled descendants are carrying.

By studying these possession songs, one may conclude that the music of *malombo* is a language of esoteric communication between the *malombe* (members of the group) and their ancestral spirits. The music is the force that drives the dance, which drives the psyche to supernormal perceptions as well as personality transformation. This explains why *nyadala* would command the singers to generate more energy when dawn is drawing near or when the effectual force of music is dropping, hence the testimony of Vho Maine Vho Shum that the music must get deep down the *lilombe* in a way that he is taken to another world as a person who was on the edge of the wall and falls in the arena.

Without Vho Maine – the healers, the community members and the musical arts arena, all three of which are the factors that enable the *nyadala* to cross the threshold from the ordinary, everyday life to the super normal spiritual realm, it is impossible for the patient to arrive at the state of altered consciousness, or trance. Above all, as the texts of the songs constantly emphasize, it is the music that must interlock these elements that induce a state of altered consciousness and supernormal communications.

Connection with the ancestor is measured in two primary ways: Firstly, the Kalanga language, which is the language of the Vhavenda ancestral spirits, must appear within some songs. The patient will understand the language easily during the state of trance or possession and afterwards, the patient will have no idea what the words mean. Secondly, after the *malombo* ceremony has been performed and the patient is healed, s/he is able to stand up and dance vigorously. Prior to the healing ritual, the patient might have had great difficulty in making even basic movements. Therefore, it can be

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argued that the healing of the patient can only be achieved through the agency of the formulaic ritual music that engineers the arrival of the ancestral spirit.

In the context of these songs, one important conclusion can be drawn: Music plays an irreplaceable role in the interaction between the *malombe* and *vhadzimu* (the ancestral spirits). Without powerfully evocative music the ultimate goal of attaining interactional contact with the ancestral spirits will not be achieved. Much like Ellis' (1985) description of Aboriginal song (See **Figure 3.22**), the interlocking of melody, rhythm, text, dance, and ceremony in *malombo* music, enable the ancestral spirits to be evoked, thus bringing healing to the patient. The healer uses the songs of *malombo*, the core melodies are enahanced through the *mato* process of enticing the ancestral spirits with melody, text, and rhythm, in order to achieve healing.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This final chapter summarizes how music provides both the impetus for inducing Vhavenda spirit possession and how music sets the framework for the accompanying movements of the patients, which are necessary in order to lead to healing. It is evident that all *malombe* make use of songs as a means to announce the patient's arrival into the world of their ancestral spirits. This research sheds light on the indigenous healing practice of the Vhavenda cultural group and in particular how music is central to the process of healing.

The research outlined in this thesis provides a detailed overview of the role of musical arts in the healing practices of the Vhavenda people of the Limpopo Province. The study examines and describes the role and function of musical arts in the process of invoking the ancestral spirits during spiritual healing events. The researcher has demonstrated that the indigenous musical arts used in the *malombo* healing practice affect the patient both psychically and physically. Music is used as a means to transform patients, providing a vehicle for which the *malombe* can provide healing which enables them to return as members of their society once again, free from illness and in some cases, anguish.

Nineteen songs were collected and translated from Tshivenda to English and the melodic frameworks of seven songs were transcribed and their stories detailed in order to provide melodic transcriptions of the events. The recordings demonstrate the significant musical content while the texts, discussed in the main body of chapter four, illustrate the situated symbolic or metaphoric nature of creative inspiration. The context and the manner in which the songs were effective in individual healing sessions have also been documented.

The following concluding reflections summarize and synthesize the propositions that guided this study.

The music of *malombo* has never been the subject of thorough research, despite the work that has been done concerning healing through music around the world. Although ethnomusicologist John Blacking focused on Vhavenda music in his research, he was primarily concerned with the role of music in culture, which he addressed in his study of Venda children's songs. Both Blacking and Van Warmelo dealt with *malombo* music superficially, however the lack of extensive research has left a significant gap in the research on Vhavenda musical practices. There is therefore a distinct and timely need for documentation and analysis of the traditional healing arts as they, like many traditional musical practices in the area, are vulnerable to extinction. As such, the documentation and discussion of the nineteen songs from this field research provides vital insight in order to determine the vibrancy of *malombo* musical practices today and provides a framework for future research.

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5.2. LIMITATIONS

The lack of research on traditional healing practices in Vhavenda communities is partially due to some of the limitations of research in this context. Although the researcher was invited to participate and document these closed and secret events, some limitations have impacted the discussion, documentation, analysis, and publication of materials. In order to respect the secrecy and privacy of both healers and patients, boundaries have been protected though ethical research practices. This includes not publishing information about the relationship between the patient and the ancestral spirit and the process of the meeting between patient and spirit. In addition, the secrecy of the ritual before the availing of the ancestral spirits that takes place outside the divining house has been respected and the researcher has not revealed this section of the ritual. During breaks, patients are often taken to the back of the house before the next session of the ancestors availing themselves and this period of time is considered highly secretive and not appropriate for publication. All research published in this thesis has been reviewed and approved by participants for publication including both healers and patients.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

There are several areas of research in the area of traditional healing practices that the researcher recommends for further investigation. This includes two major areas including research on the attire of the healers and research on the relationship between traditional healing rituals and current medical practices.

The attire of healers is changing rapidly as there is a decline in the use of animal skins and a reliance on coloured cloth as a replacement. Understanding and documenting this shift will preserve an understanding about the impact of environmental changes on healing practices and avenues that healers have used to continue practices with new means of attire. Imbuing cloth with meaning is central to preserving relationships with the ancestors and thus further investigation will yield important insights into these rapidly shifting practices.

Further research is also prudent in the area of African indigenous medical practices and current medical practices as governed by federal law. As there has historically been a divide between the two healing areas, research on the potentials of bridging this divide could provide pivotal insight into comprehensive healing for patients that respects both traditional and current medical practices as complementary rather than competitive. There is potential for hospitals and medical practitioners to embrace, rather than overlook, the healing potential offered through indigenous medical practices that could provide patients with comprehensive access to healing practices. This research is necessary to outline the complementary potentials that indigenous practices can provide rather than the current view of indigenous medical practices that can induce shame and fear in many patients and may then negatively impact their health.

5.4. CONCLUSION

The research conducted leads the researcher to the conclusion that if there is no music, there is no way that the *malombo* healing practice could take place. In every

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tshele session, music was the medium to facilitate the healing. The singing, rattle and drumming instigated the dance and gestural movement of the patient - the swaying of hands, the nodding of the head and the movements of the body from side to side, backwards and forwards. The songs inspire and drive the *tshele* session to become more rhythmic, and it is through this integration and blending, of melody and rhythm, that the hastening of the arrival of the ancestral spirits is accomplished. Thus, these movements demonstrate that the music has evoked the ancestral spirits to come and take control of a patient. For example, when a patient who could not even sit hears the *tshele* music, he is roused to the point that he can sit and start to dance, and it is only by doing so, that he may receive his ancestral spirits. Music is the means of invocation of the ancestors and the healing then comes from the presence of the ancestors. As such, the two are symbiotic, music is necessary for the healing presence of the ancestors and the ancestors rely on the music in order to become present within the patient.

The research outlined in this thesis demonstrated that the vocal music (and in particular the *mato* process that is the creative means that drives the songs), in combination with the playing of rattles and drums, is necessary for the ancestral spirits to be invoked as quickly as possible. The study also revealed that the *mutungwa* (drum), rattles *(tshele)*, *malombe* participation, and the community participation are the motivation behind how the *malombo* musical arts call the ancestral spirits. The music, the dance, and the community participation calm the ancestral process '*u ladza midzimu*' (the process of laying to rest the ancestral spirit peacefully). All healers and patients interviewed indicated that if there were no vocal and instrumental components they would be unable to call the ancestral spirits from the 'deep forests' (referring to a deep sleep in a remote quiet place) to join them. This study also revealed that the singing and *tshele* (rattles) cannot be separated, neither in the first session, nor in the second session when the drums are added. Music is the impetus for the movements of the patient, and '*u wa mudzimu*' (falling of the ancestral spirits state), which leads to healing.

The *malombo* performances are rooted in the supernatural intervention of the ancestral spirits. The calling up of the spirits results from the dedication and determination of the participants who continue all night until the spirits arrive. Despite the fact that the language of the ritual that is spoken and the songs are mixed with Kalanga (a Shona dialect), which in Tshivenda is called Tshikalanga, language of Zimbabwe, the healer and the patient communicate easily and without concern for misunderstanding. This is a linguistic phenomenon that requires further research.

All patients used songs as a means to accompany their arrival to their ancestral spirits world - the trance state. This transition into the possession state is marked physically with the patient uncontrollably falling down: in the research outlined here all except for two possessed fell straight to the front, facing down. It was indicated that falling whilst facing up would be regarded as disrespectful to the ancestral spirits. The connection between the physical and the metaphysical is intrinsically linked as the patients transition between illness and health, possession and release, and musical and non-musical states that mark the stages of *malombo*.

There is some evidence that the *malombo* ritual is being sustained in current Tshivenda communities. However, as is the case with many traditional forms of

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healing, it is threatened due to lack of awareness and information surrounding the healing ceremony. This thesis has outlined how *malombo* continues to be supported in communities but it is difficult to assess the sustainability of the tradition given the lack of institutional support for traditional healing practices. Of importance is the belief that once the ancestral spirits have availed themselves they leave a message of hope and prosperity to their clans (Personal interview, Nemasisi 12/10/2010), therefore supporting the ongoing sustainment of the tradition. This is furthered by actions of healers such as Vho Maine Vho Mutshe when they, the *mudzimu/nyadala*, distributed snuff to all the people who were present in the house of the *tshele* performance. It is a sign of peace and good health for the individuals present, the ancestors, and the community to share the snuff. (Personal interview, Mutshe 30/03/2012).

Therefore, participation in *malombo* echoes Thram's description: "participating in Dandanda as ritual restores the individual's sense of balance, of being "right" with the forces of the universe outside oneself, the invisible forces of the spirit world as well as the more tangible forces within the community and family to which he/she belongs" (Thram 1999:313). The songs sung during *malombo* are restorative to the psyche through the familiarity of their lyrics, and their deep connection to the past experiences of the performers, both ancestral and human. It is the musical elements that facilitate this connection and restoration of self, the bonding rhythmical flow of melody and rhythm simmer with the pulse of the patient, thus evoking a significant effect on the brain, nervous system, and spirit. This connection, between body, mind, ancestors and music was witnessed over the course of many years of field research. The outcomes and effects of this traditional healing ceremony were also witnessed, as in the case where a child who was not responding to her known name one morning was only able to respond after the *malombo* when the ancestral spirits revealed her new name. This was an indication of how the ancestral spirits responded to those who believe in them.

The songs used during the invocation of the ancestor's spirits are not commonly used; the music consists of changing texts (*mato)* by the soloist leader and the response by the *malombe*. The entire group shows full respect to the soloist, because the group members remain silent between the songs. There can be no interruptions during the period of singing and rattle playing other than the words of Vho Maine until the ancestral spirits show their presence. The songs were sometimes led in the Kalanga language to lead the Kalanga speaking *nyadala* to her awaited arena of the *malombo* ritual. There were instances where the *nyadala* asked for specific songs to be sung for her to dance. This is what the researcher has referred to as the *mato* process. The *mato* explains why each recording differs to some degree, which is also an indication of the musical skill of the leader that builds the songs during the ceremony. The *mato* process is central to understanding the musical complexities that are involved in the ritual and crucial in acknowledging the creative process involved. As such, documentation, recording, and transcription do not necessarily provide a comprehensive depiction or representation of the musical creativity that is necessary to sustain the adaptive processes of the tradition. Thus, the acknowledged limitations of recording and transcription stand to urge community members to support the practice of the tradition in order to provide for its sustainment as a creative process into the future.

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Regardless of the differences in how the patient behaved before and after possession, the fact remains that vigorous singing was witnessed in all observed cases before the ancestors arrived. The conclusions outlined in this thesis take into concern the reported experience of the patients, healers, members of *malombe* community, and Tshivenda communities at large. Musical arts, instruments, support of the relatives and the community, and the role played by the healer serve a positive message of hope and result in good health where healing takes place. The importance of the role of music in the final stages of the spirit arrival is perhaps the most significant part of the entire *malombo* ritual. For this reason it is concluded that music is the ultimate factor for the success or failure of the *malombo* healing practice. All that occurs during the healing process is because of the music that formed the bridge for the ancestral spirits to travel to the living. The framework that this suggests is that without music there is no linkage between the ancestral and physical worlds; that the music evoked through *malombo* healing ritual rests on the musical structures that are driven through the dynamic *mato* processes which rely on the musical skills and abilities of the healer. It is only when these musical processes are evoked that healing and transformation can take place. Thus, understanding the musical processes and events that underpin the *malombo* healing ritual allows for greater perspectives into the role of healing within the Tshivenda culture and the central role that music plays within this ritual.

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APPENDIX 1: REQUESTS AND APPROVALS FOR RESEARCH

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Faculty of Humanities
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20 September 2007

The Secretary General
Traditional Healer's Association
Thohoyandou

Dear Sir!

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON MALOMBO MUSICAL ARTS IN VHAVENDA INDEGENOUS HEALING PRACTICES.

1. I student no: 95292952 of The University of Pretoria, kindly request to conduct a research at your field of industry.
2. The result, musical recordings and recommendations will assist the ethnomusicologist, students and learners to understand and appreciate the role and professional procedure of traditional healers in culture.
3. Herein find a letter of registration from the University of Pretoria.
4. I will be grateful if my request will meet your favourable consideration.

Yours faithfully

Mudzunga Junniah Davhula (Mrs)

Researcher

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AUTHORISATION FOR CONDUCT A RESEACH IN THE VHEMBE AREA

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I MELUVHOLA MPHAHENI

Secretary General of the traditional healers association, i hereby authorize the research to be undertaken in Vhembe district traditional healers.

The topic of the research is: MALOMBO MUSICAL ARTS IN VHAVENDA INDEGENOUS HEALING PRACTICES

The research will in no doubt bring to surface a lot of issues and malombo music in the oral tradition of the Vhavenda tribe.

Signature:.....

Date: 20/11/2007

Place: SIBASA

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UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

VHEMBE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE THROUGH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICE EXCELLENCE

PRIVATE BAG X 5006
THOHOYANDOU
0950
TEL: 015 962 1828
015 962 1196
FAX: 015 962 1017

Ref : VDM 16/1
Enq: Nemakonde M.A.

24 October 2006

Mrs. Mudzunga Junniah Davhula
P.O. Box 62
Tshakhuma
0951

Dear Madam

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH ON "INDIGENOUS HEALING MUSIC"

1. The above matter has reference.
2. Your letter of request was well received on the 18 October 2006.
3. Request to conduct a research on Indigenous Healing Music is hereby approved.
4. We wish you the best of luck on your research.

Yours in quality service delivery.

MUNICIPAL MANAGER
VHEMBE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

27/10/06
DATE

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APPENDIX 2: APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE

PLEASE NOTE: 1. No applications will be considered without the necessary documentation. See 3.5, 3.7, 3.8 and 4.1 below.
2. No applications will be considered unless they have been approved by the Departmental Research Committee.

Please type or print legibly with black pen.

Name: DAVHULA MUDZUNGA JUNNIAH Address: P.O. BOX 62 TSHAKHUMA 0951 University Department: Musicology Professional status (if student: student number, degree and year of study): 95292952 DMus. Telephone: 015 5816049 Cell phone: 0845036567 Fax: 015 5816049 E-mail: junniah@stormail.co.za	TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: INDIGENOUS MUSIC HEALING: A CASE STUDY OF THE VHAVENDA MUSICAL PRACTICES IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH: Undergraduate ☐ Graduate ☒ Not for degree purposes ☐
ANTICIPATED FUNDING SOURCE (if any): SAMRO UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA	ESTIMATED DURATION OF THE PROJECT: From 2006 to 2007
FIRST APPLICATION: Yes ☒ No ☐ RESUBMISSION: Yes ☐ No ☐	

1. OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH
Please list:

- To conduct an emperical investigation into the healing function of indigenous music during Vhavenda traditional healers religious ceremonies.
- To conduct a literature investigation into the healing function of indigenous music in other South African cultures that can assist in determining the roles music in the Vhavenda cultural group has in the healing function.
- To draw conclusions and make recommendations that will throw light on the efficacy or otherwise of the function of indigenous music as a necessary component of indigenous healing practices.

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2. SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH

Please provide a brief summary of the research (maximum 250 - 300 words).

The Vhavenda maintain a close relationship between the living and the dead through a number of rituals. One such ritual is called malombo. There are also few major kinds of malombo dance, where we have malombo for the illness, malombo for death rituals, malombo for worshipping and malombo for treatment of seeds. In all of these malombo dance, music plays an important role. The study seeks to investigate from the Vhavenda perspective and perception, what is peculiar about healing music, and the specific roles music plays in indigeneous healing practices and processes. This researeh is therefore informed by the researcher's quest to demonstrate that indigeneous music plays a significant role in this ceremony.

3. SUBJECTS' PARTICIPATION

3.1 Where and how are subjects selected?

Vhembe District in Limpopo Province.
Purposive sampling method will be used to select those traditional healers that can provide useful information to inform the study.

3.2 If subjects are asked to volunteer, who are being asked to volunteer and how are they selected?

They will not be recruited byt they will be selected.

3.3 If subjects are to be recruited, what inducement is to be offered?

They will be acknowledged in the dessertation.
The dessertation will be made available for the public in the library.

3.4 If subjects' records are to be used, specify the nature of these records and indicate how they will be selected.

No records.

3.5 Has permission been obtained to study and report on these records?

Yes ☒ No ☐ Not applicable ☐

If *Yes*, attach letters.

Attached.

3.6 Salient characteristics of subjects:

Number: ☐

Gender: Female ☒ Male ☒

Age: 19 ± 65

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3.7 Describe if permission of relevant authorities (e.g. school, hospital, clinic) has been obtained?

Yes ☒ No ☐ Not applicable ☐

If ***Yes***, attach letters.

Attached

3.8 List proposed procedures to be carried out with subjects to obtain data required by marking the applicable box(es):

☐ Record review
☒ Interview (*Attach)*
☒ Questionnaire (*Attach, if available. If not, submit at a later stage, together with initial approval of Ethics Committee.*)
☐ Clinical assessment
☐ Procedures (e.g. therapy). Please describe.
☒ Other. Please describe.

Photography, observations, tape and video recording.

3.9 If specific evaluation/assessment and treatment procedures are to be used, is the researcher registered to carry out such procedures?

3.10 If the researcher will not personally carry out the procedure, state name and position of person who will.

4. INFORMED CONSENT

4.1 *Attach copy* of consent form

1. Consent form.
2. Detailed Consent form

4.2 If subjects are

- under 18, or mentally or legally incompetent to consent to participation, how is their assent obtained and/or from whom is proxy consent obtained?

Please describe.

If they are from the healer-trainer, the proxy consent is obtained from their healer trainee.

4.3 If subjects are

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- under 18, or mentally or legally incompetent, how will it be made clear to the subjects that they may withdraw from the study at any time?

Please describe.

4.4 If the researcher is not competent in the mother tongue of the subjects, how will he/she ensure that subjects fully understand the content of the consent form?

Please describe.

Not applicable.

5. RISKS AND DISADVANTAGES TO THE SUBJECTS

5.1 Do subjects risk any potential harm (e.g.: physical, psychological, legal, social) by participating in the research? No ☒ Yes ☐

If ***Yes***, answer 5.2:

5.2 What safeguards will be taken to minimize the risks?

Please describe.

5.3 Will participation or non-participation disadvantage the subjects in any way?
No ☒ Yes ☐

If ***Yes***, explain in which way.

6. DECEPTION OF SUBJECTS

6.1 Are there any aspects of the research about which the subjects are not to be informed?
No ☒ Yes ☐

If ***Yes***, describe the nature thereof.

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7. BENEFITS TO THE SUBJECTS:

7.1 Will participation benefit the subjects? No ☐ Yes ☒
If *Yes*, please describe.
The spiritual music will be documented for future references.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

8.1 How is confidentiality and/or anonymity to be assured?
Please describe.
All information will be treated as confidential, Anonymity is assured and the data will be destroyed if the subject decides to withdraw.
My Supervisor, Music Department-University of Pretoria and University archival section, these will have access to the research data.

9. DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH

9.1 To whom will results be made available?
To the traditional health practitioners, Universities, learners and research organisations.

9.2 In which format do you expect results to be made available?
Please mark those applicable:
☑ book ☑ scientific article ☐ lay article ☐ TV ☐ radio
☑ conference papers ☑ thesis ☑ dissertation ☑ mini-dissertation
☐ other, please describe.
chec

10. STORAGE OF RESEARCH DATA

10.1 Will research data be destroyed at the end of the study? Yes ☐ No ☒

10.2 If **No**, where, in what format and for how long will the data be stored?
Please describe.
It will be stored in the University's libraries, archives and soft wares ~~in the~~

10.3 For what uses will data be stored?
Please mark those applicable:
☒ research
☐ demonstration
☐ public performance
☒ archiving

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10.4 How will subjects' permission for further use of their data be obtained?

☒ Informed consent form

☐ Other, please describe.

11. OTHER INFORMATION

Any other information which may be of value to the committee should be provided here:

I am the daughter of the sol, I am married to the royal family, I will research in Vhembe where the Vhavenda are found, I will observe, participate and interview for data collection.

SIGNATURES:

APPLICANT: MDaluka ..... **DATE:** .....

SUPERVISOR: ..... **DATE:** .....

CHAIR: DEPARTMENTAL RESCOM:

..... **DATE:** .....

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:

..... **DATE:** .....

Are you of the opinion that the proposed research project has ethical implications?

Yes ☐ No ☐

CHAIR: FACULTY ETHICS COMMITTEE:

..... **DATE:** .....

ATTACHMENTS:

☒ Other authorities' approval
☐ Questionnaires, interviews, assessment
☐ Other
☒ Informed consent
☐ Subject instructions

* *With acknowledgement to Harvard University 1999-2000, and the University of the Witwatersrand 1992*

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APPENDIX 3 – SONG/LYRICS TRANSLATIONS

Song Title (Tshivenda)	Song Title (English)	Appendix A3 Page Number	Track Number on CD
Vho Maine ri a fa ra fhela tavhanyani	You Maine hurry, we are all going to die	A3-2	1
Ramasaga mukalaha	Ramasaga, the old man	A3-3	3
Ṋemakhavhani Ṋenzhinga	Nemakhavhani the neat one	A3-5	5
Vha (Vhakalanga) ni langane	(Vhakalanga) Come into an agreement	A3-7	6
Vho Madevha	Name of a man	A3-8	7
Mbanzhe Vhakoma	Marijuana Headman	A3-9	9
Mmbwa yanga I pfi Vhalutani	My dog is called Vhalutani	A3-10	11
Iḓani ni do vhona thevhele mmembe	Come and see the pouch, mmembe	A3-12	12
Mae-vhangu, ndo wa ndo wa dekenya	Mae-vhago I fell, I fell on my hip	A3-13	13
Vho Hangwani	The name of a woman	A3-15	15
U a lila Nyawasedza	Nyawasedza is crying	A3-16	17
Vho Nyamuofhe	The name of a woman	A3-17	18
Ntshavheni a vha mu funi	They don't like Ntshavheni	A3-18	
Ndo lunwa nga phame	I have been stung by a scorpion	A3-19	19
Ndo vhidzwa musanda	I have been summoned to the chief's kraal, yes	A3-22	20
Ndi a sinda	I grind	A3-23	21
Vhasikana kha ri ye Khadane!	Girls, let's go to Khadane!	A3-25	22
Vhusiwana hanga vhu lidza nzhivha	Poverty has brought me misfortune	A3-26	
Vhe ndi a tuwa, vhahulwane vhanga	I am leaving, my elders	A3-28	23

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Vho Maine ri a fa ra fhela tavhanyani
You Maine hurry, we are all going to die

1. Solo: *Vho-Maine ri a fa ra fhela tavhanyani*
You Maine hurry, we are all going to die,

Refrain: *Hee, huwee, aha ri a fa ra fhel*
Oh, what, yes we are all going to perish

2. Solo*:* *Na midzimu a vha tendi nayo;*
They are even refusing that the gods can have contact with us;

3. Solo*:* *Mifhululu a vha tendi nayo,*
They are refusing with their ululations (praises),

4. Solo*:* *Aha Vho – Maine ri a fa ra fhela*.
Oh, what, *Vho - Maine* we are all going to perish.

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Ramasaga mukalaha
Ramasaga, the old man

1. Solo: *Ndi a gonya tombo ndi tolele naa?*
Can I climb the stone and peep there?

Refrain: *Ahee he hee, Mbombela Ramasaga mukalaha*
Oh, Ye! Ye! Oh Mbombela Ramasaga, the old man

2. Solo: *Ndi a gonya tombo ndi tolele naa?*
Can I climb the stone and peep there?

3. Solo: *Ndi tolele hu no bva malombe wee*
To peep where the possessed dancers come from

4. Solo: *Ndi tolele hu no bva malombe wee*
To peep where the possessed dancers come from

5. Solo: *Ndi a gonya tombo ndi tolele naa?*
Can I climb the stone and peep there?

6. Solo: *Ndi a gonya tombo ndi tolele naa?*
Can I climb the stone and peep there?

7. Solo: *Ndi tolele hu no bva malombe wee*
To peep where the possessed dancers come from

8. Solo: *Ndi a gonya tombo ndi tolele naa?*
Can I climb the stone and peep there?

9. Solo: *Ndi tolele hu no bva malombe wee*
To peep where the possessed dancers come from

10. Solo: *Nwana wanga o vha tshinya mini wee?*
What did my child do to wrong you?

11. Solo: *Nwana wanga o vha tshinya mini wee?*
What did my child do to wrong you?

12. Solo: *Ndi a tuwa vhusiku honohu wee*
I shall leave just in this night

13. Solo: *Ndi a tuwa vhusiku honohu wee*
I shall leave just in this night

14. Solo: *Ndi tshi tuwa a vha nga mmboni wee*
When I leave you won't see me

15. Solo: *Ndi tshi tuwa a vha nga mmboni wee*
When I leave you won't see me

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16. Solo: *Ndi do tuwa nga 'matombo – ngwende' wee*
I shall leave through 'mato'mbo ngwende

17. Solo: *Ndi do tuwa nga 'matombo – ngwende' wee*
I shall leave through 'mato'mbo ngwende

18. Solo: *Nwana wanga ndi muthihi fhedzi wee*
My child is the only one

19. Solo: *Ndi a tuwa vhusiku honohu wee*
I shall leave just in this night

20. Solo: *Ndi tshi tuwa a vha nga mmboni wee*
When I leave you won't see me

21. Solo: *Vho vha vha tshi ri ngomani hu liwa'ni wee?*
What did you expect to eat at the *malombo?*

22. Solo: *Hu liwa nyumo na magwadi*
Only wild sap fruit and squashmelon

23. Solo: *Ndo tangana na* Matshonono
I met with Matshonono

24. Solo Matshonono *o bva* Luvuvhu
Matshonono was from Luvuvhu

25. Solo: Matshangana *ndi maphula ndevhe*
Shangaan people punch holes into their ears

26. Solo: Mutandanyi *ndi vho Raluvhimba*
Mutandanyi is the god Raluvhimba

27. Solo: *No fa nothe no fhela naa?*
Are you all dead and perish?

28. Solo: Tshitandani *ndo khotha mukhuwa ahe*
Tshitandani is where I worshipped a European

29. Solo: *Ndi tshi mu khotha ndi mukhuwa wanga*
I worshipped him because he is my European

30. Solo: Tshitandani *ndo beba pholisa*.
Tshitandani (town) I carried a policeman (on my back)

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Ṋemakhavhani Ṋenzhinga
Nemakhavhani the neat one

1. Solo: Ṋemakhavhani *Ṋenzhinga*
Nemakhavhani the neat one

Refrain: *Huwee le lee*
Yes Oh Yes

2. Solo: *Nwana wanga we nda doba*
My child whom I picked up

3. Solo: *Ndo mu doba Tshirovha*
I found him at the Tshirovha river

4. Solo: *Mulamboni wa* Tavha,
The river of sand

5. Solo: *A tshi tamba na thuthuthu*
Playing with a scooter

6. Solo: *Khuye – khuye ya vhaloyi*
Shake shake of the witches

7. Solo: *Ndo mu wana e fhedzi*
I found him naked

8. Solo: *Nwana wanga wa mutuka*
My child who is a baby boy

9. Solo: *Makhuwani ha tsha ya*
He no longer pays a visit to the reef (town)

10. Solo: *U vho shavha na tshigidi*
He is afraid of the rifle (gun)

11. Solo: *Avhusheni munene*
How are you the kind one

12. Solo: *Nwana wanga we nda doba*
My child whom I picked up

13. Solo: *Ndo mu doba* Tshirovha
I found him at the Tshirovha river

14. Solo: *Mulamboni wa* Tavha,
The river of sand

15. Solo: *A tshi tamba na thuthuthu*
Playing with a scooter

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16. Solo: *Khuye – khuye ya vhaloyi*
Shake shake of the witches

17. Solo: *Ndo mu wana e fhedzi*
I found him naked

18. Solo: *Nwana wanga wa mutuka*
My child who is a baby boy

19. Solo: *Makhuwani ha tsha ya*
He no longer pays a visit to the reef (town)

20. Solo: *U vho shavha na tshigidi*
He is afraid of the rifle (gun)

21. Solo: *Avhusheni munene*
How are you the kind one

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Vha (Vhakalanga) ni langane
(Vhakalanga) Come into an agreement

1. Solo: *Hee, vha langane*
Oh, they should discuss

Refrain: *Hee vha langane heee! ee, vha langane.*
Oh, they should discuss and reach an agreement.

2. Solo: *Vho Maine ni dzule ni langane.*
Vho Maine sit down and discuss.

3. Solo*:* *Khuuvha ni do vhona tshi laho nwana.*
Indeed you will see what has burdened the child.

4. Solo: *Ni do vhona tshira tshirambelwa.*
You will see the invitee monster.

5. Solo: *Vho Magodi thoho ndi ludongo.*
Vho Magodi, the head is hairless.

6. Solo: *Ndi ludongo nga u* la *govhole.*
It is hairless because of eating govhole.

7. Solo: *Hovhu vhusiwana ndi vhuhulu.*
This type of poverty is too much.

8. Solo: *Nwana uyu o tou tshinya mini?*
What wrong did this child do?

9. Solo: *Vho Maine takuwani ni langane (hune midzimu ya khou da nga mivhili)*
Vho Maine stand up and discuss.

10. Solo: *Vhusiwana a ni vhu vhoni naa?*
Don't you see the poverty?

11. Solo: *Vhusiwana ndi vhuṅwe na ku fa.*
Poverty is the same as death.

12. Solo: *Vhakalanga ni langane,*
Vhakalanga, come to an agreement,

13. Solo: *Ni langane ni zukwa zukwa*
You should agree and collect five cents, five cents each,

14. Solo: *Ni zukwa zukwa* ri do *renga halwa*
Contribute five cents so we can buy African beer/brew beer

15. Solo: *Havha Vhakalanga ni langane*
You, Vhakalanga, come into an agreement

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Vho Madevha
Name of a man

1. Solo: *Vho Madevha thoho ndi ludongo.*
Vho Madevha, the head is a clay frying pan.

Refrain: *Ahee ahee hee, hee zwi a vhavha*
Oh, oh yes, it is painful.

2. Solo: *Khuuvha tshiswitulo I do vha tshikoli.*
Indeed for lunch mealies will be served.

3. Solo: *Nwana u a lila Vho Mme vho ya'fhi?*
The child is crying – where has the mother gone?

4. Solo*:* *Vho ya mitangani vho ya u ka tshikoli wee!*
She has gone to the mealie fields to fetch mealie cobs!

5. Solo: *Khuuvha vha tshi vhuya vha mu khophele vho.*
Indeed when she returns she should break her a piece of cob.

6. Solo: *Ro kanda muhavho wa mavhele maswa.*
We have put our feet where new mealie - cobs are ready.

7. Solo: *Khuuvha ngugubane I a bwa migodi.*
Indeed a determined person can dig up a mine.

8. Solo: *Khuuvha vhasidzana imani ri lingane.*
Indeed girls stand up and measure our heights.

9. Solo: *Vhasidzana kha ri ye ri khadane.*
Girls let us shake hands.

10. Solo: *Ri yo luka mulala nga temba.*
So we could knit with a piece of the mulala plant with the temba.

11. Solo: *Mutshundudi zwidudu – mutembe, vhakegulu.*
The river Mutshundudi lined up with clay pots.

12. Solo: *Vho Madevha thoho ndi ludongo.*
Vho Madevha the head is hairless.

13. Solo: *Ndi ludongo nga u nwa govhole.*
It is hairless because of drinking thick juice at the bottom of the *marula* fruit.

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Mbanzhe Vhakoma
Marijuana Headman

1. Solo: *Mbanzhe Vhakoma kha I dahwe*
Headman let marijuana be smoked

Refrain: *Aa ahee kha i dahwe mbanzhe*
Oh – Yes, let it be smoked marijuana

The call and refrain are repeated five times before the other solo lines can be sung.

2. Solo: *Ndi do daha na Vho Nevuwari.*
I shall smoke with Vho Nevuwari

3. Solo: *Kha vha dahe ri vhone haa hee!*
Do smoke let us see

4. Solo: *Tshirongana ndi'we mbidzeleli*
Tshirongana (copper wrist string) you are the caller

5. Solo: *Kudya kwa vha vea kupakula (Karanga)*
Eat little and put some food aside

6. Solo: *Ngoho, ngoho Lowani o fa naa?*
Truly, truly it is that Lowani has passed away?

7. Solo: *Tenda o fa e mukhuwa*
As long as she died being a European

8. Solo: *Mbanzhe Vhakoma kha I dahwe*
Headman let marijuana be smoked

9. Solo: *Ida u vhone dembe nne ndi vhona'ni*?
Come and see miracles, what do I see?

10. Solo: *Ri vho do fa vhulenga sa phala*
We could as well die being unaware like a buck.

11. Solo: *Mbanzhe Vhakoma kha I dahwe*
Headman let marijuana be smoked

12. Solo: *Madandila kulila ndi kwa'ni? (Karanga)*
Madandila why are you crying?

13. Solo: *Nne ndi tuwe ndi ye haya hanga*
Let me leave and go to my own home

14. Solo: *Mbanzhe Vhakoma kha I dahwe*
Headman let marijuana be smoked

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15,16. Solo: *Lo kovhela Vho Khotsimunene*.
The sun has set dear uncle.

17. Solo: *Mbanzhe Vhakoma kha I dahwe*
Headman let marijuana be smoked

18. Solo: *Madandila kulila ndi kwa'ni? (Karanga)*
Madyandila why are you crying?

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Mmbwa yanga I pfi Vhalutani
My dog is called Vhalutani

1. Solo: *Mmbwa yanga I pfi Vhaluṱani:*
My dog is called Vhaluṱani:

Refrain: *Ahee hee ahee*

2. Solo: *Nṋe vha no luṱa vha luṱanye nne,*
Let those people who want to fight create their discord,
3. Solo: *Nga tshanu khe ni sa pfani ha*
Why are you not united by yourselves?

4. Solo: *Inwi ni nanela mutsinda e si shaka.*
You are worried about the foreigner who is not your relative.

5. Solo: *Vhahulwane vhanga, ngoma madambi,*
My lords ngoma is for sickness,

6. Solo: *Hu netamalombe, matsige ha neti;*
The (possessed dancers) are tired, the master drummer is not tired;

7. Solo: *Ngoma dzaṋu dzi sa pfumbi dzi na'ni?*
Why don't your drums sound better?

8. Solo: *Ndo doba tshilombo, vhahulwane vhanga,*
I picked up a troubled ancestral spirit, my lords,

9. Solo: *Hu anda mazwila, ndele a dzi andi,*
There is too much careless singing, and not enough order in the singing,

10. Solo: *Ṭhangu yanga yo wa murorwana:*
My divining bone has fallen to show murorwana:

11. Solo: *Iyani Ngweṋani ha Vho Raḽiṋala!*
Go to Ngweṋani to the traditional healer Raḽiṋala!

12. Solo: *Ndo tambula ndo wa nga dekenya.*
I suffered I have fallen on my hip.

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Idani ni do vhona thevhele mmembe
Come and see the pouch, mmembe

1. Solo: *Ni do vhona dzi vho nga madambi,*
You will see, they now appear like magic,

Refrain: *Idani ni do vhona thevhele mmembe.*
Come and see the pouch mmembe.

2. Solo: *Alilali tsho no vha nanga naa?*
Is Alilali already a healer?

3. Solo: *Tsho vha tshinanga tsho lafha vhangana?*
He has been a petty healer and healed how many?

4. Solo: *Tsho vha tshinanga tsho lafha mashonzha?*
He has been a healer and healed the mopani worms?

5. Solo: *Zwa midzimu zwi dina henefha,*
Gods' affairs are troublesome when it comes to this point,

6. Solo: *Idani ni do vhona thevhele!*
Come and see the pouch mmembe.

7. Solo: *Miluwani la Vho-Rasimphi*
Miluwani of chief Rasimphi

8. Solo: *Vhahulwane vhanga nne ndi vho do fa*
My lords, I will eventually even die,

9. Solo: *Ndi vho do fa nga nzhele madambi:*
I will die because of the knowledge – magic

10. Solo: *Ngoma dzanu dzi nea magome*
Your drum (songs) is giving me laziness in the knees.

11. Solo: *Thevhele ya mme-anga.*
The divining pouch of my mother.

12. Solo: *Tshinani, malombe!*
Dance, malombe!

13. Solo: *Rine ri malombe a tombo la tshai.*
We are malombe of the four cornered stone.

14. Solo: *Lidzani mutunwa ndi u hwe*
Play the thungwa drum so that I can hear it.

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Mae-vhangu, ndo wa ndo wa dekenya
Mae-vhago I fell, I fell on my hip

1. Solo: *Mae-vhangu, ndo wa ndo wa dekenya*
Mae-vhago I fell, I fell on my hip

2. Solo: *Yowee mae-vhangu a vha tsha nngwanya vhannani*
Mae-vhangu, they no longer find me

Refrain: *Yowee ahee ee hee!*
Yowee ahee ee hee!

3. Solo: *Mmawe, haya hashu haya ha malombo*
Mother our home of malombo

4. Solo: *Mmawe Tshakhuma a ni* li *litshi naa*
Mother leave Tshakhuma alone

5. Solo: *Mmawee ni songo fa sa Vho Maiwashe*
Mother don't die like Vho Maiwashe

6. Solo: *Mmawee haya hashu hu nga mukula nga khali*
Mother our home is like pot molder

7. Solo: *Mmawee na Mu*neri *ro vhona a tshi fa*
Mother We also witnessed the death of the missionary

8. Solo: *Mmawee* la *Tshakhuma vha nga si* li *dzhie*
Mother you cannot take Tshakhuma village

9. Solo: *Mmawee lone hone* li *tou vha* la *mavhanga*
Mother this a country of rebelling rivals

10. Solo: *Mmawee tshisimani tsha mukuvhanyela*
Mother the fountain where the rude lady washes

11. Solo: *Mmawee ya vha nyela ndi* do *kuvha nayo*
Mother I shall wash with the rude lady

12. Solo: *Mmawee Tshisafhele tshi*tanga *tshi a swa*
Mother Tshisafhele the kitchen is burning

13. Solo: *Mmawee ndo vhona nga vhuenda enda*
Mother I saw this by moving along

14. Solo: *Mmawee ndo lu vhona Elelwani ha* nali
Mother I saw this as Elelwani never get cross

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15. Solo: *Mmawee ndi tsha limbo nga malingindingi*
Mother this is the song by moving sound

16. Solo: *Mmawee mukukulume u tula Vho Gole*
Mother the cock is whistling the chiefs

17. Solo: *Mmawee mukukulume u tula Vho Gole*
Mother the cock is whistling the chiefs

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Vho Hangwani
The name of a woman

1. Solo: *Haya hanga a ri limi*
At my home we do not till the land

Refrain: *Hee! Haa, hee haa Vho Hangwani*
Oh, Yes ye yes Vho Hangwani

2. Solo: *Ri lima zwiguthe zwa muti*
We plough tree stumps

3. Solo: *Hu sa linwi mavhele haa hee!*
Where no mealies are sown!

4. Solo: *Haya hanga a vha wi malombo*
At my home they do not perform malombo dance

5. Solo: *Vho Hangwani vha a tungula naa?*
Does Vho Hangwani throw divining bones?

6. Solo: *Mutshinyalo vho mu* la *mafhuru*
Mutshinyalo has been robbed (deceived).

7. Solo: *Ndo wanala ndo wa nga dekenya*
They found me having fallen on my hip

8. Solo: *Mutale Fundudzi wo bva nga vhukati*
In the Lake Fundudzi, Mutale flows

9. Solo: *Vhunambi hanga vhu tou lovha ahee!*
My ability to sing, should it be allowed to die away!

10. Solo: *Ndi vhu fha nnyi ndi si na khaladzi?*
To whom do I hand this ability, as I have no brother.

11. Solo: *Khaladzi ndi wa inwe nndu*
The brother belongs to another house

12. Solo: D*abadaba* la *muunga nalo ahee!*
A directionless mad person

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U a lila Nyawasedza
Nyawasedza is crying

Solo 1. *Khuvha* n*wana uyu o tshinya'ni?*
What wrong did this child do?

Refrain: *Ahee u lila Nyawasedza yowee, yowee!*
Yes yes she cries yeh, yeh!

Solo 2. *Vho Nyawasedza vha mu vhengela'ni?*
Why do people hate Nyawasedza?

Solo 3. *Vho Nyawasedza ndi muthu nda tenda.*
Nyawasedza is a person like others.

Solo 4. *Khuvha Nyawasedza tsha muthu ha dobi.*
Indeed Nyawasedza does not steal.

Solo 5. *Ndo lumbama vhusiw ana hanga.*
I lean on my poverty.

Solo 6. *Khuvha Mutshindu*di *zwidudu mutembe.*
Indeed Mutshundudi is lined up with clay pots.

Solo 7. *Fundudzi Mutale wo bva nga vhukati.*
In the middle of Lake Fundudzi Mutale the river flows.

Solo 8. *Ndi tivha* de l*i sa lili* n*wana.*
What nature of dam is it, where no child cries?

Solo 9. *Vhakegulu na vhunwa vha naho.*
Grandmothers are full of wickedness.

Solo 10. *U a lila Nyawasedza tenda n*ne.
Nyawasedza is crying I do agree.

Solo 11. *Zwa vhulinga n*a*nga a ri nga zwi koni.*
We shall not be able to test traditional healers.

Solo 12. *Vha linga anga vha ri dzo tshinya'ni?*
Why test traditional healers, what wrong did they do?

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Vho Nyamuofhe
The name of a woman

1. Solo: *Ahaa daba-daba li a kovhelelwa*
Yes the sun has set for this stupid fellow

Refrain: *Ahaa ahee Vho Nyamuofhe*
Oh! Yes Vho Nyamuofhe

2. Solo: *Ndi a vhidzelela Vho Nyamuofhe*
I am calling upon Vho Nyamuofhe

3. Solo: *Tshe nda vhidzelela vho ima munangoni*
It is long time I was calling as you were at the door

4. Solo: *Tshe nda vhidzelela vho ima dangani*
It is long time I was calling as you were at the kraal

5. Solo: *Mufarekano u a tuwa*
My extra lover is leaving

6. Solo: *Hee haa Ndi a fa zwanga*
Yes let me just die

7. Solo: *Nduni ya makhadzi hu na thuri*
In the house of the aunt there are possum

8. Solo: *Ndi ri ndi tshi fa ndi fela mini, Vho Nyamuofhe?*
But why if I have to, should I die Vho Nyamuofhe?

9. Solo: *Kha vha vhone ndi a fa zwanga*
Yes let me just die

10. Solo: *Hone ndi tshi fa ndi fela mini, Vho Nyamuofhe?*
If I die, why shall I be dying Vho Nyamuofhe?

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Ntshavheni a vha mu funi
They don't like Ntshavheni

1. Solo: *Lo tsha Ntshavheni hae!*
It is morning, Ntshavheni!

Refrain: *A kholomo - Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.*
For her a kraal has been built, as though she is a cow. – Oh, Yes, I am in danger.

2. Solo: *Ndi amba Ntshavheni, Ntshavheni hae!*
I say Ntshavheni!

3. Solo: T*hoho yanga I a rema*
I say my head is aching,

4. Solo: *Nwana uyu ndi pfe*ne *naa?*
Is this child a baboon?

5. Solo: *U pwasha madanga a vhathu*
She is demolishing other people's kraals

6. Solo: N*wana uyu a ni nga mu wani*
You will not find the girl

7. Solo: *Idani ni vha nee zwavho*
Come and give them their few cents

8. Solo: *Ndi amba Ntshavheni, Ntshavheni hae!*
I say Ntshavheni!

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Ndo lunwa nga phame
I have been stung by a scorpion

1. Solo: *Ndi tshi lunwa ndi tshi lumelwa'ni?*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
I have been stung for what good reason? –
Oh, Yes, I am in danger.

Refrain: *Ahee ahee ahelelee ndo lunwa nga phame*
Oh, Yes, I have been stung by a scorpion.

2. Solo: *Khuuvha ya vha phame yo nduma tshikondo*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana
Indeed the scorpion stung me on my hip
Oh, Yes, I am in danger.

3. Solo: *Khuuvha tshi no luma nkadzhi ndi tshi'ni?*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
Oh, what is it that stings a female person?
Oh,Yes, I am in danger

4. Solo: *Khuuvha ya vha phame yo nndendemedza*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
Oh, this scorpion injected (hurt) me.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

5. Solo: *Avha Vho Maine vha fhano vho ya'fhi?*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
Where has the local Maine gone?
Oh, Yes, I am in danger.

6. Solo: *Adzani mikumba ri tungule thangu*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
Stretch out the skins so we can throw divine bones.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

7. Solo: *Khuuvha ri yo vhona ho bvaho tshilombo*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
So we could locate where tshilombo (the bad spirit) originated.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

8. Solo: *Tshilombo ndi muya vha nga si tshi vhone –*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
Tshilombo is spirit you cannot see it
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

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9. Solo: *Tshilombo ndi madi vha nga si a fare –*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
Tshilombo is water you cannot catch it. –
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

10. Solo: *Khuuvha zwo nyelisa zwo fara ene nyanenge*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
How good that it is the very clever one who is possessed.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

11. Solo: *Zwo tou fara lufara khambana Vho Maine*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
The real snuff custodian is the one possessed
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

12. Solo: *Khuuvha ha Madzunya ro bva nga zwivhana*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
At Madzunya's place we used unauthorized exits.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

13. Solo: *Khuuvha ndo swifhala ndi vho nga funguvhu, kha vha vhone*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
Indeed I am pitch black like crow, have a look.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

14. Solo: *Nne ndo sekena ndi vho nga nelete*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
I am thin like a needle Oh, yes.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

15. Solo: *Thangu dzanga dzo wa murorwane kha vha sedze.*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
My dolos have just scattered haphazardly.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

16. Solo: *Hone ya murubi ndi vhula ha Mma (midzimu ya damuni) Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.*
The 'murubi' one tells that it is the ancestor of the mother's lineage.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

17. Solo: *Ndi do gonya tombo ndi tolele.*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
I shall climb a rock and peep.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

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18. Solo: *Khuuvha ndi yo vhona ho bvaho tshilombo*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
Indeed I am going to see the place where *tshilombo* comes from.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

19. Solo: *Tshilombo ndi muya vha nga si tshi vhone*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
Tshilombo is spirit - you can't see it.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

20. Solo: *Tshilombo ndi madi vha nga si tshi fare*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
Tshilombo is water – you cannot catch it.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

21. Solo: *Khuuvha ndi takala ndo fara nga mbili*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
Indeed I become happy when holding both of them.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

22. Solo: *Havha dzi tshi lila dzi ntshela waya*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
When they rattle, I become perplexed.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

23. Solo: *Tavhanyani ni ri zhaku – zhaku*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
Hurry up and dance – dance.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

24. Solo: *Ni sa lidzi na mutsho u do tsha*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
If you do not shake them, it will become light.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

25. Solo: *Hone no da fhano no da u dzhiya'ni, vhakegulu?*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
But you are here, what for are you here, grannies?
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

26. Solo: *Ro da u vhona tshilombe tsha gole*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
We came here to see the celebrity of the god.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

27. Solo: *Khuuvha tsho fhatelwa danga sa kholomo*
Ahee, Ahelele zwo ndi wana.
The kraal is built as for the cows.
Oh,Yes, I am in danger.

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Ndo vhidzwa musanda
I have been summoned to the chief's kraal, yes

1,6. Solo: *Ndo vhidzwa musanda Tshifulanani ahee,*
I have been summoned to the chief's kraal yes,

Refrain: *Ahee ee uwee*
Yes, oh! Yes

2,13. Solo: *Ndila thi I divhi yowee ahee hee ahee*
I don't know the way

3,14. Solo: *Ndo hweswa muhwalo muhuluhulu yowee ahee*
I have been loaded with a big load (baggage) yes

4,10. Solo: *Minwe thi i divhi ahee*
Some I do not know, yes

5. Solo: *Minwe thi nga ruli ahee*
Some (baggage) I shall not be able to off-load

7. Solo: *Ndi ri thi nga swiki ahee*
I say I shall not be able to make it (arriving there)

8. Solo: *Vhala vha hashu ahee*
All those who are my relatives, yes

9. Solo: *Ndo fhiwa muhwalo muhuluhulu ahee*
I have been given a big load (baggage) yes

11. Solo: *Minwe thi i koni ahee*
Some of them (are too heavy for me) I am unable to carry, yes

16. Solo: *Minwe thi nga ruli ahee*
Some (baggage) I shall not be able to off-load

18. Solo: *Ndi ri thi nga swiki ahee*
I say I shall not be able to make it (arriving there)

19. Solo: *Vhala vha hashu ahee*
All those who are my relatives, yes

22. Solo: *Minwe thi i koni ahee*
Some of them (are too heavy for me) I am unable to carry, yes

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Ndi a sinda
I grind

1. Solo: *Ndi a sinda*
I grind

Refrain: *Sinda u mphe*.
Grind and then give me.

2. Solo: *Ndi mutuli wanga,*
The wooden mortar is mine,

3. Solo: *Ndi a sinda mutuli wanga,*
I grind, it is my wooden mortar

Refrain: *Sinda u mphe mutuli wanga*
I grind, it is my wooden mortar

1.Solo: *Mpheni mutuli wanga!*
Give me my wooden mortar!

2. Solo: *Vhakegulu, a ni leli* n*wana:*
Old ladies, you are not bringing up the child:

3. Solo: N*wana uyu u no lilela'ni?*
Why is this child crying?

4. Solo: *Mme awe vho enda Tshalovha*.
Her mother has passed over to Tshalovha (the place of death).

5. Solo: *U sinda vha rali* n*wananga*.
To pound is like this my child.

6. Solo: *Ndo humbula vhusukwa vhu li pi?*
I asked for some beer; where is it?

7. Solo: *Vho Maligwe vha enda Tshalovha*.
Vho – Maligwe has passed over.

8. Solo: *Bvumelani lombo* li *tshine vho!*
Sing up for my spirit, so that it can dance as well!

9. Solo: *Nyamalwela ndi mufunza-vhana;*
Nyamalwela the teacher of children;

10. Solo: *Mpheni mutuli wanga,*
(Ancestral spirit) Give me my mortar,

11.Solo: *Mutuli wanga ndo fhiwa nga tate,*
I was given my mortar by my father,

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12. Solo: *Ndo fhiwa vha tshi enda Tshalovha.*
I was given it when he passed over.

13. Solo: *Vhasikana galani malila.*
Girls, sit down and weep.

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Vhasikana kha ri ye Khadane!
Girls, let's go to Khadane!

1. Solo: *Vhasikana kha ri ye Khadane!*
Girls let's go to Khadane!

Refrain: *Ahee aha helele ahee*
Oh yes, aha, oh yes

2. Solo: *Ha Mutele a ku endi nwana,*
A child should not go to Mutele,

3. Solo: *U do vhuya a ka lukukula,*
It will come back and pick up dizziness,

4. Solo: *Zwa vhulombe zwi dina henefha.*
To be a good singer can be troublesome.

5. Solo: *Mmbwa yanga I pfi Vhalusani:*
My dog is called Vhalusani:

6. Solo: *Vha do lusa tshi no do la ne*
They will do all they can to "eat" (trouble) me

7. Solo: *Vhahulwanempheni tshilemba tshanga!*
Lords, give me my possession hat (tshilemba)!

8. Solo: *Idani malombe! vhusiku vhu a tsha;*
Come malombe, night becomes day;

9. Solo: *Vhusiwana vhu no nga sa lufu.*
Poverty is like death.

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Vhusiwana hanga vhu lidza nzhivha
Poverty has brought me misfortune

1. Solo: *Vhusiwana hanga vhu mpha madambi*.
My poverty has brought me misfortune.

Refrain: *Ahee heehee, vhu mpha madambi*
Yes, yes, it gives me misfortune

2. Solo: *Ho sungununwa mutundo wa gonwa wa mbo nukha*.
The semen of an impotent man splashed out and it smelt.

3. Solo: *Vhasikana vha kati matangwa ti mbo gaya*!
Girls play matangwa and I will also dance!

4. Solo: *Vha vhaluna, ndi peni-vho n̓anga ndi mbo daha*!
Men, give me a reed pipe and I will also take snuff!

5. Solo: *Vhahulwane vhanga nanga yanga ndi sia'fhi*?
My great ones where did I leave my reed pipe?

6. Solo: *Nne ndi a tuwa ndi ye Phalavhurwa*:
I am departing and go to Phalavhurwa:

7. Solo: *Vhe ri, Phalavhurwa a hu tuwelwi*.
They say Phalavhurwa is not to be crossed.

8. Solo: *Ha pfi a dzi lili musanda dzi na'ni*?
Why is it that they don't play (ngoma dza vhadzimu) at the musanda (Chief's kraal)?

9. Solo: *Rine ri makhotho a ha nya shaya nwana*.
We are indeed strong men, but we have lived without children.

10. Solo: *Vho Madevha, tsindi ndi lukwati*;
Mr. Madevha's loincloth is wrinkled (has some mess up)

11. Solo: *Tsindi ndi lukwati nga u lesa govhole*.
The loincloth has wrinkled because of eating too much marula pulp.

12. Solo: *Nne ndi a tuwa ndi tevhele tate*.
I am departing so that I can follow my late father.

13. Solo: *Nwana uyu ndi Masholopote*;
This child is Masholopote;

14. Solo: *Ene u sholopota na zwila zwa Vho tate*.
The one who gathers the things of my father.

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15. Solo: *Vhusiwana hanga ndi vhunwe na ku fa*.
My poverty makes me feel like dying.

16. Solo: *Hu do kona Vho–Mandule-ndule*,
Vho–Mandule-ndule can really dance well,

17. Solo: *Nyamuvhuya u vho gaya nadzo*.
Nyamuvhuya keeps on dancing with the drums.

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Vhe ndi a tuwa, vhahulwane vhanga
I am leaving, my elders

1. Solo: *Vhe ndi a ṱuwa, vhahulwane vhanga.*
They say I am going away, my great ones.

Refrain: *Ho ahee ho ahee haee eaa*
Oh yes oh yes yes yes

2. Solo: *Ndi tshi ṱuwa ndi vhuya ishaho.*
I am going away, but I shall return next year.

3. Solo*:* *Vhe ri maivhangu ndo wa nga dekenya.*
They say, "My mother I have fallen on my hip

4. Solo*:* *Hu neta malombe matsige ha neti.*
The (possessed) dancers are tired, the master drummer is not tired

5. Solo: *A thi tsha kona na ipfi ḽo no fa.*
I cannot sing any more; my voice has gone.

6. Solo: *Ndi ri vha ṱohola tshele sa mavhele.*
I say they are pounding the hand-rattles like maize in a mortar.

7. Solo: *Ahee! Ngoma kha dzi lile dzi mphe mulalo.*
Oh! Let the drums sound and bring me peace.

8. Solo: *Ni tshi fa ndi vhuteka-teka.*
When you die, you just wander about from village to village.

9. Solo: *Vho-Makhulu ndo kambwa nga halwa.*
The old ladies, I am drunk with beer.

10. Solo: *Ngoma dzi tshi lila dzi re na magome.*
When the drums sound, they must be powerful not weak.

11. Solo: *Vhulombe vhu ro fhiwa nga Ṅwali.*
Possession is given to us by Ṅwali (the Vhavenda High God).

12. Solo: *Tshele yanga malisa mbilu.*
My rattle stirs up the feelings (lit. eater of my heart).

13. Solo: *Vhe'dzi ya gada bere dza Tshikhuwa.*
They are galloping (like) horses of the Europeans.

14. Solo: *Ri ngo tamba ngoma dza milimbe.*
We played the drums so that people danced very well indeed.

15. Solo: *Ro fhaṱelwa danga sa kholomo.*
A kraal has been built for us, as if we were cattle.

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16. Solo: *Ka Mutele a Ku endi nwana;*
A child should not go to Mutele;

17. Solo: *Xunwa-xunwa dzi a pedza vhana, iwe vhathu.*
Locust finished the children, you people.

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CD TRACKLIST

Track Number	Song Title (Tshivenda)	Song Title (English)
1	*Vho Maine ri a fa ra fhela tavhanyani* (See Chapter 4, Page 4-8)	You Maine hurry, we are all going to die
2	*Vho Maine ri a fa ra fhela tavhanyani* (Different *mato*)	You Maine hurry, we are all going to die
3	*Ramasaga mukalaha* (See Chapter 4, Page 4-12)	Ramasaga, the old man
4	*Ramasaga mukalaha* (Different *mato*)	Ramasaga, the old man
5	*Ṋemakhavhani Ṋenzhinga* (See Chapter 4, Page 4-18)	Nemakhavhani the neat one
6	*Vha (Vhakalanga) ni langane* (See Chapter 4, Page 4-22)	(Vhakalanga) Come into an agreement
7	*Vho Madevha* (See Chapter 4, Page 4-26)	Name of a man
8	*Vho Madevha* (Different *mato*)	Name of a man
9	*Mbanzhe Vhakoma* (See Chapter 4, Page 4-30)	Marijuana Headman
10	*Mbanzhe Vhakoma* (Different *mato*)	Marijuana Headman
11	*Mmbwa yanga I pfi Vhalutani* (See Chapter 4, Page 4-34)	My dog is called Vhalutani
12	*Iḓani ni do vhona thevhele mmembe* (See Chapter 4, Page 4-36)	Come and see the pouch, mmembe
13	*Mae-vhangu, ndo wa ndo wa dekenya* (See Chapter 4, Page 4-38)	Mae-vhago I fell, I fell on my hip
14	*Mae-vhangu, ndo wa ndo wa dekenya* (Different *mato*)	Mae-vhago I fell, I fell on my hip
15	*Vho Hangwani* (See Chapter 4, Page 4-41)	The name of a woman
16	*Vho Hangwani* (Different *mato*)	The name of a woman
17	*U a lila Nyawasedza* (See Chapter 4, Page 4-43)	Nyawasedza is crying
18	*Vho Nyamuofhe* (See Chapter 4, Page 4-44)	The name of a woman
19	*Ndo lunwa nga phame* (See Chapter 4, Page 4-48)	I have been stung by a scorpion
20	*Ndo vhidzwa musanda* (See Chapter 4, Page 4-54)	I have been summoned to the chief's kraal, yes

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21	*Ndi a sinda* (See Chapter 4, Page 4-56)	I grind
22	*Vhasikana kha ri ye Khadane!* (See Chapter 4, Page 4-58)	Girls, let's go to Khadane!
23	*Vhe ndi a tuwa, vhahulwane vhanga* (See Chapter 4, Page 4-62)	I am leaving, my elders

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6. 02/04/2008 Maine Vho Mavis Mulaudzi = Lukau
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25. 30/03/2012 Maine Vho Mutshekwa Nekhudzhiga = Tshakhuma
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30. 12/12/2007 Maine Vho - Joyce Madzivhandila = Maswie
31. 02/02/2008 Maine Vho Namadzavho = Tshamanzenge
32. 18/07/2009 Mutshekwa Madzunya = Mavhulani
33. 03/08/2011 Professor Ralushai = Mbilwi
34. 10/08/2007 Maine Vho Riccardo = Itsani
35. 03/09/2009 Vho Caroline Mbadi = Luvhalani
36. 18/05/2010 Maine Vho Musetsho = Tshitomboni
37. 04/08/2006 Vho Mbulaheni Neluvhola = Siloam
38. 14/10/2010 Maine Vho Nyawa = Tshitomboni
39. 05/09/2011 Vho Elisa Razwiedani = Mutikini
40. 20/09/2011 Vho Tshinakaho Bulala = Maguvhuni
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42. 16/06/2009 Maine Vho Mukondeleli Rabumbulu = Muledane

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