CONTESTING CULTURAL MEANING IN A POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICAN HIV/AIDS MUSIC EVENT

by

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Introduction: a dance with no drum

On the night of July 29, 2007 a cocktail party was organized by McCord Hospital at the Zimbali Lodge at the Overport in Durban for a leading Harvard AIDs research scientist and his team. In line with what had become customary at the hospital, the Siphithemba Choir, which functions as a support group and choral ensemble at the hospital, was invited to perform at the event. At the party the choir performed several gospel tunes, including an adaptation of Enoch Sontonga's *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika*, and some of their own compositions. Two traditional Zulu songs, *Isiyalo* (Advice) and *Ikhalaphi* (From whence the cry), however, stood out most. Their performance styles affected the configuration of the night's music event, thus informing the discourse that is central to this paper [DVD track 1].

The two traditional songs share commonalities on a number of levels. First, they are both in rudimentary African call and response style, with *Ikhalaphi* having two distinct spoken A and sung B sections. Second, the lyrics of each song address the HIV/AIDS issue. *Isiyalo* speaks about a young beautiful woman who engages in the prostitution trade and rejects the men who propose marriage to her. *Ikhalaphi* sings about a female lover whose sagged breasts are clear indications that she has become sexually active before marriage. Thus the two songs touch on the theme of sexuality, which is integral to HIV/AIDS discourse, particularly in regards to disease prevention. Finally, they both integrate Zulu *ngoma* dance.

Isiyalo

Call: *Asikho isiyalo la izalwakhona*	There's no advice from whence she comes
Resp: *Asikh' isiyalo la izalwakhona*	There's no advice from whence she comes
Iphum' ekhaya igqoke kahle	She comes from home well dressed
Ifike ngalena kwendaba	She comes across the hill
Ekumule idilozi ilibeke phansi	She strips pants and puts it down
Thubhobho i-gemu	For a 20 cents game
Asikh' isiyalo la izalwakhona	There's no advice from whence she comes

Refrain (with solo improvisation)

Call: *Ayivumi ngishela kwaMasondo ayivumi*	She rejects my proposal to kwaMasondo
Resp: *Ngishela kwaMasondo ayivumi*	I propose [to] kwaMasondo, she refuses

Call: *Le'ntombi yenzani?*	What is the young lady doing?
Resp: *Ngishela kwaMansondo ayivum*	I propose [to] kwaMasondo, she refuses

Ikhalaphi

A Call: *Ikhalaphi (con locutae)?*	Where is the cry from?
Resp: *Ikhalaphi induku yempi?*	Where is the cry from, the stick of war?
Sizwa ngosi, ikhalaphi.	We perceive the smoke, from whence the cry
B Call: *Awe kanjani?*	How did they (breasts) fall?
Resp: *Awe knajani?*	How did they fall?
Amabele ejongosi,	The breasts of the virgin
Okusho ukuthi seliphuma kanje.	It means that she is (already) having affairs.
Call: *Wetshitshi lami!*	Oh my virgin (girl)!
Call: *Awusho ngani?*	Why did you not tell me?
Resp: *Uma usuphuma kanje?*	When you started affairs?
Call: *Awusho ngani?*	Why did you not tell me?
Resp: *Awusho, uma usuphuma kanje?*	Why not, when you started affairs?

Isiyalo is in simple quadruple time signature and the choir performs it to a soundtrack accompaniment with a modern choreographed dance that incorporates elements of the Zulu *ngoma* (see Figure 1); but, *Ikhalaphi* is in compound quadruple time and is performed purely as a traditional folk song with *ngoma* dance. In the performance at the Zimbali Lodge the choir merged the two songs by incorporating only the B section of *Ikhalaphi* and omitting the A section.

In a rehearsal during the day at Umlazi, the choir made the decision not to use the instrumental soundtrack so they could make a smooth transition from *Isiyalo* to the B section of *Ikhalaphi.* In previous performances, the floor had been open to all choir members to demonstrate their facility with the dance, so they would all take turns coming to the front of the ensemble to demonstrate a solo dance. Sometimes, when performed exclusively to a Zulu audience, individual members of the audience would follow the trail of the choir to also demonstrate their facility with the dance, a practice that speaks to the communal nature of music making in African contexts, and the blurred boundaries between performers and audience (Nketia 1974: 21-34).

Something dramatic happened that night as soon as the choir made the transition from *Isiyalo* to *Ikhalaphi.* Some members of the choir rushed to the empty table that was by the wall in front of the audience and began vigorously pounding rhythmic patterns to accentuate the foot stamping of the *ngoma* dance (see Figure 2 and [DVD track 2]). The pounding of the beats on the table added energy to the dance. I thought, however, that the dance would have been more graceful if it had been accompanied with their drum, the *idlamu*. They had used the drum for their rehearsal during the day at Umlazi before the night's performance at the Zimbali Lodge.

On the way home, I asked Xolani Zulu and Ncamisile Yengwa, two members of the choir who rode with me, about their decision to leave their drum behind at Umlazi and rather play on an empty table. Ncamisile responded, "there is no place for the drum *umfundisi*." I thought she simply meant that there was no space in the cars for transporting the drum to Zimbali Lodge.

ISIYALO

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Figure 1. Excerpt of a transcription of *Isiyalo* with the accompanying choreographed dance steps in counterpoint relationship with the vocal part.

The drum controversy

About a week following the event at the Zimbali Lodge I met with the medical superintendent Dr. Helga Holst at McCord Hospital in Durban. A middle-aged white woman, Dr. Helga Holst presided over what was reckoned as one of the best "holistic HIV [and AIDS] care" projects in Africa.[1] It was under this program that the Siphithemba Choir was born. During our meeting the superintendent recounted the history of the choir, placing it in the context of the story of the hospital as a church institution. I was getting ready to leave her office when she suddenly asked me about my faith, and what I thought about mixing elements and symbols of indigenous African religious practices with the Christian faith. I responded that, as one trained

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[1]   Institute of International Medicine (INMED), "McCord Hospital, Durban, South Africa," www.inmed.us/training_sites/mccord_hospital_south_africa.asp

Figure 2. Ncamisile Yengwa performs the ngoma dance with vigor in a concert at the Zimbali Lodge in Overport City, Durban. Photo by author.

in theology, I am a strong believer in inculturation[2] and have no problems with letting people worship God in ways that are relevant to their own unique experiences and cultural ideals. Following my response she said, "Then ask them about their drum…. There was a controversy about it some time ago in this place. Ask them about it. If they trust you they will tell you something about it; then you should let me know" (H. Holst pers. comm. August 2007).

Until now I had believed that everything had been perfect for the choir in respect of their existence in and contributions to the hospital through their music and dance. But, in a later conversation, Phumulani Kunene, the choir director, explained that once during a trip to the United States with the superintendent, she prevented them from bringing along the drum on the grounds that McCord is a Christian hospital and could not be associated with the use of the drum. Apparently she linked the drum with the ritual practices of Zulu traditional diviners (*izangoma*) and traditional healers (*izinyanga*), who used drums to invoke spirits or even to heighten their own spirit during ritual healing ceremonies. Phumulani explained however that the drum was also used traditionally for different purposes such as to signal the coming out of the king from the royal homestead and to transmit signals to the infantry regiments about an impending war. Its use in traditional Zulu dance is mainly to accompany and accentuate the rhythm of the *ngoma* dance. According to him – and his explanation

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[2]   I use 'inculturation" here as a term that is employed in theological circles in reference to the adaptation of Christian teachings and practices to local cultures, and how the cultures shape the evolution of Christian practices. It differs from the anthropological term "enculturation" which denotes the process of cultural formation of an individual.

reflected the opinion of other members of the choir – the superintendent was mistaken in her interpretation of the spiritual significance of the drum. Some members believed that the superintendent's action amounted to an attack on their culture and identity as Zulu and Africans. It became clear to me from these conversations then that the choir's decision to not bring their drum to the event at Zimbali Lodge was a conscious effort to avoid a confrontation with the superintendent and not because of a lack of space in the vehicles providing transport to the event.

The choir's performance that night at the Zimbali Lodge and their use of alternative accompaniment for the *ngoma* dance and the story behind the performance decision which unfolded later in the course of interviews with choir members and the medical superintendent of McCord Hospital is central to the discussion of the issue of cultural politics in a post-apartheid HIV/AIDS context, examined against the background of the sociocultural and political history of South Africa, that follows.

HIV/AIDS and cultural politics
Paula Treichler's observation about HIV/AIDS as "an epidemic of signification," (1999) speaks to how social and cultural processes and political dynamics account for the ways in which AIDS has been interpreted and how meanings have been constructed around the disease in local contexts and on the global scene. Some scholars have read the dynamics in terms of the culture of class differentials, which creates the environment of systemic "structural violence" (Farmer 1999: 1488), due to social and economic inequalities. For Famer, the cultural politics of classism means that the poor are the most vulnerable and therefore at risk of the assaults and violations of their rights given unequal access to health care in many societies and the refusal to address them.

In South Africa, the history of apartheid and its lingering effects has been recognized by scholars of public health and social medicine to have had serious impact on the current experience of HIV/AIDS in the country (Karim 2009: 921; Coovadia 2009: 817-34; Brummer 2002: 1-26; Fassin 2007: 72). This history has also shaped the AIDS discourse in South Africa and how the problem is sometimes viewed through the lens of race and ethnicity,[3] thereby fueling a process of cultural politics reminiscent of and similar to that which characterized apartheid politics and colonialism (Magazinner 2010; de Gruchy and de Gruchy 2005). The discourse on cultural politics of HIV/AIDS has also shaped the local constructions of meanings and responses to the AIDS epidemic. Steven Robins for example argued that former President Thabo Mbeki administration's "AIDS denialism" was Black nationalist posturing that interpreted the

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[3]   See Okigbo,"Performing Blackness in a South African HIV/AIDS Choir." *Du Bois Review* 8, no.1 (2011). In this article I argue that the Siphithemba Choir's performance of Blackness is shaped by a combination of several related factors, namely the nature of the virus's genome and its racial and geographical distribution, the history of apartheid and its lingering effects, the inter-racial acrimony in the post-apartheid society, and other socio-cultural and global politics of HIV and AIDS.

"black disease"[4] labeling of HIV/AIDS and the Medical Science Research Council's statistics of the HIV prevalence in the black community as another evidence of continuation of the "long colonial and apartheid legacy of scientific racism" (2004: 651-672). Ultimately the political debates on AIDS fueled suspicions about the scientific studies and reports in black communities in which many people advanced racialist readings of the disease in ways that are ever more radical (Fassin 2007: 72). In the light of the radical readings, AIDS has also been imagined as "the new apartheid" (McNeill 2011: 2-7), primarily because people infected by HIV are perceived as the victims of misguided public health policies, but also because HIV/AIDS has forced debates about cultural practices with opinions sometimes split along ethnic and racial lines. Thus for instance, the revival of certain cultural practices such as virginity testing among the Zulu as a means to regenerate cultural pride in a post-apartheid South Africa and as a local preventive solution to the AIDS crisis has generated polarizing debate about its appropriateness (Scorgie 2002: 55). Interestingly, in his study among the Venda in the Limpopo Province, Fraser McNeil observed how activists and those who are devoted to grassroots preventive education mobilize similar "traditions" such as girls initiation rites in an attempt to secure legitimacy for their biomedical model. Thus they sometimes pitch themselves against the older women who are managers of the rites of passage and who "invoke authoritative notions of the past to support their stake in resolving the perceived crisis of reproduc[*tive*] health*" (McNeill 2011: 18). While McNeil's work channels existing studies that highlight the role of music as culturally based intervention protocols for behavioral change (DiClemente 1992; Gottlieb 1990; Barz 2006; Barz and Cohen 2008: 148-159; Steingo 2011: 343-61), his study reveals how the domain of musical performance also comprises the sphere of contestations of cultural meaning in the context of HIV and AIDS.

In my work with the Siphithemba Choir however, I have observed that, although their music may function as a culturally based form of 'edutainment', their musical performances in this case reveal other underlying political dynamics that expose what some scholars of post-apartheid studies have characterized as the residues of apartheid era sentiments, which "continue to influence, shape and limit the trajectory of development of a post-apartheid order for the foreseeable future" (Norval 1996: 1; see also Fassin 2007: 72). The controversy over the use of the *idlamu* drum by the Siphithemba Choir and how that has impacted their musical choices is particularly illustrative of this reality. While in other cases traditional practices and cultural symbols have been mobilized as a means of securing legitimacy in grassroots education, at McCord Hospital the *idlamu* as a musical instrument was excluded from performance by ascribing meaning to it that challenged its legitimate place within the space of a Christian health service. Although the cultural politics under discussion here occurred in the context of HIV/AIDS music event, the issue did not seem to border on the cultural

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4   See also Karim who observed that "black disease" labeling was actually framed by the apartheid government in the 1980s to reinforce racial prejudices about black sexual promiscuity (Karim et al., 2009 p. 923).

construction of meaning around AIDS and health. Based on my conversation with the Medical Superintendent, her primary aim was to exclude what she perceived to belong in traditional religion from the space of a Christian institution. Although one may be hard pressed to overlook the issue of the construction of meaning in relation to AIDS given the cultural debates that became integral to conversations on AIDS especially in South Africa as highlighted above, my discourse in this article uses historical analysis to engage the controversy over the use of the drum. I suggest that the controversy is an instance of continuation of the politics of culture and identity that was integral to the apartheid system and was reproduced and replayed within the context of an HIV/AIDS music event. I interrogate what it means when the musical performance of HIV/AIDS becomes a space where the once opposing bodies in the system of apartheid engage in cultural contestation.

The Siphithemba Choir, choral singing, and dance

The Siphithemba Choir[5] came out of the HIV/AIDS support group that was founded in 1997 at the McCord Mission Hospital in Durban, as a source of alternative care in the form of spiritual counseling, prayers, and a social support network for HIV positive individuals at the time when, due to slow dissemination of antiretroviral therapy, doctors and caregivers had little medical help that they could render to patients. Siphithemba's repertoire is largely gospel music, including pre-existing songs they adapted and their own compositions. The preponderance of gospel music in their repertory is in keeping with their association with McCord, which is a mission hospital.[6] But the choir members also see themselves as engaged in the mission of preaching the gospel through their music which encapsulates the spirituality of hope in the presence of HIV and AIDS. Their preference for gospel music notwithstanding, the choir conductor, Phumulani Kunene and other members interviewed, revealed that they also incorporate traditional Zulu songs because of their amenability to integration with dance.

The dance rationale has several implications as it pertains to the experience of Siphithemba members. First, traditional songs and dance comprise an important medium that is recognizable to their local audiences. They also provide opportunity for audience to actively participate, such as when they join the choir in individual soloing in the *ngoma* dance. Secondly, Phumulani and Nomusa Mpanza, another female member of the choir, explained that the choir's decision to perform traditional songs was to provide more opportunities for dance as a form of exercise. Exercise is recognized as a key component of "positive living," an expression that conveys the idea of having a positive physical, emotional, and spiritual attitude toward and about the reality of

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[5]   For more details on the history of the Siphithemba Choir and the Sinikithemba Support Group at the McCord Hospital, see Okigbo, 2011: 285-298.

[6]   Dr. James McCord, a medical missionary of the American Congregational Church founded McCord Hospital in Durban, 1909. See McCord and Douglas (1946) *My Patients Were Zulus,* for more on the missionary history of the hospital.

the disease (O'Loughlin 2008). According to Phumlani, Zulu traditional songs, with their accompanying vigorous dance movements provided weekly exercise for members who would not otherwise have that opportunity due to their work schedules and environments. Dance is also the choir's way of projecting distinctive African identity in the context of performance, especially in the presence of foreign audiences.[7]

It is noteworthy that the Siphithemba Choir does not see any inherent contradictions between the African cultural idioms they use in their performances, their Christian faith, and the gospel message they purport to preach. Xolani Zulu, a male member of the choir, made the point, "we preach the gospel and give hope through our music" (interview August 2007). Asked how he sees the consistency of incorporating traditional songs with "preaching the gospel," he responded, "Because they are part of who we are as African people, I think it is okay, we can still praise God with traditional music, because we are doing good work with it" (*Ibid.*). Thus for Xolani, and for the choir members, the appropriateness of their use of traditional music and the *idlamu* consists in the "good work" that they do with their music as opposed to the "spiritual meanings" they might hold in the traditional setting.

The *idlamu,* cultural politics, and the music of AIDS

It is not clear how and when the *idlamu*, a double-headed cylindrical drum (see Figure 3) entered into and became a permanent feature of Zulu dance. Investigation into the history and meaning of the instrument reveals that *idlamu* was not originally a Zulu instrument. This assertion is premised on linguistic and comparative organological evidence that suggests *idlamu* is a corruption of the English word *drum*, as follows. The /i/ in *idlamu* is the subject prefix for noun class three, singular in IsiZulu. Since the phoneme /r/ does not exist in IsiZulu, Zulus tend to replace the /r/ sound in borrowed words with /l/.[8] Also, Zulu words, like those in most languages of sub-Saharan Africa, do not end with consonants. Thus the "shadow vowels" that are heard in the final consonants of English words are usually exaggerated to full vowel sounds and the /u/ in *idlamu* as a final vowel.

Further, the shape of the drum resembles in every respect the bass drum of the Western military regimental bands. The instrument very likely entered Zulu musical culture through encounters with the British from the earliest days of the encampment of British soldiers at the port of Durban or possibly as late as the First World War (see Kaemmer 2008: 403).

Even if the *idlamu* did not have Western origins, the superintendent's action, notwithstanding her clear Christian intentions, could be construed as reminiscent

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[7]   In addition to dance, the choir's use of traditional Zulu dress as part of their concert regalia is also a way to project an African and Zulu identity. See Okigbo 2011.

[8]   Because of the absence of /r/ in isiZulu, many Zulu who are not very proficient in English would pronounce the Rand, the South African currency, as *"ilandi,"* replacing the /r/ with /l/ while adding /i/ at the beginning as part of noun class three subject prefix, and a final /i/ as an exaggerated shadow vowel.

Figure 3. A Zulu woman playing *idlamu* during an entrance procession at a cultural mass at Emmanuel Catholic Cathedral, Durban. Photo by author.

of the colonial distortion of African cultural practices and condemnation of African values and worldviews as mere superstitions and savage idiosyncrasies (Etherington 2002: 422-39). Missionary efforts to suppress the music of African peoples, particularly those in Southern Africa, among whom they worked, have been well documented (Parrinder 1946: 190; Shaffer 1956: 39; Kaemer 1956: 57; Axelsson 1974: 91; Keteyi 1998: 23).

Grant Olwage argues that the musical separations of race and ethnicity, as well as the institutional separations that occurred under apartheid, were rooted in the colonial and missionary ideologies of culture and identity politics (2008: 38-39). Fundamental to the European colonial and missionary engagement of African cultures, religions, and worldviews was the belief that they are primitive and evil (Etherington 2002: 422-39; Sindima 1992: 73-74; Turnbull 1962). For most early European missionaries the civilization of Africans and ultimately their spiritual salvation lay in being wrested from their past and its "heathen" environment. In South Africa, especially among the Zulu in the Natal region, this resulted in the establishment of mission stations including the Adams Mission in Amanzintoti by the American Congregationalists and the Marianhill Mission by the Roman Catholics where the *amakohlwa* (believers) were made to live apart from their original homesteads and kinsfolk. At these missions Africans were

taught an idealized European lifestyle which was equated with Christian way of life; their degree of 'civilization' was measured according to the degree they adopted the European lifestyle, even if superficially.

Apartheid was thus shaped by colonial missionary projects which denigrated African cultures and in many instances proscribed many African cultural practices, particularly music. Once the missionary ideas about African and Zulu culture became entrenched they also became the basis for the formulation of the cultural components of the racial politics of the Union from the 1800s that culminated in the institutionalization of apartheid as State policy between 1948 and 1990. South African theologians, John and Steve de Gruchy (2005) lend credence to this historiography in their observation that apartheid, as it was practiced by the Afrikanner-led Nationalist Government, was first theologically conceived before it was given circular interpretation and political enactment. The proscriptive precedent that was set by the missionaries continued to influence the development of music in the mainstream mission churches. In the Roman Catholic Church the 1955 papal encyclical *Musicae Sacrae* and the Second Vatican Council constitution on the liturgy, which encouraged missionaries to promote local music for use in worship (Dargie 1997: 321), yielded little result.

From late 1970s and early 1980s however, following the efforts of Dave Dargie at the Lumko Missiological Institute in the Eastern Cape, marimba xylophones, inspired by the Zimbabwean marimba, developed at KwaNongoma music school in Bulawayo, began to be accepted as a church music instrument across Southern Africa (*ibid*, 322). Dargie, informed by his experience introducing marimba ensembles to Catholic congregations, reports that Africans' own non-readiness to embrace the use of local and indigenous musical forms and styles, as they were being pushed for by Lutheran missionary and musicologist Henry Weman for instance, and the utter rejection of the drum and drumming by the "educated elite" (1997: 231) constituted a stumbling block to African musical idioms and instruments gaining a pride of place in the mainstream churches. It is necessary to add, however, that the attitude of African elites was a result of the long term cultural "(mis)education" that was perpetuated by the first generation of European missionaries beginning in the 1800s. It took the wave of political independence of several African states in the 1960s, which coincided with the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), and the emergence of African voices in the disciplines of philosophy and theology, especially the Kenyan Anglican priest and theologian, John S. Mbiti,[9] for African Christians to become open to indigenous African musical idioms. In South Africa, that coincided with the birth of the Black Consciousness Movement and the emergence of Black Theology. Yet, the call by Steve Biko, Barney Pityana, and pioneer exponents of South African Black Theology such as Bonganjalo Goba (1974: 65-73) and Gabriel Setloane (1973: 36-41) who, like Mbiti, looked back to "pre-colonial" African cosmologies and rituals as a basis for Africanizing the Church, was overshadowed by the immediacy of the quest for political freedom. Moreover, their

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[9]   See for example Mbiti 1969, *African Religions and Philosophy.*

ideas were suspect in the eyes of State authorities, and also in the eyes of the still white-dominated church hierarchy.

Since 1990 however, the move to inculturate Christian worship and music in mainstream churches has gained traction.[10] However, this has been happening amidst what are still largely segregated churches in South Africa. The implication is that the majority of South Africans (black and white alike) still do not have enough social and cultural interaction especially in religious spaces for attitudes to significantly change. White South Africans' experience of their surrounding African cultures is largely through the entertainment industry and the media, and vice versa. As Richard Dowden says, "…blacks and whites do not talk to, *nor do they know* each other. They live in their separate worlds with their very different thoughts and feelings about South Africa" (2009: 409). It is this persisting nature of the inter-racial relationships and the cultural attitudes that arise from it that can explain the misunderstanding that ensued between the superintendent and the Siphithemba Choir over the use of the *idlamu*. By seeking to prohibit the use of the drum, the superintendent triggered memories of apartheid under which system the politics of culture and the cultural domination of Africans by Europeans comprised ideological bedrock (Comaroff and Comaroff 1985: 1-22).

According to South African Jesuit theologian Xolile Keteyi, "Black people have used music … to tell the story of their trauma and pain; to proclaim their aspirations and affirm their humanity" (1998: 28). Some choir members I interviewed construed the superintendent's action as an attack on their culture and identity as Africans and Zulu. From my conversations with them, and Keteyi's words above, one could argue that, as a group of young men and women whose lives have been severely impacted by the burdens of the HIV/AIDS and social stigma and rejection by family and friends, the superintendent's actions constituted a double attack on their aspirations and the affirmation of their humanity their participation in the choir was meant to afford. According to Phumlani, events similar to this forced them to shift their perspective about their struggle with HIV and AIDS. Born out of a consciousness of their mutual struggle with HIV/AIDS, a disease that has been so politicized, they now construe themselves as engaged in the struggle first as individuals, second as a group with shared experiences, and third as African people who must raise their voices for the African cause in the context of the global AIDS pandemic.

For the Siphithemba Choir the complex issues of race, culture, and identity embedded in the HIV/AIDS discourse are expressed in music. According to Phumlani, "we are aware of these issues and so whenever we are singing, even when we travel to anywhere, we believe that we are talking not just about ourselves, but for Africa and for black people everywhere" (P. Kunene, interview September 2007).

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[10]   Between 2005 and 2007 I documented series of experimentations in this direction at the Emmanuel Catholic Cathedral in Durban in the form of the cultural mass, and in the Methodist Church in Durban.

Conclusion

This case study of a music event in a HIV/AIDS context has been used to examine the issue of the politics of culture in relation to the use or non-use of the *idlamu* as a musical instrument by the Siphithemba Choir. By examining the issue raised by use of the *idlamu* against the background of apartheid as cultural policy and the history of colonialism and Christian missionization in South Africa, questions are raised about the implications of the contestations over the drum as an artifact that is imbued with cultural symbolism and meaning. I suggest that the drum controversy at McCord Hospital which informed the performance choices of the Siphithemba Choir has implications in post-apartheid discourse. One is forced to ask the question, what is "post" in "post-apartheid"? In other words, what does it mean to speak about post-apartheid considering the case of this HIV/AIDS-related music event and the drum controversy?

Since the democratic transition in 1994, "post-apartheid" as a discourse has pre-occupied scholars (Freund and Padayachee 1998: 16-22; Wilson 2000: 75-98; Ramphele 2001: 1-17), who analyze the prospects for future development against the background of the legacies of apartheid. While the discourse has focused largely on issues related to politics and economic development, the cultural conditions of apartheid are yet to be completely undone and have scarcely been addressed as relevant panacea for sustainable human and socio-economic development. "Post-apartheid" presupposes the cessation of the conditions that defined apartheid. It is a forward-looking analysis of the legacies of apartheid in which scholars tend to make projections about the prospects for future development as those conditions and legacies recede into memory. In this regard, post-apartheid as a discourse, as mentioned above, has largely focused on issues of politics and economic development plus the conditions of human rights in South Africa. The discourse has seldom paid attention to religion and culture, which were the major cornerstones of the initial formulation of apartheid policy. Not even the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) addressed the issue of cultural violations that were visited upon Africans, on their psyche and sacred places, by the Apartheid State and the mission churches.[11] The implication is that, not only are aspects of the cultural legacies of apartheid still in place, but in fact the cultural conditions and sentiments that characterized apartheid are still strong in many places, as seen in the instance of the *idlamu* controversy at the McCord Hospital.

In 1996 then President, now late, Nelson Mandela declared HIV/AIDS "the next struggle," an invocation of the anti-apartheid struggle. By so doing he triggered a symbolic linking of apartheid with the current experience of HIV and AIDS. Mandela's

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[11]   Part of the original intent in designing of the *Isivivani* - Freedom Park in Pretoria was to address some of the cultural violations of Africans and the Khoi and San peoples and other inhabitants of South Africa (see www.freedompark.co.za/); but in a conversation with Manshilo Motsei, South African feminist writer and cultural activist, the Park only serves as a memorial and its conceptualization did not include an effort at reconciling and resolving the cultural violations that the history of apartheid and the colonial encounters brought upon the inhabitants of the land (personal communication, 2007).

idea of "the next struggle" may have been about the public health situation; yet, a decade after his declaration a community experience and collective (albeit inter-racial) fight against HIV/AIDS was the context where the once opposing bodies in the system of apartheid were engaging in cultural contestation, with music – use of a Zulu instrument – at the center of that struggle. This situation illustrates, as it were, Olwage's suggestion that the "end of apartheid may not be construed as the end of the apartheid story" (2008: 8). Again, and finally, the music event under consideration here is AIDS-related; but it is also diagnostic of the fact that while music comprised part of apartheid's logic of separations as well as helped to take it apart, as Olwage argues (see also Byerly 1998: 1-44): the space for highlighting some of the "non-conclusions and continuations" of aspects of the apartheid story is found in this music event, even when the major actors in the contestations of meaning have clear and honest intentions.

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