



**(LAS 7401)**  
**Zulu Songs From South Africa**

The songs on this album were recorded in April and May 1982 at Maphophoma and Ethebini, near Nongoma. Tracks 1-5 were sung by Delisa Sibiya, a young woman residing near Maphophoma, accompanying herself on the umakhweyana. The other artists live in the same area, while Nomashizolo travels extensively in Natal and Zuzuland.

Tracks

1. Uyongilobola ngani? 4.03

What shall you bring for lobolo, my mother's child?

This song is a composition of a teenage girl who is very much in love with her young man. They want to get married, but the man lacks the cattle for the lobolo, the bride price.

2. Olwani ujakalwani? 2.10

Whose lazy thing is this?

This song lampoons a young woman with loose morals. It has come as a shock that the woman has been engaged, despite her despicable position among age mates who regard her as a young bitch.

3. Amadoda kashelani 2.31

Men do not propose love

4. Sengiyahamba 3.20

I am leaving

A sad song by a young bride who was rejected by her husband. The song announces her plight, and she mentions the names of the local headmen who must be informed about her disaster. She envies the local mountains for they shall remain to be with what she thought would be her lifetime home.

5. Molo molo wemkhwenyana 3.08  
Greetings to you, fiancé!

A sad song addressed to a lover or bridegroom. The sad mood is interrupted when the singer praises herself as “short division”, a ‘hard nut to crack’.

6. Madoda ngenzeni na? 4.44  
Gentlemen, what have I done?  
Nomashizolo Msimango (isicelekeshe)

Traditional Zulu beer (utshwala) is sipped from one pot by all. If a visitor arrives, he is invited to drink from the pot. Such an invitation to drink is a gesture of a very warm welcome; and denial is regarded as a harsh ostracism. In this song, the visitor was denied beer, and when the same people came to his own wedding he did the same, so that eventually they were forced to leave early.

7. Ubalwana Iwami 6.53  
My little one  
Trizinah Dlamini (umakhweyana)

A love song about a woman whose lover has been taken away by another woman.

8. Inkomo iyakhuluma 2.58  
The ox is talking  
Delisa Sibiyi (umakhweyana), Dora Zulu, Muphokuhle Buthelezi,  
Clement Sithole.

A ritual song sung before slaughtering of an ox.

9. Uyababona abelungu 3.00  
See the Whites  
Delisa Sibiyi (umakhweyana), Dora Zulu, Muphokuhle Buthelezi.

A war song sung during the Anglo-Zulu war.

10. Emathanjeni 3.14

In your bones  
Phumzile (MaZulu) Mpanza (ugubhu)

A ritual song associated with healing.

Zulu people are part of the Nguni people in Southern Africa. Music is defined as umculo (singing). Zulu music is seen as 'food of life'. All life situations and human emotions are expressed in music. The aesthetic principle enables people to say things to others, which they would otherwise not be able to transmit in speech.

Zulu music incorporates the three basic elements of rhythm, harmony and melody. Without cross rhythm Zulus dismiss the music as lacking in rhythm. Harmony on the other hand, is so important that in some songs this element overpowers the others. Harmony is called isigubudu, which describes converging horns on a beast, whose tips touch the body of the animal. Harmony is therefore defined in terms of intertwining of parts as well as their timbral quality. Like inward curbed horns, harmony is regarded as being introspective, and tends to provoke the inner feelings. Melody in Zulu music, to a certain extent, is influenced by the pre-composed intonation of speech. However, a musician may improvise and the instrumental sounds might suggest certain words. Because of this duality in melody making, a tune is regarded as a path (indlela). The same tune repeated with different words, will differ slightly, because the pitches are subject to change, whereas the melodic shape, the path, must remain constant.

Three types of bows are featured on this album: ugubhu, umakhweyana, and isicelekeshe. The former is prevalent in songs that are emotional, as it is capable, more than the other bows, to supply a harmonic structure which is essential in representing emotions. The ugubhu is an unbraced gourd-bow whose strings of wire yields two fundamentals. Partial are selected by bringing a gourd resonator, which is attached towards the lower end of the stave, closer to the player's chest or removing it from it. The umakhweyana belongs to the category of braced gourd-bows, as the string is divided by a loop in the middle which also holds the gourd resonator in place. Two fundamentals are available on both portions of the string with the knuckle of the middle finger near the loop. Skilled players like Delisa Sibiyi elicit entire melodies from the harmonies produced. The isicelekeshe she played by Nomashizolo (cover photograph) is a bowed zither rather than a bow proper. Bowing is executed in the circular motion and the hair nearer to the bow is tensioned by pressing the hair nearer to the bow with the thumb. The variation in tension serves to isolate certain partials of two or three fundamentals obtained by pressing the string with the ball of the thumb and the knuckle of the finger. Portable music instruments are regarded as mode of transport.

This face is so strong that some players of these instruments would refuse an offer to be transported in a motor vehicle and rather opt to 'ride' the rhythm over a 20km journey!

In the rendition of Zulu songs, the singer must praise himself, praise both his parents, the local chief, and mention the rivers that identify his area of residence. People meeting a walking musician do not interrupt him by greetings, but rather wait for the musician to introduce himself in the accepted form. The weight of the praises reinforce the belief that a person is not a 'mushroom' A person does not emerge from the ground; he is the product of society, and his presence is appreciated. Being human is measured by one's ability to relate to other people, without losing one's individuality which is expressed in individual praises.

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