

Abstract

The dissertation is a biographical ethnography of an individual, ordinary musician and Mamelodi township dweller, Lesiba Samuel Kadiaka (*1962) in South Africa. It is based largely on fieldwork totalling more than 12 months conducted in five periods over six years between 2006 and 2011.

It examines the possibilities of studying an average (rather than 'leading') musician ethnographically and their implications and consequences for wider ethnomusicological and South African music research. It makes a practical contribution to the wider debate about the relationship between individual, social, and cultural structures, and breaks new ground in its focus on the previously little known music and practices of Mr. Kadiaka's church, the Zion Christian Church.

The research consisted mainly of ethnographic observations of various kinds of musical activities in which Mr. L. S. Kadiaka was involved in as a solo musician (songwriter and song singer) and as a member of the ZCC, on the one hand, and of deep interviews over the time span of six years, on the other.

It consists of a biographical part dealing with his narratives about childhood in rural Ga-Mphahlele and his later life in Mamelodi township. Iconographic historical sources of a private nature are use too. The second part describes in three large chapters ways in which he was musically involved in various social and cultural settings.

The core of the dissertation's methodological and theoretical approaches rest on detailed ethnomusicological and other examination of various ethnographic and historical sources, as they relate to L. S. Kadiaka's musical activities. These are understood as sites of the construction of specific cultural meanings and as such map his wider social and cultural position as a poor township dweller in a post-apartheid context.

As a reflexive interpretative ethnography it pays careful attention to the production and situatedness of the ethnographic data in particular research contexts providing a detailed account of the researcher's position too.

Key words: Biographic Ethnography, Music, Experience, Identity, Township, Migration, Zion Christian Church, South Africa, Ethnomusicology