

MA Comprehensive Examination: Musical Materials – *Shosholoza*



Case Western Reserve University

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Instructional Learning Module

Tshosholoza

Henry H. Leck

SAB

Colla Voce Music: 21-20400

Overall: 2

Vocal: 2

Tonal/Rhythm: 2

Ranges: S: G4 - E5

A: F#4 - D5

B: C3 - B3

TTBB divisi and tenor solo

Walton Music: WLG139

Overall: 3

Vocal: 3

Tonal/Rhythm: 3

Ranges: T Solo: A□3 - F4

T1: C4 - A□4

T2: A□3 - D□4

B1: E□3 - B□3

B2: A□2 - A□3

Jeffery L. Ames

Arrangers:

Henry H. Leck founded the Indianapolis Children's choir and served as its director for 30 years. He worked on the faculty at Butler University for 27 years and he has published numerous choral compositions and arrangements. Leck spent 10 days in South Africa studying music in 2008 (this arrangement was published in 1991).

Andre Petersen, who Leck cites as the source for *South African Suite*, is a professor at the Northwestern University in South Africa. He specializes in African music and music education. In 1989, Petersen studied an MMus degree at Butler University on a Fulbright Scholarship and he taught *Shosholoza* to the Indianapolis Children's Choir. Petersen received no payment or royalties for his contributions to this arrangement.

Jeffery Ames is the director of choral activities at Belmont University. He has conducted young choirs all over the USA and has composed and arranged multiple choral scores. At the time of publication, the contributor could not find any information on Ames' relationship to South Africa and South African music.

Composition and Historical Perspective:

The exact dates and place of origin for *Tshosholoza* (also spelt *Shosholoza* and *Chocholoza*) are not known, but it is likely that the song was sung by migrant workers in Zimbabwe, a southern African country previously called Rhodesia. The song mourned the journey the workers made from their homeland to the mines of South Africa, where miners were exploited and lived in poverty, far away from their families. *Tshotsholoza* is also said to be a work song, and Nelson Mandela described how he and fellow prisoners sang the song at the Robben Island prison where he served part of 27 years in jail for resisting the apartheid regime. Apartheid, which ended in

1990, was the brutal legislative segregation and marginalization of people of color in South Africa. According to Mandela, *Tshotsholoza* became a song of hope for many people who were part of the black struggle in South Africa. Today, the song is often sung at sports events in South Africa and it was included in the Hollywood film, *Invictus*. This has resulted in more jovial connotations. Although this song is a song of hope, it is also a reminder of the dark history of apartheid, which still impacts millions of South Africans today, and of the ongoing exploitation and oppression of mine-workers in southern Africa.

Technical considerations and Musical elements:

In South Africa, a song like *Tshosholoza* is taught by rote and passed down orally from generation to generation. It is highly recommended that students in the USA learn the song by rote. Leck and Ames' arrangements can serve as a springboard for teachers and might be useful in determining the key and starting pitches for choirs at different developmental stages. The Leck arrangement, for example, might be more suited to middle school choirs, whereas the Ames arrangement might be useful for high school choral directors. Most importantly, teachers should consult the videos of South African choirs under Suggested Listening (below) for model performances of the song. Teachers can scaffold the process of learning by rote into smaller steps, which can be repeated as often as needed. It might be useful to give students copies of the text and translation and to work on pronunciation first. Introducing the melody from the top (T1/S) down might make the inner voices easier to learn (they are mostly thirds, fourths, or sixths apart). A strong bass section can be added as soon as possible.

In general, the vocal ranges of *Tshotsholoza* are not too demanding in both these arrangements and in the recorded examples, although traditionally the bass line would reach into low registers that might be difficult for high school singers and unmanageable for most middle school choirs. The tenor solo in the Ames arrangement and soprano section in the Leck arrangement should be loud and strong - loud enough to carry over the rest of the choir, which should also be singing with strong chest voice. Even the Leck arrangement can be modeled to sound like a call (soprano) and response (alto and bass).

Although some of the dotted and 8th note rhythms are tricky, it might be easier for the choir to learn these by rote than if they were to read from the notation. In the Ames arrangement, the conga parts might be challenging, but these should also be learned by rote and students can consult online videos (particularly the second Drakensberg Boys' Choir video) for inspiration. Students should feel free to improvise on the drums while keeping a steady beat.

The form of the work may be difficult for students to memorize. It might be helpful to have students create visual representations of the form that can be displayed in the classroom in early stages of rehearsal. Repetitions of run-throughs will be most helpful in this regard. If the form is

compared to Euro-American binary or ternary form, the teacher should emphasize that it might be inappropriate to use such terminology to describe indigenous South African musics, because asserting Eurocentric modes of analysis on indigenous musics is part of a broader culture of appropriation and colonization.

Perhaps the most challenging technical aspect of this work is the language. The Nguni languages used in the song (Ndebele, Zulu, and Xhosa) do not have diphthongs and North American choirs should pay special attention to pronouncing vowels accurately. This might require extensive practice and repetition, sometimes without singing. The accents of the language (provided in the Ames arrangement and below) should also be followed and can be marked in student copies of the text and the teacher copy of the score.

Stylistic Requirements:

Overall, the vocal tone of this work should be a dark, but forward chest voice rather than head voice quality. Consult listening examples for models of tone. The tempo can be upbeat, but it should not be too fast - it should maintain a lilting, walking feeling. Intonation is important, but it is not uncommon for the intonation to sag somewhat during performance and some intervals, such as thirds, could sound “flatter” than the tuning of thirds in Euro-American art music. Movement can be incorporated, but it would be best to consult online performances when choreographing - most movements will be modeled on walking motions. In general, the performance should be loud and energetic, although dynamic contrasts such as those outlined by Ames can add interest to the performance. If possible, the choral director should leave the stage for this performance and allow the tenor/sopranos and drummers to lead the song.

Form and Structure:

Essentially, the text of the song has an A and B section, although the melody and harmony remain similar. Traditionally, the sections are repeated multiple times, until the soloist leads the song to a close or the singers tire and taper off. In Leck’s arrangement, the A and B sections are followed by a repeat of the A section (similar to Euro-American ternary form). In the Ames arrangement, the A and B sections are followed by a C section, which leads into a repeat of the A section. The C section is not part of traditional renditions of the song, but other choirs, such as the Drakensberg Boys’ Choir (linked below) have also adapted the music to add middle sections. It is up to the teacher’s’ discretion whether these middle sections are performed.

Text and Translation:

The text of *Shosholoza* is a combination of Ndebele, Zulu, and Xhosa words (the combination of languages from the Nguni family is common in sub-Saharan Africa). Nguni languages do not lend themselves to word-for-word translations and the meaning of a phrase can be lost if each word is translated separately. For example, the word *siphume* on its own would mean “jump out”

in English, but in the context of *Stimela siphume South Africa*, it is inferred to mean “The train coming from South Africa”.

Shosholoza (spelt *Tchocholoza* in isiXhosa)

Go forward

Kolezo ntaba

From those mountains

Stimela siphume South Africa/Zimbabwe/Rhodesia

On this train from South Africa/Zimbabwe/Rhodesia

Wena (wen') uyabaleka

You are fleeing

Kulezo ntaba

From those mountains

Stimela siphume South Africa/Zimbabwe/Rhodesia

On this train from South Africa/Zimbabwe/Rhodesia

Pronunciation:

(Note some differences to the pronunciation provided by Henry Leck)

Shosholoza

SHOH - sho-loh-zah

Kulezo ntaba / *Hay ya kwezontaba*

Koo leh-zohn - TAH - bah / Heh yah kwe zohn -TAH - bah

Stimela siphume South Africa / *Zimbabwe*

STEE-meh-LAH see-POO-meh South AH-free-kah / Zihm-BA - bweh

Wena (wen') uyabaleka

WHEN-oo yah-bah-LEH-gah

IPA Guide:

Shosholoza

ʃ ɔ: ʃ ɔ: l ɔ: z ə

Kulezo ntaba

k u l ε z o : n t a : b a :

Stimela siphume South Africa Zimbabwe

s t i : m ε l a : s i : p u m ε s a u θ æ f r : k a : / z i : m b a : b w ε

Wena (wen') uyabaleka

w ε n u j a : b a : l ε g a :

Suggested Listening:

- The Drakensberg Boys' Choir teaches and performs *Shosholoza*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=saJmOw0GGyI>
- A contrasting performance by the Drakensberg Boys' choir with percussion solo at end
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLu2eth-l-Y>
- Unidentified African choir singing *Shosholoza* for tourists
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tZ2IbvrZF4>
- Traditional Zulu choir performs *Shosholoza* with mime
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7YCtz4zsvcA>
- The Belmont University Choir sings *Tshotsholoza* with Jeffery Ames:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izVuJ8E6-7M>

Additional Resources

- *Miners Shot Down*, a documentary on the plight of mine-workers in South Africa, centered on the story of the Marikana Massacre of 2012. References apartheid and post-apartheid politics. Contains graphic content.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EN199WpXBmU>
- The CIA World Factbook: South Africa entry
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sf.html>
- South African government website: History of South Africa
<http://www.gov.za/about-sa/history>
- Commonwealth entry on South Africa
<http://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/south-africa>
- History of South African musics:
<https://www.brandsouthafrica.com/south-africa-fast-facts/arts-facts/music>

Score Overview Charts

Arrangement	Key	Orchestration	Voicing	Tempo	Form	Texture	Suggested Tempo
Henry Leck, 1993	G Major	A capella	SAB	None provided	Ternary	Homophonic adaptation of call and response	J= 90 -100
Jeffery L. Ames, 2005	A-flat Major	Voice, Congas, Djembe	Tenor solo and TTBB	J=90	Ternary	Call and response; response homophonic	J= 90 - 100

Flow Chart for *Tshotsholoza*, Henry Leck Arrangement for Middle School Choir

Measure:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Tempo	J=98								
Form	“A” Section: Repeat				“B” Section				
Key	G Major								
Text + accents	<u>T</u> shotsholoza, <u>k</u> wezontaba, <u>s</u> timela siphume Zimbabwe								
Texture	Homophony with overlap								
Dynamics	forte				forte				

Measure:	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Tempo	J=98								

Form	“B” Section	“A” section
Key	G Major	
Text	Zim bab we	T shot sholoza, kwezontaba ,
Texture	Homophony with overlap	Homophony with overlap
Dynamics	Mezzo piano	forte

Measure:	19	20	21
Tempo	J=98		
Form	“A” Section		
Key	G Major		
Text and accents	stimela siphume Zim bab we		
Texture	Homophony with overlap		
Dynamics	forte	Cresc.	

Flow Chart for *Tshotsholoza*, Jeffery Ames Arrangement for High School Choir

Measure:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Tempo	J=98								
Form	“A” Section (includes repeat)				“B” Section (includes repeat)				
Key	A-flat Major								
Text and accents	<u>T</u> shotsholoza, kulezontaba, stimela siphume South <u>A</u> frika				Wen’ uyabaleka, kulezontaba, stimela siphume				
Texture	Call and response: Solo and homophony								
Dynamics	f < > < > < > < > < > < > < >								
Measure:	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Tempo	J=98								
Form	“A” Section (includes repeat)				“C” Section (repeated 4 times)				
Key	A-flat Major								
Text and accents	South Afrika	<u>T</u> shotsholoza, kulezontaba, stimela siphume South <u>A</u> frika			Stimela, stimela, siphume South				
Texture	Call and response: Solo and homophony								
Dynamics	Homophony 1st: <i>p</i> ; 2nd: <i>mf</i> ; 3rd: <i>ff</i>								

Measure:	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
Tempo	J=98								
Form	“A” section (includes repeat)								
Key	A-flat Major								
Text and accents	<u>A</u> frika	T <u>sh</u> otsholoza, kulezont <u>a</u> ba, stimela siphume South <u>A</u> frika							
Texture	Call and response: Solo and homophony								
Dynamics	1st: <i>f</i> ; 2nd: <i>ff</i>		<<		>>		> <i>ff</i>		