

Joshua Pulumo Mohapeloa Critical Edition in Six Volumes

Transcribed, compiled, edited, and introduced by Christine Lucia
Sesotho texts translated by Joshua Pulumo Mohapeloa,
Mantoa Motinyane-Smouse, and Mpho Ndebele

Volume I:

Meloli le Lithallere tsa Afrika I

(African Songs and Extemporaneous Harmonizations Book I)

Volume II:

Meloli le Lithallere tsa Afrika II

(African Songs and Extemporaneous Harmonizations Book II)

Volume III:

Meloli le Lithallere tsa Afrika III

(African Songs and Extemporaneous Harmonizations Book III)

Volume IV:

*Khalima-nosi tsa 'Mino Oa Kajeno:
Harnessing Salient Features of Modern African Music
and*

*Meluluetsa ea Ntšetso-pele le Bosechaba Lesotho
(Anthems for the Development of the Lesotho Nation)*

Volume V:

*Eight Songs from Hosanna: Lipina tsa Kereke
(Hosanna: Church Songs)
and*

Bukana ea Lipesaleme (Book of Psalms)

Volume VI:

Miscellaneous Published and Unpublished Works

General preface

This is the first Critical Edition of the complete works of Lesotho composer Joshua Pulumo Mohapeloa (1908-1982), who between the 1920s and 1970s created a modern African choral idiom in tonic solfa score, inspired by traditional Basotho music, jazz, western classical music and hymns. Mohapeloa's repertoire of almost 200 short unaccompanied choral songs has been newly transcribed from tonic solfa into staff notation, and his original Sesotho texts have been extracted from the solfa scores and translated into English where his own translations do not exist. His tempi, dynamics, and expressive markings are retained and where they do not exist editorial suggestions are made. All editorial interventions on the score are shown in square brackets. The historical and cultural background of the composer and various documents including his own writings, have informed the editorial work. The musical sources are given for each song. Accuracy and consistency have been aimed at as far as is practicable, respecting the composer's legacy and presenting it in a form that scholars, teachers and performers can access. Mohapeloa wrote within the literary tradition of tonic solfa but his music was often disseminated orally and copied by hand or electronically; thus individual songs have sometimes been modified through popular practice. This edition returns to the available printed and manuscript sources in order to prepare a new performing score of each song, with critical commentary explaining why a particular version or aspect of a score is considered authoritative.

Acknowledgments

This edition could not have been completed without the assistance of the following organisations and individuals whose support, financial or otherwise, is gratefully acknowledged:

Bellagio Rockefeller Foundation, New York
 International Library of African Music, Rhodes University, Grahamstown
 Morija Museum and Archives, Morija, Lesotho
 National Library of South Africa, Pretoria
 Southern African Music Rights Organisation, Johannesburg
 Documentation Centre for Music, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch

David Ambrose, Michael Blake, Susan Brown, Richard Cock, David Coplan, Chats Devroop, Paul Eggert, Stephen Gill, Stephen Gray, James Grier, Mokale Koapeng, Ralf Kohler, Eric Karabo Lekhanya, Joyce Ntsiuoa Mohapeloa, Pulumo Mohapeloa, Mantoa Motinyane-Smouse, Stephanus Muller, Angela Mullins, Mpho Ndebele, Sibusiso Njeza, Barry Peter Ould, Roger Parker, Tii Pitso, Thembela Vokwana.

This Critical Edition is dedicated to Roger Parker, for his generous ongoing critical engagement with South African musicology.

Abbreviations

Edwards = *Staff Notation Versions of Choral Compositions of Mohapeloa* transcribed by Jonathan Edwards.
 ILAM = International Library of African Music
 Internat. = International
 ISMN = International Standard Music Number
 JPM = Joshua Pulumo Mohapeloa
 MLA = *Meloli le Lithallere tsa Afrika*
 MMA = Morija Museum & Archives
 MSBD = Morija Sesuto Book Depot
 NTTC = National Teachers Training College (of Lesotho)
 OAU = Organisation of African Unity
 OUP = Oxford University Press
 Revd. = revised
 SAMRO = Southern African Music Rights Organisation, Johannesburg.
 SATB = Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass
 Std. = Standard
 Transcr. = transcribed
 Trans. or transl. = translated
 Vol. = Volume

General introduction

by Christine Lucia

A Mohapeloa Critical Edition

This Critical Edition is a preliminary attempt to bring together the complete works of Joshua Pulumo Mohapeloa (1908-1982) in a scholarly collection. It is a 'Critical Edition' rather than a 'Complete Edition' because completeness is only relative: even though Mohapeloa is dead, there are almost certainly published or, more likely in manuscript that are missing and may eventually turn up, and because this is a digital online Critical Edition newly discovered works can be added to the website www.african-composers-edition.co.za. The 'critical' element is explained in more detail later in this introduction.

The 'completeness', even though it is partial and open-ended, still gives an impressive picture. There are 183 short unaccompanied choral works by Mohapeloa here, which were composed throughout his lifetime from approximately 1929 to 1979, and thus cover half the twentieth century. Other composers in southern Africa can boast similarly large outputs of perhaps more wide-ranging music. What is remarkable about Mohapeloa's output is that it is so concentrated on unaccompanied choral music and on individual short works of between one and five minutes in length; and because of the song texts the aggregation of these small documents results in an overarching record of the history, the environment, the weather, the landscape, the workplaces, and the daily lives and emotions of African people over half a century that is miraculous in its expressive totality. It is the first complete critical edition of music in southern Africa, and it is an *African* musical edition, that has far more resonance than the sum of its parts.

Known mainly through a handful of works sung by African choirs in southern Africa, Mohapeloa's music is barely known elsewhere - many people in the musical world in southern Africa have never heard the name 'Mohapeloa'. The music was collected from a number of sources, most of them fairly easily available, and has been grouped into six volumes here, arranged more or less chronologically according to when works were written. With one exception, all of the works were originally composed in tonic solfa notation and are newly transcribed into staff notation with English translations of the Sesotho texts and comments on variants and discrepancies.¹

Volumes I-III contain three collections published in the order in which they first appeared (1935, 1939, 1947). Volume IV comprises eight songs from a multi-authored church songbook of 1955 together with 39 previously unpublished settings of Psalms and other Biblical texts made for the African Dutch Reformed Mission Church in about 1979. Volume VI contains miscellaneous individual songs from various periods but mostly Mohapeloa's later years, some of them previously published but the majority not. Corrections will be made to existing works from time to time and reposted at www.african-composers-edition.co.za, and new songs traced through further research will be added to Vol. VI. Each of the six volumes is duplicated (Vols. Ia, IIa, IIIa, IVa, Va, VIa) to provide an alternative version of the scores with tonic solfa notation added, for people who cannot read staff notation. An audio CD, *African Choral Legacy: Historic Recordings of Joshua Pulumo Mohapeloa* (ACE CD001) provides a companion piece to the scores and is also available on the website.

Each volume has a short Preface and a list of Contents and there is also a full Catalogue of Works by J.P. Mohapeloa, a List of Sources referred to throughout the edition, and a Pronunciation Guide to the Sesotho Texts. The front pages of individual scores include a historical introduction and a translation of the text, and the back page has a list of sources used to prepare the new score and critical commentary on textual issues or variant readings.

Unlike most critical or complete editions of music scores in the West, this one lacks any precedent in the context of southern Africa, where Mohapeloa lived and worked. The musicological context out of which it emerged is a colonial one, and in this region of the world our musicology developed out of what Joseph Kerman famously described as the 'second phase' of musicology in Europe: interpretive work done from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries on music already largely collected and edited throughout the nineteenth century in critical editions (the first phase). We never had this first phase, in southern Africa, we assumed Europe's, uncritically. There is much more to say on this topic but this is not the place and I will rather focus on describing the edition itself, and begin by saying something about Mohapeloa's life as a composer and the tradition of African choral music within which his work was produced.²

¹ The exception is the unpublished O.A.U. anthem *Freedom in Unity*, written for unaccompanied choir with a separate piano accompaniment in staff notation that goes with it which has more elaborate harmonies than the choir version, and is thus treated as an independent 'piano solo'.

² One of the reviewers noticed that the introduction originally lacked this background and suggested it was important to include it for people who know nothing about music in this part of southern Africa.

Mohapeloa's biography in brief³

Joshua Pulumo Mohapeloa was a Mosotho from the Bataung clan, born in Molumong in the eastern mountains of the tiny kingdom of Lesotho on 28 March 1908. He was the third generation of a family converted to Christianity in the nineteenth century by the Swiss-French Protestant missionaries from the *Société des Missions Evangéliques chez les peuples non-chrétiens à Paris (SMEP)*, known in English as the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS). Joshua Pulumo was the fourth of ten children born to Rev. Joel Mohapeloa and Candace Sehoroeane Matong.

After elementary schooling in the village of Molumong in the eastern highlands (Mokhotlong District) Mohapeloa attended the PEMS Training College in the mission station of Morija in the south, which took him as far as what we would now think of as 'middle school', and in those days it included some teacher training for elementary school level. In addition to academic subjects Mohapeloa studied music and music education at Morija, including tonic solfa notation, staff notation, elementary music theory, and keyboard (harmonium). He completed a Junior Certificate there in 1927 and in 1928 enrolled at the South African Native College (SANC) in the eastern edge of the Cape province of South Africa in order to complete his Matriculation, which he did in 1929.⁴ He hoped to go on to study medicine after this but even before the end of 1929 it was clear that he had contracted tuberculosis, and so he was forced to leave the SANC and go home to Mohalinyane in west Lesotho, where his family were by living at this time. While recuperating here he took correspondence courses and began composing, as a distraction from the difficulties of study and from his weak condition. His daughter-in-law Ntsiuoa Mohapeloa remembers him telling her that "he was so sad about all that that, he used to sit in the forest. Sit there, worry, being alone there. Then, he said to me, he would be listening to the birds chirping, you know. Then he started to, you know, love nature, started to appreciate what was around him. He started to appreciate the countryside. He thought, 'this is a wonderful country, I can write a lot about it'".⁵ Nor was he just an appreciative observer of nature, for both at Molumong and at Mohalinyane Mohapeloa planted many trees, which was his way of acknowledging the importance of the environment and the devastating effects of soil erosion due to over-grazing.

At home and at school Mohapeloa was exposed to various forms of music, most of it vocal: folk songs, songs composed in tonic solfa by older Sotho composers, European hymns, and some western operatic and oratorio choruses introduced by his European teachers at the Morija Training Institution. He also learnt indigenous dances and games, and delighted in making up tongue-twisters. As his brother, the historian Josias Makibinyane Mohapeloa recalls, "the Basotho ways, old and new, that he learned from home, at school, herding, and different kinds of jobs, are evident in many of his songs". Mohapeloa started a choir at Mohalinyane and tried out his songs, whose popularity quickly spread to other choirs and other regions. By 1934 he had written over 30 songs and in 1935 Morija Sesuto Book Depot published his first songbook, *Meloli le Lithallere tsa Afrika (Meloli I)*, in tonic solfa notation, and in Sesotho. In late 1936 or early 1937 the Morija Training Institution Choir, conducted by Mohapeloa's neighbour, Bennie Mashologu recorded eight songs from *Meloli I* at the South African Broadcasting Company (SABC) studios in Johannesburg, and these are probably among the first African choral songs recorded for radio.⁶

Mohapeloa produced *Meloli II*, his second songbook in 1939 and in the same year began part-time studies in the Music Department at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg as an 'Occasional Student' (with the aid of a scholarship given by the Lesotho Director of Education - Mohapeloa's talent did not go unnoticed) to prepare for which he had already spent "a year's intensive revision work on the rudiments".⁷ Mohapeloa attended lectures by Professor of Music Percival Kirby (who, incidentally, had studied composition at the Royal College with Stanford) and by music theory lecturer W.P. Paff. His student record at Wits shows that he passed "History of Music A.1" in 1939, "History of Music II" and "Counterpoint & Harmony" in 1940, Counterpoint &

³ Information for this biography was culled from many sources and rather than litter it with footnotes I give most of them here: Mohapeloa, J.M. and M.K. Phakisi, *The Eloquence of Song in Sesotho*, trans. Mantoa Motinyane-Smouse (Maseru: Lekhotla la Sesotho L/P 1139, 2009[1987]; Gill, Stephen, *A Short History of Lesotho* (Morija: Morija Museum and Archives, 1993); Daniel Moekoetse Mohapeloa letter to David Ambrose, 17 November 1981; Huskisson, Yvonne, *The Bantu Composers of Southern Africa* (Johannesburg: SABC, 1969); Mohapeloa, J.P., Preface to *Khalima-nosi tsa 'Mino oa Kajeno* (Morija: Morija Sesuto Book Depot, 1951; Mohapeloa, J.P., 'Bophelo ba ka ke le Sechaba sa Sejoale-joale: My Life as Modern African Composer, trans. Mantoa Motinyane-Smouse (SAMRO Archive: Huskisson Collection, [n.d. c.1965]); Mohapeloa, J.P., Preface ['Khorō'] to *Meloli le Lithallere tsa Afrika I*, trans. Mantoa Motinyane-Smouse (Morija: Morija Sesuto Book Depot, 1988(1935)). There are a number of photographs illustrating this biography on www.african-composers-edition.co.za.

⁴ Matriculation was the school-leaving qualification. SANC is now called Fort Hare University and boasts some famous alumni, including Nelson Mandela. It was at that time the only place in southern Africa where a black person could matriculate.

⁵ Ntsiuoa Mohapeloa, Author's Interview, 28 Sep. 2006.

⁶ They can be heard on www.african-composers-edition.co.za/sales/audio.

⁷ This quote comes from a proposal that Mohapeloa wrote much later for a study trip abroad: it was made to the Lesotho High Commission in 1968 and, as it happens, turned down, on the recommendation of Hugh Tracey. Mohapeloa's proposal and Hugh Tracey's correspondence with the High Commission were found in the Hugh Tracey Correspondence Collection at the International Library of African Music, Grahamstown (document HTC-H051-01, folder 'High Commissioner-006').

Harmony” in 1941, and “Composition only” in 1942. These did not constitute complete years of study and Mohapeloa thus could not complete a degree, but the courses contained musical techniques that helped him expand his musical grammar.⁸ Changes in his compositional style in *Meloli III* (1947) and comments he later made in interviews with David Coplan (1976 and 1978) show how he wrestled with such techniques and with their relevance to his work. Mohapeloa was only allowed to study ‘Composition only’ at Wits after three years, in 1942, and no details are given in the *University Calendar* about exactly what ‘Composition only’ constituted.

A 34-year-old African composer steeped in Sotho folk music and varied mission-trained styles of choral writing (in tonic solfa) must have made an odd impression at Wits in the late 30s to early 40s. Kirby makes no mention of Mohapeloa in his autobiography *Wits End*, although Kirby mentions many other former students and (surely) this one would have stood out. Composer Stanley Glasser, however, who was an economics student at Wits when Mohapeloa was there, warmly remembered ‘Josh’ as he called him, recalling that Kirby and Paff “were highly impressed with Mohapeloa as a musical phenomenon, remarking on his musicianship, originality and imagination of his pieces and somewhat puzzled as what best to do for him”.⁹ Kirby took a rather dim view of African choral music in general,¹⁰ but maybe he regarded Mohapeloa as an exception, and clearly Mohapeloa felt indebted to Kirby because he gave his first-born son, Maloisane the English middle name, Percival.

While on ‘the Reef’, the area around Johannesburg where many coal and platinum mines are located, Mohapeloa ran a choir called the Johannesburg Traditional Choristers in order to survive financially, and after he returned to Morija he conducted the church choir and later formed a community choir called the Baithaopi (Volunteers) Society. He began working at the Morija Printing Works as a proof reader in 1945, the year that he married Mary Stimmiri - with whom raised four children - and he stayed in this job until his retirement in 1973. Aside from attending the Kitwe All African Church Music Conference in Zambia in 1963, Mohapeloa never seems to have gone beyond the borders of South Africa, although it is clear from a funding proposal he wrote in 1968 (see footnote 6 above) that he badly wanted to, chiefly in order to expand his musical horizons. After his retirement Mohapeloa taught music at the National Teachers’ Training College in Maseru, which was founded in 1975; indeed, it seems that he started the music department there and he was evidently still very much involved with this work when he died, on 13 January 1982.

Joshua Pulumo Mohapeloa is buried in the graveyard on the eastern edge of Morija, and in 2008 a tombstone was erected by the family, sponsored by the Southern African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO). Mohapeloa was a member of SAMRO (all his music is under copyright and SAMRO administers the rights) and a founder ‘African’ member of Hugh Tracey’s African Music Society.¹¹ He was awarded an OBE by the British Government in 1961, a Knighthood of the Order of Ramats’eatsana (KCOR) by the Lesotho Government in 1976, and an Honorary D.Litt. from the University of Lesotho in 1978. An obituary published in *Leselinyana le Lesotho* mentions that he was an honourable member of the Organization of Sesotho Writers, and that the King and Queen of Lesotho attended his funeral.¹²

Overview of the tradition of African choral music in southern Africa

John Knox Bokwe stands “at the head of the tradition of black choralism” in southern Africa, as Grant Olwage has observed.¹³ Bokwe’s first notated composition, *Msimdisi Wa Boni* was published in 1875 and he followed it with more than 30 pieces over as many years. With these pieces and the performance practice that Bokwe established through his music, certain norms in the field of African choral music were established that have persisted to the present day. He was, for example a “self-taught composer [who] composes almost exclusively for voice [and who] is typically also a choral conductor [for] whom choral practice is a part-time activity” (Olwage). S/he also typically writes in tonic solfa notation, the musical script taught in mission schools.

Bokwe’s choral music was published between 1875 and 1922 by Lovedale Press and includes several works in the early South African collection of mission songs and hymns, *Amaculo ase Lovedale* (1885). All Bokwe’s manuscripts in Rhodes University’s Cory Library for Historical Research are in staff notation, for it was not

⁸ Course details published in the *University Calendars* of the time list specific techniques, although whether or not these were all equally helpful (or indeed studied) is debatable.

⁹ Stanley Glasser to Christine Lucia, 8 June 2009.

¹⁰ “[Its] form is of the most rudimentary nature, consisting chiefly of orthodox musical sentences without a trace of the devices used by European composers to mitigate the ‘squareness’ of the design or to inject vitality into the melody or character into the harmony. In other words, with very few exceptions, our African composers have made little advance in their art during the last half-century”. Kirby, Percival, ‘Introduction’ [to ‘Bantu Composers of South Africa, The’, in *South African Music Encyclopedia Vol. 1*, ed. J.P. Malan, 1979, 85).

¹¹ African Music Society, List of Members at 30th April 1948, Cape Town: University of Cape Town Museums and Archives, P.R. Kirby Collection, file BC750/A, [n.d. 1948]; African Music Society, Form of Application for Membership, Cape Town: University of Cape Town Museums and Archives, P.R. Kirby Collection, file BC750/A, [n.d. 1948].

¹² *Leselinyana le Lesotho*, ‘The Composer Has Rested: Joshua Pulumo Mohapeloa KCOR, OBE, D.LITT’, translated for the author by Mantoa Motinyane-Smouze, 29 January 1982, 1.

¹³ Olwage, Grant, ‘John Knox Bokwe: Father of Black South African Choral Composition’, *NewMusicSA Bulletin* Issues 9/10, 2010/2011, 18-19.

unusual for musically talented pupils in black mission schools in southern Africa to receive additional instruction in staff notation and piano or harmonium as Mohapeloa did. Bokwe's music was strongly influenced by British Victorian or American revivalist hymnody, resulting in an SATB choral style that Olwage describes as "resolutely metropolitan". The magnetic attraction to Christian styles at 'the centre' of the western cultural empire by composers living at 'the periphery' in (often) rural locations scattered throughout southern Africa, was to remain a characteristic feature of African choral music throughout its history.

Bokwe also left us with another first, which to some extent offset his metropolitan leanings: his transcriptions of fragments of African traditional music that date back to an early nineteenth century indigenous chant by the first Xhosa Christian convert, Chief Ntsikana Gaba (c.1780-1821). One of these fragments is called *Ulo Tixo Mkulu* (in isiXhosa; 'Thou Great God' in English), which became known as 'Ntsikana's Great Hymn',¹⁴ a very interesting record of what Bokwe remembers from an era before African music was recorded in any other way. Bokwe thus unwittingly (I think) set in motion two parallel characteristics of much African choral music right to the present day: the re-imagination, in western four-part harmony, with inflections from various classical and popular styles, of traditional music from regional African cultures. This creolised new style of African choral music became very important during the twentieth century as a musical vehicle of communal expression, including protest, as has been observed by a number of writers.¹⁵ Bokwe's peers and immediate successors include Tiyo Soga and Enoch Sontonga, the latter most famous for his hymn *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* which was adopted by the South African Native Congress (SANC) as a closing song at meetings in 1919 and subsequently by the SANC's heir, the African National Congress (ANC), now the governing party of South Africa; and it is still sung as part of the new South African national anthem.

The third generation of African choral composers, more or less contemporary with Mohapeloa, includes Michael Mosoeu Moerane, Reuben Caluza, Daniel Marivate, Benjamin Tyamzashe, and Hamilton Masiza. Their work was advanced through competitions and through the establishment of mission printing presses such as Lovedale Press in the Eastern Cape (a British Methodist mission), Morija Sesuto Book Depot (MSBD) in Lesotho (Paris Evangelical Lutheran), and Mazenod Institute in Lesotho (Roman Catholic). These presses were among the first publishers of African choral music. Mohapeloa's first four songbooks were published in the 1930s-50s by MSBD and a few of his other songs were then published by MSBD and Mazenod in the 50s and 60s. More commercial publishers became involved in publishing African choral music in the later twentieth century, including Shooter and Shuter in Pietermaritzburg who published the next generation's music including songs by Alfred Assegai Khumalo, and Oxford University Press, who published Mohapeloa's fifth song collection (1976).

Educational publishers supplied small tonic solfa books to the newly burgeoning State school systems of countries such as South Africa, Swaziland, Botswana, and Lesotho, so they had a guaranteed large market. Composers of the past fifty years, who include Mike Ngxokolo, Makhaya Mjana, L.B.M. Chonco, Thanduxolo Ngqobe, Shalati Khoza, and Phelelani Mnomiya, could to some extent still rely on this market but as it has dwindled they have also increasingly had to rely on the prescription of their works for competitions in order to ensure performances, if not an income. Considering the size of the repertoire, few African choral works have in fact been transcribed into staff notation since Bokwe's time and those few works that have, were mainly done for competitions. In 1998 the South African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO) began publishing a series of African choral scores in 'dual notation' called *South Africa Sings* which are useful study scores; and SAMRO has also published some individual scores.¹⁶ Publication remains, however a major lack in this very vital field.

Choral practice

The history of African choral music publications relates intimately to its history as a practice, and this history is closely bound up with the histories of black southern African groups, the emerging black middle class in the early twentieth century, and the different religious or education systems that African people were exposed to. The tradition of 'amakwaya' or 'iikwayala' as it is often called (from the Zulu/Xhosa words for choir) is much older than the first inter-institutional choral competitions, that date back to 1931 when the newly formed South

¹⁴ Bokwe, J.K. *Ntsikana, the Story of an African Hymn* (Lovedale [Eastern Cape]: Lovedale Press, [n.d. c.1904].

¹⁵ See for example, Mngoma, K., 'The Correlation of Folk and Art Music Among African Composers', *Papers Presented at the Second Symposium on Ethnomusicology*, ed. A. Tracey (Grahamstown: International Library of African Music, 1981), 61-69; Mthethwa, B., 'The Songs of Alfred A. Kumalo[sic]: A Study in Nguni and Western Musical Syncretism', *Papers Presented at the Sixth Symposium on Ethnomusicology, 1987*, ed. A. Tracey (Grahamstown: International Library of African Music, 1988), 28-32; Pewa, E., 'Zulu Music Competitions: the Continuity of Zulu Traditional Aesthetics' (MA diss., University of Natal, 1995); and Mugovhani, G., 'The Manifestation of the "African Style" in the Works of Mzilikazi Khumalo' (MMus diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 1998).

¹⁶ Khumalo, Mzilikazi, gen. ed., *South Africa Sings* (Johannesburg: Southern African Music Rights Organisation, *Vol. I* 1998; *Vol. II* 2008; *Vol. III* 2013). This relative 'boom has ended, and with music (still) not in the curriculum of most state schools in South Africa as an independent study, online publishing would seem a good way to go for composers who want their music disseminated further than competitions.

African Bantu Board of Music first held competitions in the Johannesburg area.¹⁷ These competitions, which initially had instrumental categories as well as choral, prescribed a number of songs each year and helped enrich a repertoire already developing for classroom use. In practice, conductor-teachers often taught music by rote because scores were precious resources, and rehearsals were held almost daily. (This is still common practice.) But although the number of songs written in tonic solfa notation has proliferated and styles have gradually become more diverse, inflected with regional differences during the course of southern Africa's volatile twentieth-century history, choral practice itself has remained largely unchanged. It is still a community-based, amateur practice, with the majority of choristers unable to read music (even tonic solfa), rote learning predominating, and competition the centrifugal force holding the practice together.

Annual competitions are organised for school, church, and adult choirs by separate bodies: and Lesotho, where Mohapeloa lived and worked, has its own competitions although some Sotho choirs also participate in South Africa's (much larger) competition field. The competitions have a lot in common with sport: choirs are like teams, with managers jealously guarding their success and conductors who have additional coaches to do 'drill' work. Over the course of a year prescribed pieces are rehearsed in two categories, 'Western' (e.g. Handel), and 'African' (e.g. Mohapeloa), with traditional song/dance also performed, in the choir's regional folk costume. Choirs pay to enter in the regional and provincial rounds of these competitions, which culminate in national finals held in one of the major cities - Johannesburg, Cape Town, Bloemfontein, or Durban - or in the case of Lesotho, its capital, Maseru. Competitions have evolved almost beyond recognition from their humble beginnings into a big business run, in South Africa's case, by the National Choir Festival (NCF), which has in the past worked in conjunction with corporates such as the Ford Motor Company, the Standard Bank, and Telkom, and now works with the Old Mutual insurance and banking group.¹⁸ The affect of "massive monetary incentives" on the culture of choralism as a result of this interface between music and corporate strategy has been critically observed by Thembela Vokwana.¹⁹ Competition finals have been recorded for radio since the 1960s and for television since the 1980s. The NCF makes its own in-house videos that are sold at the following year's competitions, but these films do not circulate more widely and the focus in them is on singing rather than on compositions or composers, whose names are often not displayed on the videos.

African choral music as a daily performance practice is as much a social as a musical practice, then, a reason for coming together and supporting each other not only by participating in competitions but by performing locally outside of a competition - for weddings and funerals, etc. - acts performed by the community for the community. Choralism is a habit, a way of life, sometimes even an obsession, which the NCF Facebook page gives daily confirmation of; a major after-hours commitment for people who are working or studying, and a social forum for the unemployed.

Since the early history of African choral practice in the last quarter of the nineteenth century external influence has brought about many changes to musical style and vocal techniques, although the African choir from southern Africa retains a sound unlike that of any other choral group in the world. 'White' adjudicators have in the past (for better or worse) directly affected matters of tone production, phrasing, and intonation deemed important to western styles of choral singing. So have recordings: as soon as prescribed works are announced at the beginning of each year practitioners now rush off to find recordings of the western works, on which - probably because there are recordings to emulate - they seem to spend a great deal more rehearsal time than on the indigenous works, according to laments on Facebook.²⁰

Listening to the recordings housed in the SABC sound archive since the early 1960s, one becomes aware how singing styles have changed: vibrato, for example, gradually entered the African choral sound during the early 1980s, when CDs first came out, perhaps under the influence of opera stars such as Pavarotti, perhaps under the influence of Gospel. Conductors may have more musical training and exposure than their predecessors seventy or even twenty years ago but memorisation of a small repertoire for competitions is still the major focus of practice, rather than learning a wide repertoire for presentation outside competitions as well as in, never mind making commercial recordings, which (therefore) barely exist. It is unusual for any conductor or chorister to know more than a handful of Mohapeloa's songs, in short. People tend to know only what they have sung in competitions because little else is available to them - and this gap in knowledge is something an online critical edition might help to fill.

In an unpublished essay on choral music written in 2004, 'Expressions in Black' Thembela Vokwana distinguished four main styles or 'expressions' in choral music that had emerged by the end of the twentieth century:

¹⁷ Vokwana, Thembela, 'Expressions in Black: A History of South African Black Choral Music: "Amakhwaya/iikwayala"' (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2004), 7.

¹⁸ See <http://dogreatthings.co.za/music/national-choir-festival/regional-championships/2013-prescribed-music>.

¹⁹ Vokwana, 'Expressions in Black', 3.

²⁰ This began long ago. See Ndlovu, C.J.M., 'Red-carpet Treatment of Western Classical Music in Black South African Music Competitions', *Papers Presented at the Fourteenth Symposium on Ethnomusicology*, ed. A. Tracey (Grahamstown: International Library of African Music, 1997), 100-103.

- expressions based on European models, especially Methodist hymnody and Baroque - Classical choral models. (Christian themes, nature appreciation and [themes of] love obviously borrowed from the literature of the English canonic masters read in schools as well as the Bible.)
- expressions based on European models but evoking unity among Africans, social commentary on abuse of substances in urban areas, the dilemma and problems associated with urbanization and civilization.
- expressions with sections clearly adding indigenous aspects of music, sources being the local wedding songs and other types of traditional musics found in rural communities.
- expressions specifically emulating indigenous musical components and themes throughout as well as those that incorporated aspects of *toyi-toyi* as a means of voicing anger at political upheavals, reclaiming an African identity and aesthetic.²¹

These expressions clearly outline a history of practice in which many musical and so-called extra-musical elements have been important, resulting in a huge repertoire of African choral music in tonic solfa notation through which these expressions have developed over many decades. In her 1969 book *The Bantu Composers of Southern Africa* Yvonne Huskisson wrote entries on 318 composers.²² Her 1992 supplement contained many new entries on younger composers, and yet she still regarded her research as representing only the “tip of the iceberg”.²³ Assuming, at a conservative estimate, that there have been around 500 composers since Bokwe each composing an average of 100 songs, the total repertoire that has emerged historically might then run to 50 000 works. The vast majority of them are lost, however because very few were published, and works surviving in manuscript are rare. This is *Gebrauchtsmusik* second to none, written for immediate use and committed to memories that may not outlive one or two generations. Mohapeloa was lucky - and very unusual - in having so many of his works published during his lifetime.

Aside from publication, some survival rate has been guaranteed for others through the practice of hand-copying, and later, electronic copying. African choral songs are rarely regarded by practitioners, as ‘works’ in a historical or generic sense, however so much as they are seen as vehicles for use in the moment, and as prescribed works for winning prizes. That competitions are necessary for the survival of culture, indeed people, is not in dispute here, but it is not surprising, given this background of choral music’s use that no complete body of work by one composer has previously been considered *as* a body of work. Although choral music and choral practice in southern Africa has been written about by a number of people and there are publications aside from those already mentioned that are well worth exploring, such as Nhlapo and Khumalo’s *The Voice of African Song*,²⁴ consideration of this music as ‘work’ or ‘works’ remains unusual.

The concept of ‘work’, ‘song’, and ‘catalogue’ in this edition

Work

If there is one place where the ‘work-concept’ still has currency, it is a complete critical edition, the purpose of which is to make available a new version of all works authored by one person. In this case, Mohapeloa is author of the texts and composer of the music. His works are registered with the Southern African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO) and the copyright that subsists in them is held by his legal heirs, Mrs Ntsiuoa Joyce Mohapeloa (the composer’s daughter-in-law) and Joshuoa Pulumo Mohapeloa, her son and the composer’s grandson. They have granted permission for African Composers Edition to collect, edit and publish Mohapeloa’s works in this edition. This concept of ‘work’, the legal one, reminds us that all songs written by Mohapeloa remain under copyright until 70 years after his death (2052; and copyright can under certain circumstances also be renewed).

The concept of work generally referred to in this Introduction, however, is a generic one, and the word identifying it in southern Africa is not normally ‘work’ but ‘song’. It is common practice in the African choral tradition to refer to indigenous works as songs rather than choral pieces, choir music, choruses, or part songs – some of the English terms used in the West. ‘Song’ in the West implies ‘art song’ - solo song with piano accompaniment - and a few African composers have written ‘art songs’ in this sense, too, but not Mohapeloa.²⁵

²¹ Vokwana, ‘Expressions in Black’, 5.

²² Huskisson, Yvonne, *Die Bantoe-Komponiste van Suider-Afrika/The Bantu Composers of Southern Africa* (Johannesburg: South African Broadcasting Corporation, 1969).

²³ Huskisson, Yvonne, *Black Composers of Southern Africa: An Expanded Supplement to The Bantu Composers of Southern Africa*, edited by Sarita Hauptfleisch (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1992), back cover.

²⁴ Nhlapo, P.J. and S. Khumalo, *The Voice of African Song* (Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, 1993).

²⁵ See Joshua Uzoigwe, *Akin Euba: An Introduction to the Life and Music of a Nigerian Composer* (Bayreuth: Eckhard Breiting, 1992); Akin Euba, *Modern African Music* (Bayreuth: Iwalewa Haus, 1993); and Chris van Rhyn, ‘Mapping Western Art Song Composition in Africa Since 1990’ (PhD diss., Stellenbosch University, 2013).

Song

‘Song’ in the African choral tradition means a short work for SATB sometimes with additional voices, an extra Alto or Tenor being Mohapeloa’s preference, and invariably unaccompanied. The word for ‘song’ in local languages is synonymous with ‘music’ or ‘dance’: ‘*umculo*’ or ‘*ingoma*’ in isiZulu, for example; and one Sesotho word for song, ‘*lifela*’ reflects the introduction of hymn tunes by missionaries. The most common Sesotho word for school (choral) song is ‘*lipina*’, derived from ‘*mino*’, “an abbreviation of *mobino*, derived from the verb *ho bina*, to sing”.²⁶ Mohapeloa preferred new words, like ‘*meloli*’ (which means whistles), ‘*lithallere*’ (songs sung with a trained voice), or ‘*meluluetsa*’ (ululations); and the title of his 1951 songbook was *Khalima-nosi tsa Mino oa Kajeno* where the word ‘*mino*’ is combined with ‘*Khalima-nosi*’ to give the literal phrase, ‘shining stars’ - or perhaps ‘gems’ - ‘of today’s music’. Whatever the preferred word for ‘song’, these different experiments reflect Mohapeloa’s explorations along a new path of African choralism from the 1930s onwards. The notion of ‘song’ in African music in southern Africa goes far wider than choirs, of course, and embraces almost every cultural expression in the region. Singing is such an ingrained, embodied activity that it was possible for historian Helen Kivnick to say in 1990 on the brink of South Africa’s new democracy:

It is through their singing that Black South Africans most publicly assert their cooperative identity. And we may be sure that when South Africa’s people draft a constitution that allows them all to live together in true justice and equality, when they install their first truly democratic elected government, these political milestones will have the sound - quite literally - of more than 28 million voices singing.²⁷

Catalogue

The need for a catalogue for this edition is related to its rationale, which is (1) to make available a large repertoire by one composer writing in an African choral tradition already 140 years old; and (2) to present that composer’s repertoire critically in a way that highlights African music’s relation to western modernity while revealing its Africanness and more than that, its unique creole-ness. No catalogue of Mohapeloa’s songs existed when work on this edition began, so the edition and the catalogue developed together. The ‘Catalogue of Works by J.P. Mohapeloa’ lists all Mohapeloa’s songs, each work assigned a ‘JPM’ number (like BWV numbers for the complete Bach edition or K numbers for Mozart but in this case based on Mohapeloa’s initials), and all Mohapeloa’s works as published scores, each assigned an ‘ACE’ number, ACE being the acronym of African Composers Edition. There are two ACE numbers per JPM work because there are two versions of every score, one in staff notation only and one in staff notation with tonic solfa added. The first song in Vol. 1, *U Ea Kae?* (Where Are You Headed?), for example is listed in the catalogue as JPM001/ACE001 and JPM001/ACE002. Each ACE work is assigned a sequential ISMN (International Standard Music Number).²⁸

Titles of songs are normally given in italics in this Critical Edition unless songs and collections are referred to in close proximity, in which case the *New Grove* practice of using italics for collections and single quotation marks for individual songs is followed. The five song collections in Volumes I-IV are only collections, not cycles; the songs are not meant to be performed as an entity and were grouped for publication purposes, although there is a certain integrity of style to each volume and patterns of subject matter emerge within collections. Mohapeloa’s songs are known in the African choral community by individual titles and performed individually, and some have been (re)published individually because they proved popular or began life as ‘occasion’ pieces.

The total number of Mohapeloa songs previously published in tonic solfa notation collections is 132. (This figure does not count reissues of songs in other publications - see below.) More than 50 extant unpublished psalms and miscellaneous songs are also published here for the first time, making the total number of works in this edition 183. Furthermore, there are a number of titles for which scores have not yet been found.²⁹

Previous publication of Mohapeloa’s work

Many of Mohapeloa’s songs were originally published during his lifetime in five tonic solfa songbooks devoted to his music. These books and their reprints are primary sources for this new edition and are listed below, with details of each reprint. The fact that they were reprinted several times testifies to their (once) widespread use - especially in Lesotho’s schools - and studying the reprints reveals minor typographical errors that might on the other hand be meaningful if microscopic rethinks, or vice versa.

²⁶ Wells, Robin E., *An Introduction to the Music of the Basotho* (Morija: Morija Museum and Archives, 1994), 5.

²⁷ Kivnick, H.Q. *Where Is the Way: Song and Struggle in South Africa* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 336.

²⁸ In southern Africa ISMNs are supplied by the National Library in Pretoria.

²⁹ The obituary mentioned above (*Leselinyana* 1982, 1) includes the phrase, “During his life we can estimate that Mr J.P. composed 200 songs”. The Preface to Volume VI has a list of possible missing works at the end.

Meloli le Lithallere tsa Afrika [African Songs and Extemporary Harmonizations Book 1].³⁰ Morija, Lesotho: Morija Sesuto Book Depot. 1st ed. 1935; 2nd ed. 1953; 1st reprint 1977; 2nd reprint 1983; 3rd reprint 1988. [32 songs]

Meloli le Lithallere tsa Afrika II: Buka ea Bobeli [African Songs and Extemporary Harmonizations Book 2]. Morija, Lesotho: Morija Sesuto Book Depot. 1st ed. 1939; 2nd ed. 1945; 3rd ed. 1955; 4th ed. 1980; 5th ed. 1996. [32 songs]

Meloli le Lithallere tsa Afrika III: Buka ea Boraro (African Songs and Extemporary Harmonizations Book 3]. Morija, Lesotho: Morija Sesuto Book Depot. 1st ed. 1947; 2nd printing 1966; 3rd reprint 1977; 4th reprint 1983; 5th reprint 1988. [28 songs] (This contains three songs later republished in *Meluluetsa*: ‘TY’, ‘Maseru’ and ‘Mafeteng’ - see below.)

Khalima-nosi tsa 'Mino oa Kajeno: Harnessing Salient Features of Modern African Music. Morija: Morija Sesuto Book Depot. 1st ed. 1951; 1st reprint 2002. [5 songs]

Meluluetsa ea Nišetso-pele le Bosechaba Lesotho. [Anthems for the Development of the Lesotho Nation]. Foreword by Dibarata Ghosh. Cape Town: Oxford University Press. 1st ed. 1976; out of print. [25 songs] (This contains several songs previously published elsewhere.)

Mohapeloa numbered his 92 songs in the first three songbooks consecutively: *MLA I* begins with no. 1, *MLA II* begins with no. 33 and *MLA III* begins with no. 65. He intended *Meluluetsa* to be published by MSBD as *MLA IV* but was persuaded to give them to Oxford University Press instead.³¹ The five songs in *Khalima-nosi* show new trends in modern African music as the title suggests and provide a significant transition between Mohapeloa's early ‘school’ songs of the 1930s and 40s and his more mature ‘patriotic’ works from the post-war 1950s and post-Independence 1960s-70s in Lesotho.³²

In addition to the five Mohapeloa songbooks, eight of his songs appeared in a multi-composer collection of worship music called *Hosanna: Lipina tsa Kereke* (Hosannah: Church Songs) (Morija, Lesotho: Morija Sesuto Book Depot. 1st and 2nd ed. 1955). These are ‘Balisa’, ‘Hosanna’, ‘Christmas’, ‘O, Phokolang’, ‘Molimo ke Moea’, ‘Silevera le Gauda’, ‘Ahe Moren’a Khanya!’ and ‘Na le ’Na?’. ‘Molimo ke Moea’ had originally been published in 1939 the hymnal *Lifela tsa Ziona* - see below. Two other Mohapeloa songs appeared in another collection of worship music, *Binang ka Thabo* (Songs of Joy): ‘Leheshe-heshe’ and ‘Lehlomela la Thesele le Letle-letle’ (Mazenod: Mazenod Institute. 1st ed. 1963). This book contained four other Mohapeloa songs later republished in *Meluluetsa*: ‘Leribe’, ‘Butha-Buthe’, ‘Maloti a Lesotho’, and ‘Quthing’. To recap, the following is a list of songs from collections that have appeared in another place:

‘Molimo ke Moea’ was first published by MSBD as hymn no. 445 in the 1939 edition of the Lutheran Evangelical Church (LEC) hymnal, *Lifela tsa Ziona*.³³

‘Morija’ (*MLA III/38*), ‘The Gay Night Birds’ (*MLA III/77*), and ‘Thoko ea Tlhōlo’ (*MLA III/92*) were also published by MSBD as separate leaflets.

‘Coronation March’ (*MLA II/64*) was originally published in the *Basutoland Teacher's Magazine* in 1937 in honour of the coronation of Britain's King George V;³⁴ in 1939 and 1945 this version was reprinted but in the 1955 3rd edition of *MLA II* the lyrics were adapted to take account of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953.

‘TY’ (*MLA II/35*), ‘Mafeteng’ (*MLA III/55*), and ‘Maseru’ (*MLA II/64*) - republished in *Meluluetsa* as songs no. 20, 22, and 21 respectively.

Lesotho Tsiketsi sa Tlotla ea Afrika and *Moshoeshe, Tsoha* - originally published in the Souvenir Programme of the 1966 Lesotho Independence Celebrations.³⁵

³⁰ This first volume was not called ‘Book 1’ until the last reprint of 1988; and the technical difference between new editions (where there are changes even if pagination is the same) and reprints (where there are no changes) is not consistently followed.

³¹ Mohapeloa to Huskisson, 3 August 1962 and 18 November 1963, Korrespondensie [Correspondence] (Huskisson Collection, SAMRO, file ‘Mohapeloa, J.P.’); and David Ambrose, pers. comm. July 2012 re OUP.

³² The country attained independence from Britain in 1966.

³³ David Ambrose letter to Christine Lucia 24 June 2014. *Lifela tsa Ziona* is the most widely used hymn book in southern Africa, and is reprinted almost every year by MSBD.

³⁴ Mohapeloa, Joshua Pulumo, ‘A Song for the Coronation of King George VI’, *Basutoland Teachers' Magazine* 1, November 1937, 6-8.

³⁵ Morija Sesuto Book Depot, ‘Souvenir Programme: Lesotho Independence’ (Morija Sesuto Book Depot: 4 October 1966), 13-14.

‘Maloti a Lesotho’ (MNBL/15), ‘Butha-Buthe’ (MNBL/18), ‘Leribe’ (MNBL/19), and ‘Quthing’ (MNBL/24) - originally published in *Binang ka Thabo*.

Composition, publication, marketing and dissemination of Mohapeloa’s music

The first edition of book I of *Meloli le Lithallere tsa Afrika* (here called *Meloli I*) gives us a very good idea of how Mohapeloa’s music was published, marketed and disseminated and is discussed in some detail here, with many points applicable to later songs and songbooks. *Meloli I* was first published in 1935 by Morija Sesuto Book Depot (MSBD), Lesotho. This modest educational mission press, which for decades had published a range of school text books, religious books, songs, hymns, and other material for markets all over southern Africa, announced proudly in the newspaper *Leselinyana le Lesotho* (The Little Light of Lesotho) on 23 August 1935, “This book that we are introducing to preachers, teachers, and the Basotho in general from Lesotho and South Africa, is the first of its kind”.³⁶ The advertisement goes on:

There are many songs here, composed by a Mosotho, a child of Lesotho, the one whose name appears above [in the ad]. It’s been a while that we’ve been hearing some of these songs, some in schools outside and inside in praise of fine song. Today we have all these songs together in one book, a book that has been printed well, and which is easy to read. Let everyone rush and buy it, to show that we are rejoicing, and let us give thanks to the first Mosotho composer; because we can now teach his beautiful songs and follow the rules he has shown us in the way that he has presented them.³⁷

Mohapeloa was not the first person in Basutoland to compose songs, for he built on what a handful of his predecessors, indigenous composers such as Hope Mosaase, Jeremiah ’Makoa, Stephen Mosaase, and W. Buti had started.³⁸ Using their songs, together with Basotho traditional music, hymns, quasi ‘African songs’ written by Europeans and a handful of western classical pieces in tonic solfa notation, he forged a new vernacular choral idiom. At the same time, he developed a new African literary genre: the song lyric. So there was something ‘new’ in this collection that enabled Mohapeloa - publisher’s hype aside - to be called ‘the first Mosotho composer’.

How were these songs composed, and what did the publisher mean by ‘we’ve been hearing some of these songs’ for a while? Historian J.M. Mohapeloa sheds some light on both questions:

At the beginning he wrote a few lines, he would then test this with two to three people to hear how it sounded. He would continue with the short song, changing it here and there. He would try it again, and then make changes. He would continue doing this until he had a complete song which was sung by a choir that he formed. It was also sung by other schools ... That choir which Pulumo started continued to grow and its other work was to test the new songs that were composed ...

It did not end there. [The choir] started entertainments. At first it sang at Mahalinyane. It then visited branches in Liphiring, Makhaleng and Tsoloane. Pulumo was encouraged by the way people enjoyed his music ...

[H]is songs were generally loved; other groups, in addition to Pulumo’s choir, started performing his songs. Those singers visited far places such as Siloe, Thabana-Morena, Mohales Hoek, Mafeteng, Hermon, Maseru and other directions. They went outside Lesotho, and went as far as Bloemfontein, Kroonstad and Johannesburg.³⁹

This rapid oral dissemination of the music even before it was published relied on the way both music and text had a strong underlying nationalistic cultural appeal: these were songs for ‘Basotho in general from Lesotho and South Africa’ - and it must be remembered that there are more Sotho speakers living outside Lesotho (in surrounding South Africa) than in it - and so it was recognisably ‘our music’; it spoke to a wide range of people living in scattered areas who effectively constituted an imagined Basotho community. It can even be argued that

³⁶ *Leselinyana le Lesotho* 68(34), 23 August 1935, 4. Translated for the author by Mantoa Motinyane-Smouse. The first edition was on sale for 2s 9d, or 3s including postage.

³⁷ *Leselinyana* op. cit.

³⁸ “My love for and understanding of music was founded and honed by these strong men and the forerunners of education in the [remote] mountain region” (‘Bophelo ba ka ke le Sehoba sa Sejoale-Joaleka: My Life as a Modern African Composer’ [unpublished manuscript, n.d. c. July, 1965], 1. Translated for the author into English by Mantoa Motinyane-Smouse).

³⁹ J.M. Mohapeloa and M.K. Phakisi, *Likheleke tsa Pina Sesothong* [The Eloquence of Song in Sesotho] (Maseru: Lekhotla la Sesotho L/P 1139, 1987), 18-19. Translated into English for the author by Mantoa Motinyane-Smouse.

people were united in their ‘Basotho-ness’ through singing these songs, wherever they lived. The sense of community was made possible largely because the songs drew on familiar Basotho folksong, dance and stories as well as on the style of tunes in the widely known Lesotho hymnal *Lifela tsa Sione*, but it also took on board musical gestures from classical choruses, which had had a ghostly presence through old tonic solfa songbooks in Lesotho since the early twentieth century, for example *Lipina tsa Likolo tse Phahameng* (Songs for High School, 1907). Mohapeloa’s use of various guises of ‘the familiar’ made people feel they knew his idiom already. He gave them something that spoke to their heritage, even while he reimagined and reinvented that heritage for choir, in 4, 5, or occasionally 6 or 8 parts.⁴⁰

Meloli I’s appearance was timely, for in the mid-1930s Basutoland was in the process of strengthening the education system during the course of which many new schools were built.⁴¹ It required that songs be taught from solfa scores. Mr T.T.E. Pitso from Maseru, who was a school pupil in Lesotho during the 1930s and knew Mohapeloa, explains in an interview with Christine Lucia what happened in those days:

- TTEP From my early days in primary school, Mohapeloa’s songs came in handy, at a time when the country needed songs like his in the schools, in particular. I was up in the mountains, a remote school called Lesatseng Primary School.
- CL And his music was even known up there?
- TTEP It was all over Lesotho.
- CL How did you learn it?
- TTEP We were made to read tonic solfa, sing different parts.

‘For the coming generations’

Mohapeloa prefaced the 1935 1st edition of *Meloli I* with a composer’s statement, ‘Re E-s’o Qale!’ (‘Before We Start!’) which is worth quoting in full,⁴² because it perfectly explains Mohapeloa’s intention for the time and place in which his compositions first appeared in print and conveys a sense of the struggle to blend old and new, musically:

Re E-s’o Qale! (Before We Start!)

It is well known that to the Black nations of Africa music holds a special place. From days of old to modern times, a Mosotho has sung in his language; sometimes singing sad songs of death or songs of joy that move him to stomp with his feet. Music allows him to bring out all that is in his heart.

It’s also been observed by many that this accomplished singing by Africans has been changing with time. A song of a Mosotho of old was repetitive; even though it was a beautiful melody that was made even better by good lyrics and good singing; often the group of words were not more than two; and sounds of the song that are unequal in pitch, not over five (pentatonic). Today we speak in foreign languages and we even sing these “doremifa” [solfa letters] which even children playing out in the street hum out as “tralala”. Africanness or old Sesotho is gradually disappearing; what remains of it, has a strong smell of foreignness.

Here, we are striving to embellish and enjoy. All existing sounds have been used to depict all sorts of feelings, irrespective of whether they are African or foreign. However, the two groupings [African/foreign] will somewhat distinguish themselves; although they are not standing out in the true sense because we are like the Mosotho of today who speaks two languages at the same time and is not proficient in any of the two, twisting the foreign language towards Sesotho while bending Sesotho towards that foreign language.

We have totally failed to create the loud song of men “sehou, pina ea banna” because in an attempt to have a joyous mood, instead of coming up with two groups of words we have several groups. Even in this grouping of two (the foreign one) we have failed to stick to the usual form, which has clear rules that are well known by those who have read the letters of the big accomplished musicians from overseas. We don’t really follow those rules here [the rules of western harmony and voicing]. When the sound of the song goes in this direction, instead of allowing it to follow the right path, we threw in three or four notes here and there to

⁴⁰ See Christine Lucia, ‘Joshua Pulumo Mohapeloa and the Heritage of African Song’, *African Music* 9.1 (2011): 56-86.

⁴¹ These include Basutoland High School in Maseru which opened in 1939, one of whose founding teachers was Michael Mosoeu Moerane (Gilbert Ramatlapeng, Author’s Interview 4.4.14; see also David Ambrose, *Maseru: An Illustrated History* (Moriya: Morija Museum and Archives, 1963).

⁴² ‘Re E-s’o Qale!’ (‘Before We Start!’) [Preface] to *Meloli le Lithallere tsa Afrika I* (Moriya: Morija Sesuto Book Depot, 1988), [4]. Translated into English for the author by Mpho Ndebele.

embellish the song to create nice songs, “lithallere”. It is for these reasons that we are not calling this book a book of songs but a book of sounds and nice songs, “meloli le lithallere” as is, indeed, the case.

Accomplished singers, let’s sing together with understanding, because you have sharp ears and your voices are sweeter than Lesiba [a Sesotho blown string instrument]. Your joy and sadness touch your heart best when they are conveyed in song. Even you bad singers, I invite you to sing along; loudly too. Whatever happens will happen; after all, the Sesotho idiom “even the bad singer is allowed to sing for his king” covers you. As for you who are off-tune: don’t worry, just wait for the song to drag and go real low as it gets out of tune; now throw in a stone [i.e. kill it]. Let us sing together like true Africans! for this thing called song is our speciality.

Mohapeloa’s experience of negotiating between African and western musical values is wonderfully encapsulated here, and his intriguing discussion of ‘African’ and ‘foreign’ elements invites closer analytical study of his music to see how he combined them. The historical introductions and notes on the scores of individual songs in this Critical Edition often take up this theme of reconciliation between different musical traditions.

In the 1953 edition of *Meloli I* Mohapeloa expanded on this Preface, which he now called ‘Khorō’ (Gateway), adding a final section where he said, “as long as all our songs are published, the case of African music will be placed completely on the forehead of the court [‘lekhotla’] and African Music will be in the right place, where it is kept for the coming generations, as an example that they can follow, or a place to start when investigating about what proper African music should be”.⁴³ The notion that ‘right place’ for African to be preserved for future generations was the printed tonic solfa songbook might seem extraordinary to a western conductor or music scholar; but it was not out of the ordinary to an African composer brought up musically in the mission tradition.

The ‘foreign-ness’ of the songs, as Mohapeloa’s publisher hints in that advertisement for *Meloli I* on 23 August 1935 quoted above, comes partly from the idea that these were ‘nice songs’ that somewhat ‘followed the western rules’ - meaning ways of writing for voices in four parts. This implies there was something in the music to show that a Basotho composer had mastered a certain style of western vocal harmony but within a vernacular musical language. For as Mohapeloa implies, these are not (merely) Basotho traditional songs committed to paper, in two or three parts with one cycle of material repeated in varying ways; they are *composed* songs, in four-part harmony, with phrases, sections, repeats, sometimes dynamics, and, moreover, quite complex texts written by Mohapeloa himself.

The part-writing in Mohapeloa’s music is often very lively, and there can be different lyrics in parallel; the four-part texture sometimes breaks into five or six voices or reduces to three; there are sudden changes of rhythm and harmony; the Soprano parts often lie quite high - indeed all the ranges are wide and require strong, flexible voices; the Bass often goes below the staff, recalling the deep style of Basotho men’s traditional singing, ‘mokhorotlo’ or ‘mohobelo’; the Sesotho lyrics are not easy even for native speakers; and tempi can be quite fast. Mohapeloa is aware of phrasing and the need to breathe, but he makes few concessions to amateur singers. Good intonation, breath control, accurate ensemble, tone production adequate to their expressive nature, and regular practice are all needed in order to do justice to the performance of these songs. Although there are folk elements too - in some of the texts, in the use of pentatonic melodies, in the way some sections are harmonised according to root movement by a 2nd rather than a 4th or 5th, in the strong bass lines - these are far from being simply folk song arrangements; but neither, on the other hand are they quasi-hymns, as is often thought.⁴⁴

This is really a new and strange, unfamiliar musical territory: songs based on a western notion of unaccompanied choral music but with Lesotho lyrics, and with elements of Basotho folk music, dance, and poetry. Songs that play with language, and play with sound. As Mohapeloa puts it in his original Preface: “All existing sounds have been used to depict all sorts of feelings, irrespective of whether they are African or foreign”.

‘A book of sounds and nice songs’

If this was a thoroughly hybrid new genre, how should it be sung? Clearly Mohapeloa did not intend the songs in *Meloli I* to be sung in a ‘folk’ way using what he referred to as ‘sharp’ singing but rather, with a ‘nice’ trained voice. This way of singing is partly what lies behind the idea of ‘nice song’; it relates to the meaning of the word ‘lithallere’ in the title of Volume 1, and it requires some explanation.

⁴³ Joshua Pulumo Mohapeloa, ‘Khorō’ [Preface] to *Meloli le Lithallere tsa Afrika I*, (Morija: Morija Sesuto Book Depot, 1988(1935)), 3. Translated for the author into English by Mantoa Motinyane-Smouse.

⁴⁴ Stellenbosch University Library, for example catalogues *Meloli I* under ‘hymns’.

From 1922 to 1927 Mohapeloa attended Morija Training Institution, commonly known as ‘Thabeng Normal School’ which was what we might nowadays call a middle school, between primary and senior secondary level. “[In] the years before Pulumo went to this school”, his brother J.M. Mohapeloa writes, “music at this school was a bit ‘sharp’”. (He does not mean sharp in pitch but harsh in sound.) As a particular song was mentioned, he says, people “would stand up already shouting. When they sing they would mingle, and move side-ways until they made a circle. When they were done forming the circle the song was also finished!”. J.P. Mohapeloa recalled in an interview with David Coplan in 1976 how at primary school, “We sang European composed songs. The words rather terribly distorted, because we couldn’t pronounce the English words. Sometimes we didn’t know what we were singing about. We enjoyed the noise”.⁴⁵ This kind of ‘noisy’ singing was evidently phased out after Pulumo arrived at Thabeng. By this time,

The music teacher, called E. Pester, was busy teaching music with soft voices, which were used with skill, without being pushed, without being carelessly sharp. Those who were conducting choirs were taught how to direct properly, showing time and how to direct the singers with your hands. They were not teaching only those who wanted to be teachers, although for those music was examinable. All the students who were training to become teachers and other branches, were divided into “Class Choirs”, each group had a director who pointed out the important points of music. They would choose a song which the groups would use on a selected competition day. When the students learned this song, they would be shown how to sing properly and not just making noise.⁴⁶

It was in one of these groups that “Pulumo developed his knowledge of music”:

Pester had a chosen quartet of singers whose music was the most beautiful because they were trained with care and patience, such that when they sang, it was mysteriously beautiful. They sang the notes accurately, the voices clear, controlled by the owners. Before the end of the year that Pulumo arrived at Morija, Pester had already noticed that he was talented and selected him to become part of the quartet. His knowledge of music became deeper.⁴⁷

This knowledge was not only of singing with a Western trained voice but of how Western music was written: knowledge of theory of music. This knowledge is part of what constituted ‘the rules’ that Mohapeloa ‘has shown us’, as his publisher put it: a system of keys, key relationships, time signatures, notation, chord progressions and elementary harmony, heavily diluted in the mission school - as in every educational context - and in the context of a mission station in a rural African country such as Lesotho, severely decontextualized. There was little exposure to the urban Western performance and compositional traditions out of which these ‘rules’ sprang, in short. As a student noted for his musical gifts, Mohapeloa was given extra music lessons by the school matron, Florence Mabile (daughter of the Principal), in staff notation and keyboard and this may have made him slightly more aware of some of the contexts than his peers were, but not much.⁴⁸

When Mohapeloa left Thabeng to attend the SANC (now the University of Fort Hare) in 1928 to complete his Matriculation he encountered Xhosa and Zulu composers whose music was stylistically somewhat unlike Sotho music, and to different ‘African’ ways of singing. By the time Mohapeloa came to collect his first 32 songs into one volume, then, he was ready to use a new term for them as ‘songs’, eschewing the usual Sesotho words ‘lipina’ or ‘lifela’ in favour of a new phrase, ‘meloli le lithallere’.

‘Meloli’ and ‘lithallere’

‘Meloli’ (pronounced ‘melody’⁴⁹) does not mean melody in a Western sense: it is the plural of the Sesotho noun, ‘mololi’, which means “narrow, thin thing; whistle; song of a bird”.⁵⁰ In the context of the title of this volume it means song as ‘pleasant musical sounds’, unadorned natural song; it could even refer to ‘folk’ song. Throughout *Meloli I* Mohapeloa evokes *sounds*: of nature, of weather, birds, of games, tongue-twisters and dances, and of rural life in general, so ‘meloli’ is a wonderfully evocative portmanteau word connoting both human and non-human sound.

⁴⁵ Interview with David Coplan, 1976, card 1.

⁴⁶ Mohapeloa and M.K. Phakisi, *Likheleke*, 12-13. Translated for the author by Mantoa Motinyane-Smouese.

⁴⁷ Mohapeloa and M.K. Phakisi, *Likheleke*, 13.

⁴⁸ J.P. Mohapeloa, ‘Bophelo’, 1-2.

⁴⁹ The Sesotho ‘l’ is pronounced ‘d’ when it comes before the vowels ‘i’ or ‘u’.

⁵⁰ A. Mabile and H. Dieterlen, reclassified, revised and enlarged by R.A. Paroz, *Southern Sotho-English Dictionary* (Morija, Basutoland: Morija Sesuto Book Depot, 1950), 213.

‘Lithallere’ (pronounced ‘ditalleree’) on the other hand, comes from the verb ‘thallera’, ‘to adorn’ and is associated with speech; the plural noun ‘lithallere’ derived from it means ‘nice songs’.⁵¹ Mohapeloa translated this word for David Coplan during an interview with him in 1978 as “extemporary harmonization”.⁵² The title *Meloli le lithallere* ... reflects the ability of Africans, he explained to Coplan, “to sing in unison or harmonize without forethought - automatically”, showing that “it’s not difficult to harmonize; it’s second nature”. To sing and to harmonise are one and the same musical gesture, as it were. Perhaps, therefore, one should not attach too much significance to the *difference* in meaning between ‘meloli’ and ‘lithallere’ but rather look at their use jointly in this title.

The publishers translated *Meloli le Lithallere tsa Afrika* in a later advertisement as ‘African Songs and Tunes’, a space-saving solution, perhaps; and very different again is the translation made in 1998 by J.S.M. Khumalo, “African melodies in decorative counterpoint”.⁵³ By doing so, Khumalo raises the interesting question of just how unplanned and spontaneous such part-singing - the impromptu addition of parts to a melody - was in the Africa of the 1930s, as opposed to how carefully and deliberately Mohapeloa composed his songs and wrote them down ‘for future generations’, because the idea of spontaneous harmonisation is in many ways a colonial cliché, the West’s view of the African, the ‘Other’ musicking. It denies self-awareness, or the effort of musical training that Mohapeloa and other African composers underwent, whereby they painstakingly acquired and exercised a ‘foreign’ and ‘imposed’ knowledge of chord voicing and chord progression in staff notation and a skill in manipulating choral textures. Such skill was hard won, and although one must be careful not to fall into the trap of seeing it as more of a skill or more hard won than learning indigenous music or hymns in the community or at home, informally, we do know that Mohapeloa himself did not quite ever feel he had reached the level of mastery of ‘Western rules’ that he desired, telling David Coplan in 1976 that “my theoretical background was not so good at first, I hope simply because I was trying to imitate what I had heard and seen in print in tonic solfa. I had a very elementary idea of chords, so I exploited that to the best I could”.⁵⁴

The irony, not lost on Mohapeloa, was that the more he mastered Western theory of music the more he wanted to use it to “write in such a way that the compositions were African in that they sounded like what people in the villages sing”; so much so, that inevitably he eventually felt that his songs fell into two categories: “those that are based on the traditional way of singing, and those which are modelled on the school songs that we sang”.⁵⁵

The word ‘lithallere’ crops up in the texts of Volume I more often than ‘meloli’. Song no. 9 is even called ‘Lithallera’ - originally ‘Lithallere’ but Mohapeloa changed the ending to -a in his 1965 manuscript of the work (more details on this ms. below), perhaps to bring out the idea of adornment.⁵⁶ This song almost parodies the notion of Western song, with its chorus ‘tarara’ (mimicking ‘falala’ or ‘doremi’); indeed the text is all *about* Western singing in Africa. The Sesotho text is Mohapeloa’s; the phonemic interlinear translation on the left is by Mantoa Motinyane-Smouse, and the translation on the right is by Mantoa Motinyane-Smouse and Mpho Ndebele.

Lithallera

Tararara ...⁵⁷

Le mona hae, Afrika, re bina ka lithallere,
Even here home Africa we sing in nice-voices

Ha re hlokofetse,

When we hurt

Re bina ka lithallere, utloa hle, ak’u utloe,
we sing in nice-voices hear please, please listen

Re le timeletse;⁵⁸

We you disguise-for

E, ke lithallere;

Yes is nice-songs

Re ikaha likou

We build larynxes

Ka meloliloli ea khabo.

With sounds of adornment

Le rōna ma Afrika

Too we Africans

Fine Songs

Tararara ...

Even here in Africa we sing with fine voices,

When we are sad,

We make good melodies, listen carefully,

You can’t tell we are sad;

Yes, these are the fine songs;

We strengthen our throats

With melodies of adornment.

We too, we Africans,

⁵¹ Mabile and Dieterlen, *Dictionary*, 381.

⁵² Coplan interview 1978...

⁵³ Khumalo, *South Africa Sings Volume I*, 28.

⁵⁴ Interview with David Coplan, 1976, card 4.

⁵⁵ Coplan 1976 interview, cards 3-4.

⁵⁶ Joshua Pulumo Mohapeloa, *Meloli le Lithallere tsa Afrika* (unpublished manuscript, July, 1965), Richard Cock private collection, Johannesburg.

⁵⁷ This seems to mimic the English ‘tra-la-la’.

⁵⁸ Literally, ‘as we elude you’, i.e. you can’t tell we are sad.

Rea na te fi sa. We make-nice	We have fun.
Etsoe ntho ena ho bina ⁵⁹ In-fact thing this of singing	After all, music
Ke ea habo rōna. Is of-house our	Is our forte.

Thus ‘lithallere’ seems to embrace not only a habit of spontaneous extemporary singing - related to (learnt) folksong, perhaps but modified by (learnt) Western practices - but also a way of physically *cultivating* the voice. Words and phrases in the above text such as ‘tarara’, ‘bina ka lithallere’, ‘ikaha likou’ and ‘meloliloli ea khabo’, as well as the sense of pride with which African song is represented in this song - ‘music is our forte’ (what a wonderful understatement) - point to a Westernised African notion of song and vocal display.

Maintaining a distinction between ‘African’ and ‘Western’ would be seen as an essentialist move, in our time, but to Mohapeloa perhaps, conscious of developing a new kind of African choral song in the 1930s to 1970s it still had some bite, as his notion of “songs of two kinds” mentioned above reveals. And elsewhere in his 1976 interview with Coplan he explains how he tried to teach his own choir “to sing with tuneful voices”.⁶⁰ The way that choirs nowadays, in 2015, globally, sing in such diverse ways - the way an American university choir might sing *Lithallera* for example, and how different that might be from the way a British ‘natural voice movement’ choir might sing it - would have fascinated him.

Sources for this edition

Three types of sources have been consulted for this new edition: Mohapeloa’s published scores in all the available versions listed above, his manuscript scores where they exist, and other documentation.

Published scores

The first source is more important than might be the case with other critical editions because of the dearth of manuscripts. The books published by MSBD are still in print - the latest editions are on sale at the bookshop in Morija - and most of the previous editions are housed in the Morija Museum and Archives (MMA, opposite the bookshop). *Binang ka Thabo* is still on sale in the Catholic Centre at Maseru (Maseru). *Meluluetsa* did not go beyond a 1st edition and is out of print but there are copies in several libraries including the Library of the University of South Africa, Pretoria. The newspaper *Leselinyana* is housed in MMA. Many other newspapers, magazines and documents and even one or two individual songs are owned by Professor David Ambrose in Ladybrand, South Africa, who must have the largest private archive of material on Lesotho in the world. Other sources for scores are institutional or private collections. SAMRO has songs from larger collections that were published individually (usually in Morija), and other songs or fragments, including ‘Lesotho, Tsiketsi sa Tlotla ea Afrika’ (SAMRO Catalogue AO2950), ‘Eben-Ezer’ (AO2951), ‘Tloholohelo ea Ntlo ea Molimo’, ‘Morija’ (Morija Solfa Leaflets No. 1), and ‘Thoko ea Tlhōlo’ (Praise of Man’s Victory Over Ignorance), described as an ‘Adapted Extract’ from *Meloli le Lithallere tsa Afrika III*. These sources are not always dated. SAMRO has itself re-published two songs from *MLA* in *South Africa Sings*: ‘U Ea Kae?’ (*MLA I/1*) and ‘Nonyana Se-nyamafi’ (*MLA III/66*).⁶¹ These published songbooks constitute the majority of sources consulted.

Manuscript scores

Most of Mohapeloa’s original manuscript sources are lost but a few have survived, held in the private collections of Mrs Ntsiuoa Joyce Mohapeloa (Hlotse), Dr Karabo Eric Lekhanya (Maseru), and Dr Richard Cock (Johannesburg). Mrs Mohapeloa has part of the ms. of *Meluluetsa* and manuscripts of the miscellaneous songs *Freedom in Unity: O.A.U. Anthem*, *Tholoana Lerato*, *Lesotho Lefa la Rōna*, and *Shoeshoe tsa Moshoeshoe*. Some of these are in large print format: 4 plain A4 sheets glued together and music written with a thick felt-tipped pen. Mrs Mohapeloa’s view (pers. comm. 29.9.06) is that this was due to the composer’s failing eyesight in later life.⁶² Dr Lekhanya’s private collection in Maseru includes a sheaf of Psalm settings by Mohapeloa in manuscript - harmonizations of Afrikaans melodies made for the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa - a missionary branch of the main Dutch Reformed Church - in the late 1970s - and a few individual late songs. Dr Cock’s private collection in Johannesburg has the original manuscript of *Meloli I* revised by Mohapeloa in 1965 - discussed in more detail below. A manuscript score in the SAMRO Archive attributed to Mohapeloa, *Thapelo*

⁵⁹ As in many other African languages, the Sesotho word for ‘singing’ or ‘song’ is synonymous with - indeed stands for - ‘music’.

⁶⁰ Coplan 1976 interview, card 8.

⁶¹ See Khumalo, *South Africa Sings I*, 29-32; and Khumalo, *South Africa Sings II*, 61-75.

⁶² Another suggestion is that music in this format could be pinned on a wall and read by choirs during rehearsals (J.S.M. Khumalo, pers. comm. 2 September 2008). Mohapeloa’s script, both in his music notation and his song texts, is distinguished by its neatness and legibility regardless of paper quality or size.

[Prayer] (file A04669), handwritten in staff notation, is neither by Mohapeloa nor in his hand: it is an extract from a work by Haydn transcribed anonymously from the tonic solfa songbook *Lipina tsa Likolo tse Phahameng*.⁶³

Other sources

Fifty-seven songs from *Meloli* were transcribed into staff notation by a teacher at Waterford School in Mbabane, Swaziland called Jonathan Edwards. His handwritten *Staff Notation Version of Choral Compositions of Mohapeloa* contains the 32 songs of *Meloli I* and first 25 songs of *Meloli II*, without translations.⁶⁴ Copies of this private publication are housed in the International Library of African Music (ILAM), Grahamstown and Morija Museum and Archives. Edwards' interpretation of time signatures, grouping of notes, or voice registers sometimes differs from the present Critical Edition's, but his volume provided a very useful sounding board.

Other transcriptions of individual songs have been made for concerts or eisteddfods from time to time: for example Mohapeloa's *U Ea Kae?* (*MLA I/1*) by Rosalie Conrad in 1987 for the University of Durban-Westville Choir, and 'Mokhotlong' (*Meluluetsa* 17) by Ludumo Magangane and Carl van Wyk in 1997 for the Roodepoort International Eisteddfod.

Over decades of practice where choral songs were performed by so many different kinds of choirs for competitions and other events, many hand-written, roneoed, gestetnered or photocopied versions of individual songs have been brought into circulation. A common practice before the 1970s (already mentioned) was copying songs by hand: composers whose work was not published did this as a way of getting their works known; or teachers/conductors borrowed scores and copied them. Through years of copying, sometimes from a borrowed score that itself was copied from a previously borrowed score within a context where memorization is so important, many slightly different versions began to exist. It was only in the 1990s that scores were standardised for national choral competitions and there is (still) usually no indication of the printed source of songs reproduced by the NCF, whose prescribed music, once sent out to choirs as a photocopy pasted into a foolscap book is now available online. Titles of pieces or composers' names are still sometimes missing from these prescribed songs, however and in the case of Mohapeloa they were/are rarely reproductions of original Morija, OUP or Mazenod scores. This reinforces the notion that works are anonymous vehicles for singing, appropriating, copying, and winning prizes that are handed down lovingly over generations of competition entrants via oral tradition, rather than historically grounded documents produced by composers who own - or their descendants do - the work as intellectual property.

For the purposes of this edition, circulating copies have hardly been used. They shed wonderful light on the reception history of Mohapeloa's music but not on its genesis, which is the focus here.

Recorded sources

Eight songs from *Meloli I* sung by the Morija Training Institution choir were recorded by Gallo in December 1936 or January 1937 and are now housed in the International Library of African Music (ILAM) in Grahamstown. They have been reissued on ACE CD001 (2013) and can be purchased via the website www.african-composers-edition.co.za. The songs are *Chabana sa Khomo*, *Ei, Ei, Kolliana*, *Methaka Emang*, *Mutlanyana*, *Qeu! Qeu! Majoana*, *Tsohang*, and *U Ea Kae?* There are 378 recordings of choirs singing Mohapeloa housed in the SABC Sound Archive in Auckland Park, Johannesburg. A few of them turned out not to be by Mohapeloa and some songs by Mohapeloa were not actually ascribed to him as composer but were designated (in the SABC language of the 1960-80s when the choirs were recorded) 'South Sotho' or 'traditional'. All these recorded sources were consulted and many of them were useful in guiding the insertion of editorial tempi and dynamics where none existed in the original scores.

Non-musical sources

Literary sources used to prepare this edition include Mohapeloa's prefaces to *MLA I*, *Khalima-nosi*, and *Meluluetsa*, which indicate his intention and sometimes his sources of inspiration. Prefaces and forewords written by other people are also interesting: for example Akim Sello's foreword ('Mohlatsoa-Sebaea') to *MLA I* (1935), Diparata Gosh's introduction to *Meluluetsa*, and Chief Lebua Jonathan's foreword to *Meluluetsa*.

The Huskisson Collection in the SAMRO Archive contains material acquired by Yvonne Huskisson during the 1960s while she was compiling choral programmes for the Radio Bantu service of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). In her capacity as Music Organiser for Radio Bantu she corresponded with

⁶³ *Lipina tsa Likolo tse Phahameng* [Songs for High School] (Morija: Morija Sesuto Book Depot 1985(1907) was a major bearer of the traditions of western choral practice to Lesotho and would have been known to Mohapeloa from his schooling in Morija. It follows the format common in nineteenth-century British publications in tonic solfa of reproducing popular choruses from oratorios and operas for wider dissemination. What is interesting about *Lipina tsa Likolo* is that it also contains a number of European folksongs, too, presumably because it was compiled by Swiss-French missionaries.

⁶⁴ Edwards, Jonathan, *Staff Notation Version of Choral Compositions of Mohapeloa* (Mbabane, Swaziland: Waterford-Kamhlaba School, October 1979).

most of the 318 composers listed in her 1969 book (mentioned earlier), including Mohapeloa. The documents in the file ‘Mohapeloa, J.P.’ in the SAMRO Archive Huskisson Collection include their correspondence, two original photographs, Mohapeloa’s various lists of his works, two short autobiographies (one in Sesotho, one in English), transcripts of regional (Zulu, Sotho, Xhosa etc.) programmes on African music, and Mohapeloa’s translations of some of his songs. Also in this file at some point was a manuscript, almost certainly the original manuscript, of *Meloli* Book 1, which Mohapeloa sent Huskisson in 1965. The importance of this 1965 Huskisson ms. as a source is discussed below.⁶⁵

Anthropologist David B. Coplan interviewed Mohapeloa when he was beginning his ethnographic research on Basotho music and poetry in the 1970s. Coplan recorded two interviews, one in 1976 on tape which he later transcribed onto cards, and one in 1978 directly in note form. These field cards, which Coplan located in his office at the University of the Witwatersrand in 2009, are a rich source for Mohapeloa’s thoughts about his music and how he composed it, especially his struggle to combine African and western elements to his liking. Another useful source for connections between his songs and his life is a biographical essay by historian J.M. Mohapeloa (the composer’s brother) and the composer L.M. Phakisi, produced in 1987. This substantial privately published monograph of 47 pages in Sesotho called *Likheleke tsa Pina Sesothong* (The Eloquence of Song in Sesotho) has rich historical data not given elsewhere and includes some musical analysis with tonic solfa examples.

Newspapers such as *Leselinyana le Lesotho* (The Little Light of Lesotho) have a number of references to Mohapeloa between the 1920s and 1980s. A typescript by P.M. Mot’soane in Morija Museum and Archives (2004) reproduces some material from Mohapeloa and Phakisi, and one on the Internet by Moroesi Sibandze for the St Louis African Chorus draws heavily on Mot’soane.⁶⁶ Interestingly, it also refers to a project aimed at “transcribing all, or selections of Dr J.P. Mohapeloa’s compositions into staff notation” in which student volunteers were invited to team up with Ms Sibandze’s ‘Arts and Cultural Centre in Lesotho’.⁶⁷ There are many other literary sources pertaining to Lesotho’s history,⁶⁸ and some music-analytical,⁶⁹ ethnographic,⁷⁰ or musicological ones.⁷¹ The lists Mohapeloa made for the SABC were consulted, as well as one drawn up in 1998 by a Mr Nchoncho, evidently part of a proposal to celebrate the 90th anniversary of Mohapeloa’s birth.⁷² Some of the titles Nchoncho lists are difficult to trace: they may not be Mohapeloa’s titles but slightly altered first lines, or popular names by which songs became known among choirs, for there are many titles on Nchoncho’s list (and also at the SABC) that do not appear in any other source.⁷³

Reliability of the sources and the authority of this edition

The approach used in this edition comes from the German tradition of historical-critical editions whose “method focuses on the creation of a comprehensive apparatus, linked to an accurately presented, historical text”.⁷⁴ This is a performing edition: the edited vocal texts here are as historically authoritative as possible and performable by contemporary choirs anywhere. The process of editing involved selecting the best tonic solfa copy-text from among competing versions (printed and manuscript) and preparing a new version of the score in staff notation, with minimal interference to the text, explaining in the apparatus (editorial marks, translations, notes, commentaries) why such a version is considered authoritative. Editorial suggestions on the score itself are kept to a minimum, there to clarify an aspect of performance that is not self-evident.

The Huskisson manuscript (1965) mentioned above is the authoritative copy-text for Volume I: *Meloli le*

⁶⁵ It is now in the private collection of Dr. Richard Cock in Johannesburg, who allows copies to be made. A copy made by Mokale Koapeng c.2009 was the one used in the preparation of this edition, and both Richard Cock and Mokale Koapeng are very kindly thanked for access to this rare text.

⁶⁶ Mot’soane, P.M., ‘A Brief History and Background to J.P. Mohapeloa’s Music Composition: An Interview with Prof J.M. Mohapeloa, a Brother of the above Music Composer. Conducted by P.M. Mot’soane: 10th November 2004.’ (Unpublished typescript, Morija Museums and Archives, 2004).

⁶⁷ Sibandze, M., ‘Dr. J.P. Mohapeloa: The Man and His Music’ (*The Voice of African Music: A Newsletter of the St. Louis African Chorus* 10.1, Winter/Spring 2003), www.africanchorus.org/Voam/Voam1014.htm, accessed 19.11.05; the outcome of this project has been difficult to trace.

⁶⁸ Gill, *Short History*, 1993.

⁶⁹ Mngoma, ‘Correlation of Folk and Art Music’, 1981.

⁷⁰ Coplan, David B., *In the Time of Cannibals: The Word Music of South Africa’s Basotho Migrants* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994); Wells, *Introduction*, 1994.

⁷¹ Olwage, Grant, ‘Music and (Post)Colonialism: The Dialectics of Choral Culture on a South African Frontier’, (PhD Dissertation, Rhodes University, 2003); ‘Apartheid’s Musical Signs’, in *Composing Apartheid: Music For and Against Apartheid*, edited by Grant Olwage (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008), 35-54, and ‘John Knox Bokwe, Colonial Composer: Tales About Race and Music’ (*Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 131.1, 2006), 1-37.

⁷² Ntsiuoa Mohapeloa, pers. comm. 29 September 2006.

⁷³ See Catalogue of Works by J.P. Mohapeloa and the Preface to Volume VI of this Critical Edition.

⁷⁴ Hulle, Dirk, ‘Aims and Methods of German and French Traditions of Textual Scholarship and Critique Génétique’, Paper presented at the Symposium *Securing the Past, Rescuing the Present* (North-West University, Potchefstroom, 24-26 February 2011).

Lithallere tsa Afrika I, because it is almost without doubt (in the absence of any other evidence) the original 1935 manuscript used to typeset the 1st edition, with many minor tweaks made by the composer before he sent it to Huskisson in 1965. (Details of what Mohapeloa added or changed in 1965 are given in the critical commentaries on individual scores.) This ms. is thus the last known version of *Meloli I* that Mohapeloa approved. He made extensive changes to the MSBD 2nd published edition (1953) of *Meloli I* subsequently reproduced in all MSBD's later editions, but when came to showing Yvonne Huskisson in 1965 his best work - as any composer wants to do, when asked for samples of their compositions by a major player in the music industry - Mohapeloa returned to his first thoughts as set down in the ms., polished up.

How Huskisson obtained this ms. is explained in their correspondence in the Huskisson Collection in SAMRO's Archive. She must have first written to him (we do not have her letter) in mid 1965, for his reply on 16 July 1965 was, "Just a line to thank you for your kind invitation to contribute something in your intended publication. I am only too glad to co-operate in a work of this type. As proof of this I am returning the form duly signed and promise to fulfil the remaining obligations shortly". Five days later, on 21 July, he sent her the manuscript score of *Meloli I*, the Mazenod publication *Binang ka Thabo*, and a covering page attached to the score that read:

I have pleasure in sending you some of my compositions as requested.

1. The songs in manuscript form have already been published (1935) and the copyright for these is in the hands of the publishers, Morija Sesuto Book Depot.
2. The printed copy consists of songs of which the publishers concerned do not claim any copyright reservations. The copyright still belongs to the individual composers.⁷⁵

He 'suggests' three songs from each book, perhaps for Huskisson to use as examples and it's interesting that he refers to songs 'already published in 1935' as if *Meloli I* had not already been reprinted by MSBD in 1953 with his revisions and a preface explaining them. Not one song is without change, and in some songs there are dozens of changes to pitch, to rhythm, the duration of notes or rests, also to keys, text, voicing, and as a result occasionally text. Mohapeloa did not cut out or add sections to songs but tinkered, extensively, with the musical grammar. This 'first reprint' of *Meloli Le Lithallere tsa Afrika I* is technically a second edition, then, rather than a reprint. Much of the change does not affect pagination and none of it amounts to radical differences in the structure or length of individual songs, but the extent of 'minor tinkering' is remarkable. The 1953 edition was reprinted in 1977, 83, and 88 almost without change (there are one or two changes in 1977); the last two editions appeared after the composer's death in 1982; and there have been no reprints of *Meloli I* since 1988.

Yvonne Huskisson replied to Mohapeloa on 6 August thanking him for his manuscript and assuring him that the SABC would retain the book "until we know exactly what we require. Rest assured it will be in safe-keeping until it is back in your hands".⁷⁶

This must be the original manuscript used to prepare the first edition of *Meloli I* in 1935, with revisions made by hand: Mohapeloa would not have been able to rewrite 32 songs (almost 100 pages of music) for Huskisson, by hand, in so few days. There are a few very slight differences between the ms. and the 1935 publication, attributable either to careless typesetting or to last-minute changes dictated by the composer directly to the compositor, that therefore do not appear on the ms.: for example, in *U Ea Kae?* there are ties at one point while the ms. has rests. Generally speaking, Mohapeloa's scores contain very few typos, but occasionally in the ms. ties are very faint and could be mistaken for rests (bar 21 of *U Ea Kae?* is a case in point).

No correspondence has survived which proves that the SABC returned the ms. to Mohapeloa, although in the Morija Museum and Archives (close to where he lived) there is a tantalising display card lying among some first editions of *Meloli* that reads, 'Tonic Sol-Fa Manuscript with its corresponding Printed Book by the African author J.P. Mohapeloa' - but there is no manuscript. Perhaps the card was used for an exhibition at some point, which included this ms. Huskisson's extensive documentation on hundreds of composers remained in the SABC Music Library after Huskisson retired, but during the restructuring of the SABC in the 1990s Huskisson gave her entire collection of scores and documentation on African composers to Dr Richard Cock, then Head of Music at the SABC who later donated it to the Southern African Music Rights Organisation in Braamfontein, Johannesburg, retaining for his private collection only the ms. that Mohapeloa sent Huskisson in 1965.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Mohapeloa, J.P., manuscript of *Meloli le Lithallere tsa Afrika [I]*, [1965, cover page] (Johannesburg: Richard Cock private collection).

⁷⁶ Letter YH to JPM 5.8.65 (Ibid).

⁷⁷ E-mail RC to author, 23.10.12: "The Huskisson collection was given to me, and I donated it to Samro. The Mohapeloa book I still have, and that is the only item which I retained". Both Huskisson and Cock refer to the ms. as a 'book' because its format is a foolscap hard-covered exercise book, lined for writing. The size, the copperplate handwriting of titles and text, and the tortoise-shell binding would fit with a date from the 1930s.

The ms. of the 1953 ‘reprint’ has not been found. It was typeset at Morija Printing Works while Mohapeloa himself was working there. Did he dictate the changes (to the 1935 edition) directly to the compositor, or even adjust the lettering and spacing on the compositor’s plate himself? There seems no doubt that the changes *are* by Mohapeloa, for in the preface to the 1953 edition, ‘Khorō’ (‘Entrance/gateway’) he speaks about tightening loose ends and making the songs more to people’s liking, saying, towards the end, “Ha ho le joalo tlhopho-bocha ena re tla e òmela” (In this way we will remix this new publication).⁷⁸ Whether or not he was happy with the ‘remix’ we can only surmise, but perhaps he was not entirely happy, because he did not send Huskisson this 1953 published edition but his much larger and more valuable hand-written manuscript from years earlier. This is the version he wanted her to use in programmes for public radio broadcast and in a prominent publication about African composers. Because it was only ‘rediscovered’ recently - and I am indebted to Mokale Koapeng for this discovery - and was certainly sent to Huskisson in 1965, and but because it contains a few minor changes to the 1935 edition it is referred to in this Critical Edition as the ‘1965 Huskisson manuscript’ or ‘the 1965 ms.’. It has no date, but the accompanying letter is dated 21 July 1965, so when the ms. is referred to it is by the dated 1965 not 1935; and the page nos., which are not Mohapeloa’s but were added later, are shown in square brackets. This manuscript is taken as the authoritative source or copy text for the present edition, with additions from other sources used where appropriate.⁷⁹

Regarding the reliability of published sources: most of them were printed in Morija, where Mohapeloa settled in 1945 and lived until his death in 1982. His day job from 1945 to 1978 was proof reader at Morija Printing Works where MSBD books were printed, so he would have been close to the publication process and knew how compositing worked. In comparison with the MSBD publications, therefore there are many more typos in *Meluluetsa*, printed in Cape Town by OUP. Although Mohapeloa proofed this (the Ntsiuoa Mohapeloa ms. mentioned above shows some of his corrections) many errors remained. He described one of the problems with this product as ‘spacing’, saying in his 1978 interview with Coplan that (for example) song no. 7, ‘E, Molimo Ok’o Boloke Motlotlehi le Sechaba’ (MNBL/7)] was “spatially poor. Tonic solfa line has 20 rather than 18 typographical units. Proper duration of notes not well rep[resented]. The *Meloli* Books are better”.⁸⁰ Part of the problem, he felt, was the inadequacy of tonic solfa rhythm to represent African rhythm patterns which came into his mind “more by accident than intention”. This song was “1st written in very complic[ated]. manner”, he told Coplan, “later simplified - it had quarter notes as 1/6 of a bar. The song is better taught without the score, which does not represent the rhythm adequately”. In both the surviving manuscript version of this song and the printed score the meter is two divisions in a bar subdivided into twos, and fours, which is indeed far from “quarter notes as 1/6 of a bar”.

The MSBD reprints occasionally have variants that might be improvements or corrections, and these variants are explained in the critical commentary on individual songs. Some reprints had additional prefaces while others did not. Some reprints are identical. The only difference between the 1st edition (1951) and 1st reprint (2002) of *Khalima-nosi*, for example is that the 1st edition has a photograph in the Frontispiece while the 2nd does not.

Presentation of the edited scores

Editing Mohapeloa began with the process of transcribing songs manually from tonic solfa to staff notation, a process that is a mystery to most people.⁸¹ Staff notation scores were set up in the Sibelius music software program reading from a tonic solfa score where the voices are not always designated (e.g. SATB) and where the number of voices sometimes varies during the course of a song, only the context helping to decide what the extra voice part is.⁸² Repeats are frequent but formatting them had to vary according to context. Tonic solfa does not use key signatures: the key of a song is stated at the top of the score, for example ‘Doh=F’. Major keys are the norm, and even where a song is in a minor key or modal it is still usually given a major key (doh).

Determining meter (time signature) was more difficult, since this is not stated by composers of tonic solfa scores but has to be deduced from the way units or bars are divided and subdivided by short barlines, colons, dashes, full-stops, commas, or spaces (rests). The most common metrical divisions in Mohapeloa’s songs are

⁷⁸ ‘Khorō’, in *Meloli Le Lithallere tsa Afrika ka J.P. Mohapeloa I*, 1953, 3-4 (4). Translated for the author by Mantoa Motinyane-Smouze. The verb ‘òmela’, meaning ‘to add flour to beer already cooked’ (R.A. Paroz, *Southern Sotho-English Dictionary* by A. Mabile and H. Dieterlen, revised edition, 1950 (Morija Sesuto Book Depot), 260), seems an apt description of the variants contained in the 1953 edition.

⁷⁹ These changes may reflect the influence of his part-time study at Wits, where Mohapeloa learnt to have misgivings about his lack of knowledge of western harmony and counterpoint. For more on this issue see Lucia, Christine, ‘Joshua Pulumo Mohapeloa and the Heritage of African Song’ (*African Music* 9.1, 2011), 56-86 and ‘Composing Towards and Against Whiteness: The African Music of Mohapeloa’, *Unsettling Whiteness* ed. Lucy Michael and Samantha Schultz (Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2014), 219-230.

⁸⁰ J.P. Mohapeloa interviewed by David B. Coplan (Morija, May 1978), card 2.

⁸¹ There may be a computer program that does this, but it might not be able to cope with music based on a Sesotho text that can change voicing mid-song and has an idiomatic repeat system, and where variants exist.

⁸² This descriptive section may read oddly with its mixture of past and present tense as I try to deal with the problem that the music and the scores ‘are’ - they exist continuously in the present - while the editing process ‘was’ (thankfully) recently finished.

four main divisions, for which 4/4 meter worked best, although duple or triple divisions are also found (2/4 and 3/4). Mohapeloa sometimes divides the bar into six units (6/8) and occasionally there are divisions suggesting 9/8 or 12/8. A major difficulty in transcribing songs was discerning the difference between Sesotho text, pitch letters d, r, m, etc., and commas and colons that denote rhythm - all occurring close together in a fairly crowded space on a small page.

The devil is in the detail. Tonic solfa is a notation system that uses the seven letters d r m f s l t (doh, ray, me, fah, soh, lah, te) to denote pitch. A choir has a total range of about four octaves, and different octave registers are shown by means of superscript or subscript strokes or numbers against the solfa letters. (In African choral practice numbers are more common than strokes, but strokes are normal elsewhere and are the Sibelius norm so are used in this edition.) This is what a range of four and a half octaves in tonic solfa pitch theoretically looks like, using numbers for octave displacements. The 'normal voice' octave is in the middle, underlined:

d₂ r₂ m₂ f₂ s₂ l₂ t₂ d₁ r₁ m₁ f₁ s₁ l₁ t₁ d r m f s l t d¹ r¹ m¹ f¹ s¹ l¹ t¹ d² r² m² f² s²

Using strokes it would look like this:

d,, r,, m,, f,, s,, l,, t,, d, r, m, f, s, l, t, d r m f s l t d' r' m' f' s' l' t' d'' r'' m'' f'' s''

How is a 'normal' doh determined? In Mohapeloa's scores, middle C up to B-flat (d-t) are normal pitches for Sop/Alto and an octave below this is normal for Ten/Bass, because in solfa notation the idea is to avoid too many sub- or super-scripts, just as in staff notation one changes clefs to avoid using too many leger lines.

Returning to the editing process: after clefs, key signature, time signature, and notes voice by voice had been inputted, the text was added, reproducing hyphens (or lack thereof) and spellings exactly as Mohapeloa has them, and noting discrepancies in the critical commentary at the end of the song.⁸³ Mohapeloa's solfa scores show slurs or melismas as underlinings. In the staff notation transcription these are shown as slurs between notes. Syllables are usually not prolonged in the text unless they go over a system or page.

The scores in this Critical Edition are open vocal scores, one voice per stave as in the original tonic solfa score, the difference being that the Sesotho words are placed rather more precisely under every voice. Text is often written only between Alto and Tenor in solfa scores, posing problems when voices have different rhythms. In handwritten manuscripts texts are fairly logically spaced but in published scores the spacing is not always ideal and sometimes it was difficult to determine which syllable went with which note.

All scores in this Critical Edition have a piano reduction to aid rehearsal. This is not an accompaniment as such, although in the history of choral practice it has to be said that songs may have been conceived 'a cappella' by default, for lack of keyboards in African schools or community halls and for lack of African pianists to play them. There are one or two historic recordings of Mohapeloa songs in the SABC Sound Archive where choirs are accompanied, by piano or banjo.⁸⁴ But the tradition of a cappella choral music in the West that was brought to places such as Lesotho in the nineteenth century undoubtedly also had enormous influence, and choral practice - except for big competitions - is usually an unaccompanied experience.⁸⁵

The apparatus on or around the score includes title, composer, scoring, page numbers, copyright information, historical introduction to the song and translation before the score, and sources, variants, and critical comments after it.

The edition has, perhaps controversially, two staff notation versions of every song, one with and one without tonic solfa. The argument for presenting the 'dual notation' version is that it nudges the practitioners most familiar with this music towards learning staff notation,⁸⁶ which would help them widen their repertoire. Adding tonic solfa above each voice part in Sibelius 7 is fraught with problems, however: it makes the scores visually cluttered; some tonic solfa buffs might not agree with the way Sibelius 7 handles octave displacement or compound meter; the possibility for many more typographical errors creeps in, as there were sometimes hours of extra manual manipulation of solfa characters to be done on every page. On the other hand, some choirs outside southern Africa who have never used or seen tonic solfa might be interested in these dual notated versions and may even learn how to read solfa notation, themselves, with sufficient skill to be able to sing other southern African works that have not yet been transcribed, and hence broaden their repertoire of African music.

Although an editing template was (after much trial and error) worked out for formatting scores, in practice this was often adapted to allow for notes that lie high or low on a staff, sudden divisi, or extra verses of text.

⁸³ Hyphens were particularly problematic, because many words that in Mohapeloa's early years many have been hyphenated (Sesotho was first written by French speaking missionaries in the mid nineteenth century when hyphens were common) but under the impact of changes to orthography hyphens often fell out of use.

⁸⁴ *U Ea Kae?* has been arranged for solo voice and jazz ensemble and *Molelekeng* for choir and orchestra. Copies of these arrangements are in the SAMRO Archive, Johannesburg.

⁸⁵ Note the British spelling of 'a cappella' rather than the American ('a capella') used in this Edition.

⁸⁶ In other countries in Africa choirs read staff notation, yet in South Africa the habit persists of composing and singing music in tonic solfa.

Where possible there are two systems per page, which is easier for choirs to read even if it necessitates a slight reduction in note or staff size. Where there are six or more voices or multiple verses of text, one system per page is generally used.

Regarding repeats: Mohapeloa often wrote songs in two sections, the second of which is repeated; sometimes he repeats the first section at the end of the song, or has more than one repeat in a song. He uses ‘Dal Segno’ (‘D.S.’) for most of these repeats as is the practice in tonic solfa notation, and occasionally ‘D.C.’. In this edition repeat bars or ‘D.C.’s are used except where complex repeats make ‘D.S.’ necessary. Sometimes 1st- and 2nd-time bars are generated here where they do not exist in the original solfa scores, to clarify how repeats are managed, because there is sometimes an unstated understanding by solfa composers of how a turnaround differs from the ending of a section or song. If a song begins on an upbeat Mohapeloa notates the first bar in full in his early songs, even if it begins on the 4th beat. In staff notation, the convention is to begin notating on the upbeat unless it is a particularly complex rhythm, in which case it may be preceded by a rest or rests. The transcribed song may thus begin and end slightly differently from the tonic solfa score, which means that bar numbers may sometimes be one bar out from the original score.

Repeats, like accompaniments, can be approached with an open mind. What Mohapeloa wrote is presented in this edition, but what was sung was often different in practice: as historic recordings show us, choirs sometimes repeated sections where no repeat was indicated, or even whole songs. This might have happened to satisfy the needs of the studio recording or the mood of a live concert situation, or just the love of singing.

Presentation of the song texts

The texts are presented in two forms: in the original Sesotho on the score and as separate poems with translations after them, the poems having in most cases been extracted from the solfa scores. In Mohapeloa’s scores the Sesotho matches the music word-by-word or syllable-by-syllable, but when words or phrases are repeated (or left out, or incomplete) because of the polyphonic nature of his writing, or where different voice parts sing different texts simultaneously, it took some juggling to represent the extracted text as a coherent poem. Repetitions are deemed essentially musical rather than poetic, unless the context - the meaning and thrust of a song - dictates otherwise. When the Sesotho texts were extracted from the tonic solfa scores, then, decisions were made by the initial translator, Dr Motinyane-Smouse, and I all the time about the order in which lines should appear in and how often (or if) repeated words or lines should be shown.

Writing out the texts as poems was essential, however, so that they could be translated, and because there are almost no extant texts written as separate poems by Mohapeloa himself. In so doing, this Critical Edition makes available for the first time to literary scholars a wealth of poetry in Sesotho-English that shows Mohapeloa to have been a commanding literary as well as musical figure.

In terms of the way he composed words and music: in his early songs, he told Coplan, he found it “easiest to write music, with a theme or subject in mind, then it becomes easier to fit words to it. Idea to melody to words”.⁸⁷ Coplan continues:

Mohapeloa finds the words a handicap if they are there first. Once the music is there the words just come. The tune sugg. [suggests] the words. Like in his first song ... the music sugg. a folktale about a rabbit & so the words just came. The words then necessitate changes in the melody, to avoid semantic distortion. So the words can damage the melody. To get a word that just fits the tune is a strug. [struggle] & may have to be an ‘expensive’ one. This diff. [difficulty] actually helps to improve the qual. [quality] of the lyrics – the words tend to be commonplace if they come too easily.⁸⁸

Where Mohapeloa did make copies of some Sesotho texts in 1965 for Yvonne Huskisson, these have usually been used for comparison only, because they tend to be summaries that do not ‘fit’ the music. Texts in the scores are what choirs sing, so texts extracted from the scores are what are presented and translated, by and large. Extracting words from the scores was made easier by Mohapeloa’s regular use of capital letters denoting new lines, so he obviously thought of his texts as poems.

Mohapeloa’s few English translations in the Huskisson Collection are used. Mantoa Motinyane-Smouse did all the remaining initial translations, phoneme-by-phoneme, including lines Mohapeloa left out of his own translations - an enormous labour. She then made a fairly literal interpretation of the meaning of each song to create the poems, and these were first edited by South African poet Stephen Gray and later by Mpho Ndebele, who was able to transform some of the lines through her knowledge of the songs - which she grew up with - and of the deeper meaning of many Sesotho words. Mohapeloa is known for his rich use of metaphor, Sesotho being

⁸⁷ Mohapeloa interviewed by Coplan, 1978, card 6. NB the abbreviations are in Coplan’s field notes.

⁸⁸ Mohapeloa interviewed by Coplan 1978, card 7.

a highly metaphorical language and also a tonal one where meaning sometimes depends on tone, and in the early songs he also uses many elisions and contractions of words so that they conformed to his musical vision. In *Meluluetsa* the Sotho poems were published separately from the songs in the 1976 edition although this proved to be a hindrance rather than a help because of the number of contradictions between in-score texts and the separate poems.

Translations are not there to be ‘sung to’ the notes, however but to help non-Sotho speakers understand what they are singing about. Pronunciation of the Sesotho language is not too difficult but it is not always obvious, hence the ‘Pronunciation Guide to the Sesotho Texts’ included in this Edition, that uses international phonetic symbols and English equivalent sounds.⁸⁹

Editing rationale

There is no standard way of notating scores composed in tonic solfa notation, which has been used as a compositional medium in southern Africa since the 1870s. As with editing any other music there are sometimes problems reconciling notation and practice, or what Richard Taruskin has called ‘text and act’.⁹⁰ In the practice of African choral music, ‘act’ looms large: scores are not prescriptions so much as records of what composers such as Mohapeloa have tried out with their choirs already. Once committed to paper, choirs learn a composer’s music by rote and a song is quickly memorised. The entire tradition of choral singing out of which compositions emerge is seen by conductors, choralists, competition organisers, broadcasters, adjudicators and anyone else involved as a singing, rather than a composing, tradition. Between the two acts of vocalisation - imaging the music before committing it to paper and then singing it - the score as ‘text’ plays a fleeting role. Even after so many years of national choral competitions there is no centralised, systematically catalogued library of scores;⁹¹ composers lend their scores and they disappear (as famously happened to Sontonga’s *Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika*); scores are copied wantonly as if there was no copyright: all this indicates the low value of African choral music as ‘text’. Notwithstanding, Mohapeloa saw his scores as reliable and authoritative documents, as explained earlier (and below).

There is no one, standard rationale for producing any critical edition; a great deal depends on the repertoire. The rationale for developing this edition took into account aspects of critical editions elsewhere, which offered at least partial models although no direct precedents, and a clear rationale for this one only emerged as it progressed, from the repertoire and also from limitations imposed on the production of the edition. Funding did not allow for an interactive edition with which scholars and choralists could engage and to which they could contribute, for example, which would have been ideal in a situation where widespread public opinion on this music has not been heard before and where there are so many enthusiastic and knowledgeable practitioners. Even though it is static, however, an online edition still allows some leeway for regular updating, and for incorporating comments made through the ACE website’s contact form.

This edition uses Chicago Manual of Style (adapted) for text and Sibelius 7 for scores, with standard sizes for margins, staves, and notes unless a score looked crowded: stems on middle lines down; no syllable prolongation in texts unless syllables go over a system or page; brackets for triplets; lyrics below the staff at default distance; tonic solfa above the staff; tempi placed above the time signature; dynamics placed above the relevant notes. Adjustments were made to the text on the score as typesetting proceeded, and scores went through many transformations before the present format became settled.

Editorial additions on the score are in square brackets []. All original dynamics and expression found in printed or ms. versions of Mohapeloa’s songs are reproduced here and where Mohapeloa placed only one dynamic mark on top of a system they are given for all voices here and positioned more logically in some cases. Occasionally an editorial dynamic is added after a *cresc.* or *dim.*, or an ‘a tempo’ after a ‘rit.’, for clarity. Where there are no dynamics an overall one is suggested at the beginning of a score. Mohapeloa rarely used metronome marks but he often gave tempo indications and a metronome mark is usually only added where he did not. Recorded and live performance practices often informed these interpretative interventions - tempo and dynamics - although it has to be said that historic performances themselves also differ widely.⁹² Expression marks such as ‘rit.’ and ‘cresc.’ are often found in Mohapeloa’s scores, his ‘hairpins’ as well as his ‘cresc.’ and ‘dim.’ are always retained, including where he spreads ‘cres ... cen ... do’ over more than one bar. Words or phrases that seem odd to us, such as ‘con fuoco’, occasionally appear and are explained in the commentary.

⁸⁹ This can be downloaded free on www.african-composers-edition.co.za.

⁹⁰ Taruskin, Richard, *Text & Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

⁹¹ This could be a great project for the SAMRO Archive or the Documentation Centre for Music (DOMUS) at Stellenbosch University to undertake.

⁹² There is much evidence for this on the 378 SABC recordings, some of which are reproduced on *African Choral Legacy: Historic Recordings of J.P. Mohapeloa* (ACE CD001).

This last comment requires a slight digression: Mohapeloa worked in a small village in Africa, had no real peers except Moerane who lived in Lesotho only intermittently (and was not really a friend); there was no music library nearby, and he may sometimes have had to rely on his memory when using expression marks. This maybe explains ‘con fuoco’ but there is something more below the surface here, about his scores and African modernity, that needs teasing out. Mohapeloa worked within a hybrid Afro-western cultural environment in which all influences, all source material, all exposure to new material, was devoid of an overarching western historical hegemony. This allowed him some freedom to interpret influences as he saw fit (although he may not have seen it that way). Any scores or books - and they were few and far between - that came his way were grist to Mohapeloa’s contemporary mill, as it were, not to any imagined historically burdened mill from elsewhere. In 2006 the surviving library in Mohapeloa’s former house in Morija, I noticed, contained *The World of Music* by Sandved (1957), Ewen’s *The Complete Book of 20th-century Music* (1959), and Novello vocal scores of *Lucrezia Borgia* and *Robert le Diable*. However these books and scores entered his house, what they entered into was a world of African modernist simultaneity, one that Mohapeloa shared with many in his generation. Black artistic expression could be found equally well in the modernization of the ‘traditional’ folksong, the negro spiritual, the hymn, barbershop harmony, ragtime, and all available samples of western Classical music, especially vocal; any or all of these kinds of musics were performed by African practitioners, and any or all of them were absorbed by African composers into their style. Any or all of them contributed to Afro-modernity in choral music.

The avoidance of what in the West is seen as musical modernity, “art music of the early twentieth century (Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Bartók) [and] serial or post-serial techniques”,⁹³ was inadvertent: composers in southern Africa in the mid twentieth century, black and often white, too, were generally speaking not exposed to this aspect of modernity. Modernity was represented, for people in the African choral world, by the popular song, choreographed traditional music, jazz, the romantic opera or musical chorus, and baroque or classical oratorio choruses: being ‘modern’ for Mohapeloa included knowing extracts from *Messiah*, *The Creation*, *The Mount of Olives*, a Mozart mass, or a Donizetti opera.

Returning to dynamics and expression: where Mohapeloa used them in one version of a score but not another they are deemed authoritative, and included, their absence from a particular edition is regarded as an error. They are too important to ignore, for Mohapeloa did not make free with dynamics as some composers do and in the absence of phrasing (which his tonic solfa scores do not have) they are important indicators of musical shape.

The basic principle underling the editing rationale is that of transcribing in as unaltered a way as possible any words or text on the score, retaining “given forms of punctuation, contraction, abbreviation, compound words, hyphenation and capitalization, however widely these may vary from modern practice”.⁹⁴ Given forms of Sesotho orthography are retained because the rationale is not to modernise music or lyrics but to make both more accessible. To quote Richard Fotheringham’s ‘Editing rationale’ for a collection of English plays written for the Australian colonial stage in the nineteenth century:

Original spellings with historical warrant and eccentric spellings that are not misleading are allowed to stand, as well as other inconsistent presentations. There is always the possibility in playscripts [or in this case, music scores] that such forms are meant to encode aspects of spoken [sung] language; that is, they are intended, however imperfectly, as guides to the phrasing, emphasis or rhythm of [songs].⁹⁵

Mohapeloa’s inconsistencies are not corrected, in short, because they may have a ‘momentary’ significance that we can still interpretively reflect on.

He was inconsistent about stating what voices a song was written for, sometimes. In tonic solfa scores this information normally appears at the beginning of a song along with the key. *Chabana sa Khomo* for example says at the top “Key Ab S.T.B.S.T.B.” *U ea kae?* has nothing. Perhaps the rule of thumb was SATB unless otherwise stated; but Mohapeloa did not use that rule consistently.

* * * * *

The exploratory freedom of movement associated with whiteness is expressed in the licence to control the means of knowledge production, to assume the ability to know, assess the validity of knowledge and control representations of both self and other, subject and object, while strictly upholding the self-imposed limits and binaries on which its licence depends. If whiteness asserts a right to knowledge of blackness, its

⁹³ See Lucia, Christine, ‘Back to the Future: Idioms of Displaced Time in South African Composition’, *Composing Apartheid: Essays For and Against Apartheid* ed. Grant Olwage (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008), 11-34, 11.

⁹⁴ Fotheringham, Richard, ‘General Introduction’ to *Australian Plays for the Colonial Stage 1934-1899* ed. Richard Fotheringham (Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 2006, xxi-lxxxvi), lxxxi.

⁹⁵ Fotheringham, *Australian Plays*, lxxxi- lxxxii.

*freedom to know also asserts a right to its own privacy, a freedom not to be known, a denial of equal knowledge of whiteness.*⁹⁶

It seems important to step away from the third-person, hands-off narrative that this General Introduction has been so far, and introduce a personal note.

Why me? And why Mohapeloa? Writing in the post-rainbow, post-renaissance, almost post-white South Africa of 2015 my monumental effort seems like monumental hubris. I had to balance many things in preparing an edition of music that is so well known to African choirs and yet still so utterly (shamefully) marginal in the academy or in white choralism. There is a reason for its marginality, aside from its inaccessibility in African language tonic solfa books. In most music departments around the world, clamped into disciplinary myopia, Mohapeloa's music would almost certainly be seen, as it has been by most of my colleagues in South Africa, as either not western or 'competent' enough or - on the other hand - not 'African' enough.⁹⁷ Mohapeloa slips between the cracks of musicological discourse, and yet, it was this very 'damned-if-you-do-damned-if-you-slippage' that he (or his music) experiences, this sense that such a disappearing act is all too convenient for everyone interested in music studies or music scholarship, that appealed most directly to my political sensibility, my sense of musicological activism. 'Hang on', I almost want to say, 'don't write this music out of the script; let's see what it's like, first'. Let's do a complete edition, in short, and if we're going to do that (why have I suddenly become plural?) let's make it a critical edition, complete with the study of manuscripts and variants and all the other paraphernalia normally reserved for western music. I wanted to do this doggedly devoted Morija gentleman, this missionary educated, musical and literary giant the justice he deserves, and bring African choral music into a new domain of visibility as 'analysable repertoire'. I wanted to present it as an overwhelming body of evidence *in and for itself*, for what it was and is, and get away from the dismissive mode in which it has always languished, of assessing it for what it is not.

The other constituency I address here is the practitioners, lest they think they can get away too easily with claiming it as 'our' music. This is music that has enjoyed huge popularity among black southern African choristers for more than seventy years, but most practitioners do not know it, let alone value it as a comprehensive, historically informed body of work. I keep remembering that I would not have heard this music in the first place if *U Ea Kae*? if it hadn't been sung by my (multi-racial) university choir back in 1989 in Durban, and this single item is a famous and much-prescribed competition piece, also much arranged and re-arranged; but I also have to keep in mind that I am a white, western trained, former professor of music living a privileged middle-class life, able to see this *as* a body of work, making free with the music of a black, less well trained and less privileged, humble man from rural Lesotho, who wrote for the very practitioners who sing one work to death and forget the rest, and who lived in a previous generation to mine and is not around to tell me whether or not I'm on the right track.

This is a hybrid repertoire inspired by traditional Basotho music of which I have only secondhand knowledge, jazz, western classical music and hymns, many of the Sesotho, which I also don't know. I have managed to source some of the influences, but I don't speak Sesotho and have never sung in an African choir although I have heard choirs often, occasionally accompanied and adjudicated them, and since the 1990s have used African choral music as examples in teaching music theory.⁹⁸ This was the first kind of African music that I encountered when I emigrated to South Africa in 1974 and it simply bowled me over. It still does. I remain firmly convinced that it is the most 'national' music in this region in the sense that it is more important in people's lives and communities than any other kind of music.

Mohapeloa was an African composer writing on the African continent, where he was born and which he never left. He was a much performed, much published, and much loved African composer during his lifetime, and remains popular to this day through a handful of songs. He wrote accurately, and the way he worked, to me suggests that he was well aware of the needs of singers but also carefully challenged their comfort zones. Yet I have realised over the years taken for this Critical Edition to emerge that what he wrote down was in some ways only an approximation - bearing in mind the limitations of tonic solfa, too - of what he imagined. In practice, with his own choir, Mohapeloa would have been able to create something that went way beyond the score. And that is what practitioners bring to this glorious repertoire.

I hope this Critical Edition provides choirs with informed performing scores and scholars with a new repertoire of African music to study *as* repertoire. It provides something for people to analyse and critique. To Mohapeloa, publication was as essential a means of ensuring the continuity of African music as performance was, perhaps because during his lifetime he had seen so many oral traditions dying out. As he wrote in the preface to *Meloli I* in 1935, scores are like cases ('*nyeoe*') presented to a traditional court ('*lekhotla*'), their purpose being to set

⁹⁶ Coetzee, Paulette, 'Performing Whiteness; Representing Otherness: Hugh Tracey and African Music' (PhD diss., Rhodes University, 2015), 51-52.

⁹⁷ I have written about this elsewhere; see (most recently) Lucia, *Composing Towards and Against Whiteness*, 2014.

⁹⁸ See Lucia, Christine, *Music Notation: A South African Guide* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2011).

precedents: to ensure that African Music of this kind is “in the right place, where it is kept for the coming generations, as an example that they can follow, or a place to start when investigating about what proper African music should be” (mehlala eo ba ka e salang morao kapa ba h hlakothisa phutsong ea seo ’mino oa Afrika e ka bang o nepahetse ha o ka ba sona).⁹⁹

That purpose, which for Mohapeloa was to keep a continuity between his past and his present, is the same for this Critical Edition, with a further aim afforded by the luxury of hindsight: to present a historically informed coherent body of documents for use by singers and scholars, which gives as complete a picture as it can of what Mohapeloa achieved for music in southern Africa, and to offer a model that can be built on by younger scholars who wish to do something similar for other composers, one day.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Mohapeloa trans. Motinyane-Smouse, 2009(1988).

¹⁰⁰ For references to works cited here and throughout this Critical Edition, see the document, ‘J.P. Mohapeloa Critical Edition: List of Sources’.