

Ndandihleli

Xhosa folk song

Transcribed by Molly Stone and Patty Cuyler

[ⁿda ⁿdi tɛ-li ɛm-ŋa-mɛ-ni]

Ndandihleli emnyameni

[ɔ ⁿdan-di-k'i-ⁿga]

O, ndandicinga

[u-lɔ-vi wam]

uLovi wam

[kum-bu-la lɔ-vi]

Khumbula lovi

[kum-bu-la swi-ti wam]

Khumbula sweeti wam,

[ɔ kum-bu-la da-li wam]

O, khumbula dali wam,

[u-lɔ-vi wam]

uLovi wam

[ⁿda-di-si-fa i ɛtʃ aɪ vi]

(2nd verse): ndadisifa iHIV

[zu-ma zu-ma zu-ma]

zuma zuma zuma

Ndandihleli emnyameni O, ndandicinga uLovi wam	I am sitting in the dark I am thinking of my love
Khumbula lovi Khumbula sweeti wam, O, khumbula dali wam, uLovi wam	I miss my love I miss my sweetie I miss my darling my love
Ndandihleli emnyameni O, ndadisifa iHIV	I am sitting in the dark I am dying of HIV ¹

¹ Translation and pronunciation: Stone, Mollie and Patty Cuyler. *Raising the Bar: Traditional South African Choral Music*, Volume 1.

Pronunciation Notes on Xhosa

Notes on pronunciation come from Stone, Mollie and Patty Cuyler. *Raising the Bar: Traditional South African Choral Music*, Volume 1. The Choral Imperative, 2013, p. 9-10.

Word stress – accents are almost always on the penultimate syllable of each word.

Vowels are pure with no diphthongs, [a], [ε], [i], [ɔ], [u]

Consonants: as in English. Exceptions – **g** is always pronounced [g], **c**, **x** and **q** have specific clicks.

Words that begin with m or n followed by another consonant – hum through the m or n, or, when they follow syllables ending in a vowel, pronounce the m or the n at the end of the preceding syllable.

Consonants followed by h will have a slight aspiration *after* the consonant.

hl – press the tongue just behind the front teeth as if you were going to pronounce the **L**, and blow air over both sides of the tongue.

Help with Xhosa Tongue Clicks

Ubuntu Bridge. “Three Xhosa Tongue Clicks Made Easy.”

<https://youtu.be/YlocO29uud4>

Background

This song has been sung in South Africa for many years, and the words have evolved over time.

The earliest versions of *Ndandihleli* may have been sung by those whose husbands, fathers and brothers were forced to work as migrant laborers in the mines. Or it may have been sung by the miners themselves about those left behind in the rural areas. We do know that during apartheid South Africans sang *Ndandihleli* about their loved ones who were in prison or exile, or who had died at the hands of the government.

Over the past decade South Africans have further adapted *Ndandihleli* for the struggle against HIV. They sing it to mourn those who have died of AIDS, and

to provide comfort and support those who have lost loved ones in the epidemic.²

Recordings

University of Cape Town Choir, Winter Concert in St Paul's Church, 2014:

<https://youtu.be/JFVLeW9zU8w>

Chicago Children's Choir, for The Choral Imperative, 2013:

<https://youtu.be/tRT6hFSw1gs>

This is the version that you are learning and will be especially helpful for the movement.

Analysis

Key: Flexible

Meter: Basic feel of two, but harmony parts often contrast with a feel of 3 against 2.

Form: **A** AA BB A¹A¹ **Â**Â BB **A**

Performance notes from Stone and Cuyler:

Bold letters = sections without dancing

Â = all parts hum, except for the melody

*begin dancing on the downbeat of the entrance of the lower three voice-parts (after one A section)

A Section = Ndandihleli emnyameni, ndandicinga uLovi wam

B Section = Khumbula... / iyo / a-zuma

A¹ Section = Ndandihleli emnyameni, ndadisifa iHIV

² Stone, Mollie and Patty Cuyler. *Raising the Bar: Traditional South African Choral Music*, Volume 1. The Choral Imperative, 2013, p. 19.