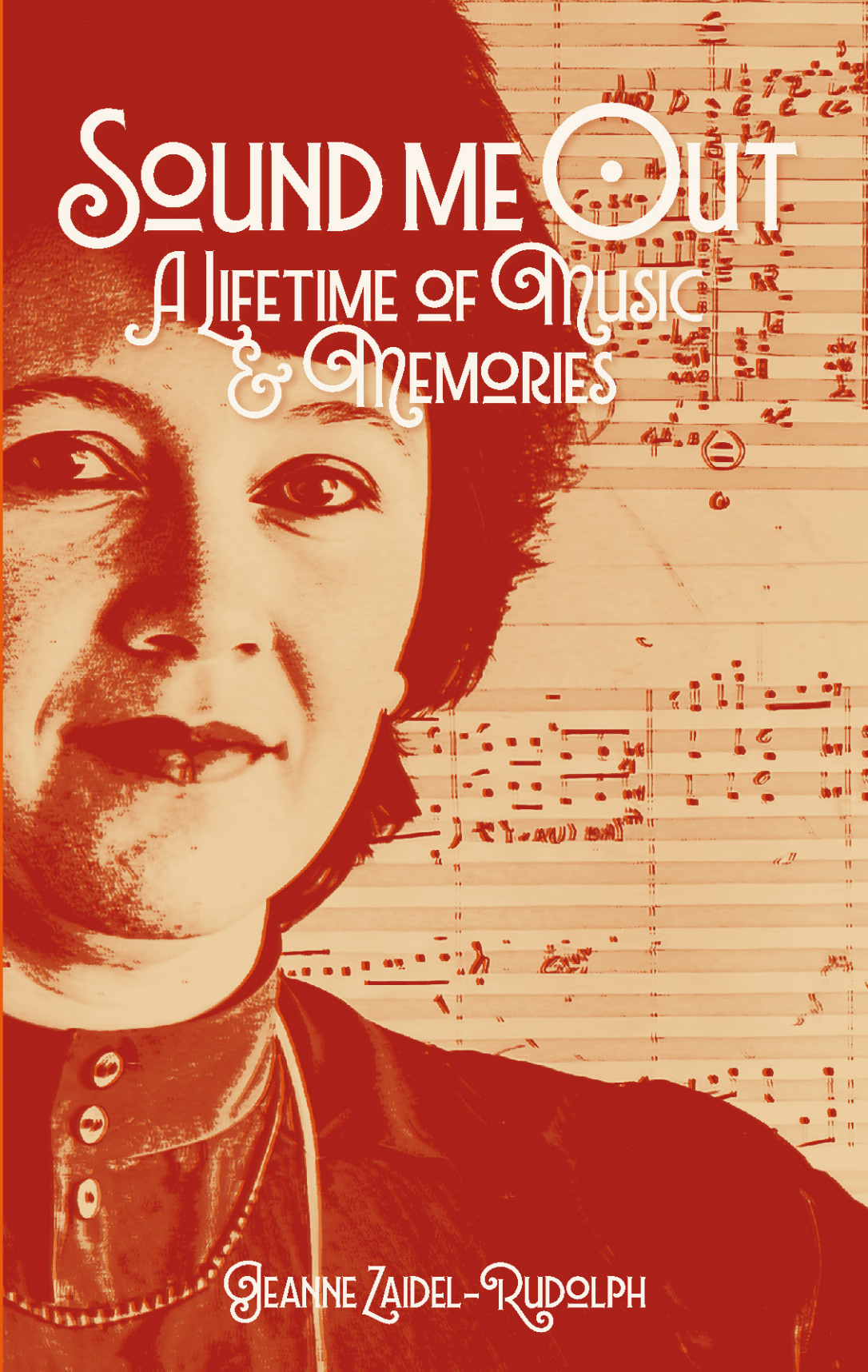

Sound Me Out
A Lifetime of Music & Memories
Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph

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Sound me Out

A Lifetime of Music and Memories

Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph

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Foreword

I have had the privilege of knowing Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph for several decades, during which she has been my mentor, colleague, fellow composer and, above all, a very dear friend. As a South African composer and academic myself, I have witnessed first-hand the depth of Jeanne's artistry, her generosity of spirit, and her unwavering commitment to music as both a creative and humanistic force.

To encounter Sound Me Out: A Lifetime of Music and Memories is to experience the extraordinary journey of a woman who has shaped the soundscape of South Africa. Jeanne's story unfolds not only as a chronicle of personal achievement, but also as a reflection of our nation's cultural evolution - one that spans from the apartheid years to a democracy still finding its harmony.

Her achievement as the first woman in South Africa to be awarded a doctorate in music composition, her studies with the renowned György Ligeti, and her prolific output of over eighty compositions all stand as testimony to her remarkable intellect and creative courage. Yet it is Jeanne's deep humanity that has always struck me most. Whether composing an oratorio for human rights, mentoring young composers, or collaborating across genres and cultures, she approaches each endeavour with empathy, insight, and an infectious enthusiasm for discovery.

Beyond her outstanding contribution to music, Jeanne possesses an extraordinary gift for language. She is, without doubt, one of the most eloquent and expressive writers I have encountered in my life. Her writing - at once precise, lyrical, and deeply thoughtful - mirrors the same artistry that characterises her music. It comes, I believe, from the same inner well of imagination and intellect that makes her such a fascinating creative force.

Jeanne is also a formidable academic, whose scholarship extends well beyond her compositional output. Through her publications, lectures, and mentorship, she has profoundly influenced the study and understanding of music in South Africa, challenging conventions and expanding the intellectual space in which music is both created and discussed.

Perhaps no achievement better captures her spirit than her contribution to the new composite version of the South African National Anthem, commissioned by President Nelson Mandela in 1995. In helping to weave together the musical languages of our country, Jeanne gave voice to a new national identity - one rooted in reconciliation, dignity and shared hope.

Sound Me Out offers readers not just a record of Jeanne's achievements, but a glimpse into the heart and mind of an artist whose music, teaching and friendship have left an indelible mark on so many lives - mine included. Her reflections on gender, faith, family, and the intertwining of African and Jewish musical traditions reveal the many layers of her creative world: one that is deeply personal and profoundly universal.

Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph's life reminds us that music is more than sound; it is memory, connection, and courage. Through these pages, she invites us to listen - not only to her music, but to the rhythms of a life lived with integrity, curiosity, and boundless imagination.

It is both an honour and a joy to introduce this book, and to celebrate the extraordinary woman whose voice - in words as in music - continues to inspire us all.

Alexander Johnson
Composer and Professor of Music
University of the Free State

Prelude

Without the fugue

The sky was getting darker even though it was only four o'clock in the afternoon. A typical Highveld storm was approaching and at the age of five I was petrified of being alone. My parents worked a full day at my father's men's outfitting shop, my elderly grandmother was asleep at the back of the house and my brother had gone to a friend's house. The rain started pelting down and the hail became so loud that I covered my ears and began shaking and crying. The lightening was flashing and the thunder made our flimsy little house shake. Through my tears I saw our piano in the corner of the lounge and ran to open the lid. I had just learnt how to play a little piece called *Prelude* by Henry Purcell and jumped up on to the piano chair. By now it was so dark in the house that I could hardly see the notes. My legs dangled high above the pedals and my fingers found the chipped ivory keys. I had memorised the little melody and repeated it over and over again very loudly to drown out the terrifying cacophony of the storm. Escaping into the world of sound and music became my sanctuary, a universal language through which I could navigate fear, hope, love, and survival. It foreshadowed the passion that would shape my future and define my career.

When I set out to carve the story of my life for posterity, I was determined that my Memoir should *not* be an academic treatise on music – especially not a technical or analytical one. There are many extant scholarly writings and analyses of my musical works, which can be accessed online. In retrospect I soon realised, however, that this approach was somewhat delusional. I have preserved the description of a particular piece of music within the text whenever it is integral to the narrative. These anecdotes and contexts hopefully add richness to the tale. However, I added an Appendix at the end of the book for deeper analyses of selected works.

I recognise, with growing self-awareness, that I have lived my life predominantly through the lens and filters of music – through a world inhabited by sound and aural magnificence that has revealed my true essence and purpose; one which defines

one of my most powerful motivators. I have lived my life, so far, not 'with' music but 'in' music. My readers will hopefully bear with me and my need to document the significant musical vignettes of my life, even if it may occasionally appear to be a tad self-indulgent.

Having said that, at the time of writing these memoirs, I am also keenly aware that my focus and perspective on life have dramatically changed with the passage of time – and nothing at all in the world is now more important to me than my family (my husband, daughters, grandchildren and great granddaughter), who have given me unstinting loyalty, unconditional love, support, buoyancy and inestimable joy. While my relationship with music is still pivotal to me, the ecstasy I feel when listening to a première of one of my compositions is paralleled by what I feel during family time; moments of raucous laughter over shared jokes and hilariously humorous incidents that have crept into our family folklore, moments of tenderness when bonding, moments of sorrow and tears at shared loss and moments of overwhelming fulfilment at observing and revelling with my loved ones around me when we are together, especially when celebrating special and happy events (*simchas*). No composition – however absorbing, rapturous or compelling – could ever match that. This may ultimately be what differentiates me as a female composer from my male counterparts.

Although I never believed myself to be, or claimed to be, the maternal type, I desperately wanted children; all the more so when I was led to believe that I would likely never be able to conceive – a harsh pronouncement for a young woman to hear. Thankfully, as my story unfolds, and supported by a loving husband, the reader will learn how I miraculously experienced several pregnancies and four healthy daughters were born to us. My life could not have been more enriched or more perfect, personally and professionally and I am continually thankful for my blessings. It is a privilege to vicariously experience the pure ecstasy on the faces of our young grandchildren when discovering life's treasures for the first time. How blessed we feel to have already been able to celebrate a grandson's wedding, a 21st birthday, several *bar mitzvahs* and *bat mitzvahs*, as well as the birth of a great-granddaughter.

As much as I have vivid memories of a musical home, I mostly cherish my memories of a loving, nurturing one – a rarity in the digital world in which we now live.

This is not to say that the digital age is without enormous benefits. My gratitude to G-d[1] knows no bounds for designating me to live when and where I did. I was born in exactly the right century to be able to have *one* foot in the glorious pre-digital world of libraries, parks, books and cinemas and the *other* foot in the automated technologies that are currently so immensely useful.

As a younger composer, my writing tools frequently consisted of blunt pencils, inefficient sharpeners and dirty erasers resulting in messy score sheets. Having access to appropriate technology with music software programmes on a computer was the most glorious revelation for me. It not only made life as a composer considerably easier, but also transformed the way I envisioned and approached musical creativity. My gratitude for this groundbreaking technology knows no bounds when I think of how Mozart or Beethoven had to painstakingly and laboriously write out orchestral parts by hand. In addition, the availability and accessibility of stimulating and enriching lectures on diverse topics, including areas of religion and spiritual enhancement, would not be possible without technology. The level of Artificial Intelligence currently in usage is indeed daunting, but I do not believe that the creative human spirit can that easily be substituted or replaced – nor should it be. There is as yet no viable substitute for humankind – with the emphasis on both 'human' and 'kind'.

The need to clarify my thoughts for this book has often taken me down paths which led to sunshine and beautiful oceans in my life, but also down others that have been beset with brambles; darkness in me which was difficult to confront. I realise, with some *angst*, that I have a somewhat obsessive streak when it comes to completing and perfecting tasks, driven by my inherent need to feel productive at every breathing moment. I

1 The traditional Jewish way of (respectfully) writing G-d's name (with a dash) has been use throughout this publication. The sources of this tradition are to be found in the *Shulchan Aruch, (set table) Yoreh Deah*, chapters 179 and 276 and commentaries. It is the Code of Jewish Law written by Joseph Karo in the 16th century.

expect a lot of other people, but mostly of myself. Throughout my career, I tenaciously sat at my piano or computer until a music problem was solved or until I had completed writing a section of a new composition, no matter what time of the day or night.

This made it difficult for me to enjoy offered bouts of recreation with my husband Michael and the children; I was fiercely competitive and felt that 'downtime' was time wasted, when I could have been producing a new score or acquiring new knowledge. This latter obsession had its positive side too, in that it led me to compose prolifically, be an avid reader and develop a tremendous curiosity about music, life, and people.

Although I have never regarded myself as a 'wordsmith', but rather as a 'note-smith', I do frequently enjoy indulging in a pun – due largely to identifying homonyms (words that sound the same but have different meanings) and using them with humour.

Whenever Michael occasionally accuses me of being overly 'bossy', I'm quick to remind him that without my efforts, we might never have built the well-oiled machine we call 'home'—a system that has served us seamlessly for many years and continues to keep our daily lives running smoothly, despite the countless demands on our time.

My compulsion to rather obsessively get involved in and try to fix situations (and people) has mostly worked in our favour, given that Michael is equally absorbed in his work, but less fixated on repairing the world. And so, dear reader, sharing selected revelatory and innermost secrets – and elucidating on aspects of my nature and life philosophy, I invite you to read these pages with attentiveness, but also with compassion and to enjoy the journey of my life, as much as I have lived it so far.

My Early Years

Youth is Not Wasted on the Young

I had a charmed childhood. Flat 201, 715 Pretorius Street, Arcadia, Pretoria was both my whole world and precious haven – to this day I remember our landline phone number from nearly 70 years ago: initially 43458. Then a 7 was added, making it 743458, and currently it would have the area code (012) for Pretoria and several more digits. Of course, these days we don't even have a relic such as a 'landline'.

We never had much of anything material besides the essentials, but my beloved elder brother, Malcolm and I experienced abundant love and attention from our parents, Evelyn and David Zaidel, both of whom were exceptionally musical. They worked extremely hard to make sure that we had the best education they could afford – no private schools, but the finest government schools in our area. I was fortunate to have had a very well-rounded education at both Arcadia Primary School and later at the Pretoria High School for Girls. It was my Aunt, Dobbie Schlesin, my mother's older sister who could afford to buy a new dress for me at the beginning of each new school year. My father ran a men's clothing store in Arcadia called Ambassadors Men's Outfitting and my mother worked as a private secretary for Rabbi Sydney Katz at the Weitzman Centre, right next door to our block of flats.

My young years were filled with happy memories of friends visiting in the afternoons and many trips to the library (I devoured books as a child). However, it was piano lessons that occupied a central role in my life. There was the usual degree of sibling rivalry between my brother and me – and getting to the piano first was one of the areas of volatile conflict, creating chaotic scenes of screaming and shoving. With both parents working though, Malcolm and I were generally very good friends when left to our own devices, except when we were vying for our parents' attention. Our Granny Clara lived with us as children and took

wonderful care of all our needs; a fine example of the benefits of an extended family. Malcolm was the most kind-hearted brother imaginable, though occasionally stubborn; and I was demanding and very determined to get my own way – not exactly a recipe for peace.

A bone of contention was that Malcolm had his own bedroom, but my 'bedroom' was just a passageway in our tiny flat. Although I was aware of my parents' financial hardships, I still complained bitterly about this, something I'm ashamed of to this day. Eventually the wall to this passage was bricked up and Malcolm moved in with my grandmother on the other side of the wall, leaving me a tiny room, but one with much sought-after privacy. I am, and always was, notoriously sensitive to sound (and noise)[1] and living on a main street with noisy neighbours used to send me into a frenzy. To this day, I cannot tolerate loud volumes of music or noise of any kind. My father tended to play his radio too loudly for my liking, especially when I was studying for tests or exams and I became extremely intolerant. Our parents were cognisant of my quirkiness in this area and did their best to accommodate me – though this was a losing battle due to our reality and circumstances. On the positive side, though, as a family we shared a great love of popular and historic recordings by Al Jolson, light opera, Italian arias and standard classical music (especially Mendelssohn's inspired *Violin Concerto* in E minor, which was our musical bread and butter as children) as well as cantorial liturgical music. How I long today for those precious early years and family times.

Magical musical moments

We enjoyed a very vibrant musical life at home, especially on weekends. These home 'concerts' became known as 'Zaidel Music Sundays'.

During these family music-making gatherings, my father's glorious golden tenor voice would ring out across the neighbourhood and people from all over the 'hood' would

1 I believe that this would be identified today as 'sensory processing disorder' (SPD).

come to listen. Malcolm would sing lustily (playing along on his guitar), mainly songs by Cliff Richard and Elvis Presley, with me accompanying him on the piano. My father would sing beautiful Italian opera arias and a range of songs in English and Hebrew. He took part in operettas, the most publicised having been his role as Absalom in the Biblical operetta *Shulamit* by Abraham Goldfaden. He was also a legendary tenor soloist in the Pretoria Synagogue choir for over 40 years. During tea breaks on Sundays, I would let off some steam and energy by rattling off my latest piano solo at great speed to show off my nimble fingers – CPE Bach's *Solfeggietto* for Piano being one of my favourite impressive 'party-pieces'. Family and friends frequently exhorted me in my youth to 'play for the guests' and I found myself doing the very same thing to my hapless daughters years later, despite having promised myself that I would not inflict a similar 'torture' upon them.

We were a traditional Jewish family whose spiritual practice was expressed largely through music and an attachment to the Holy Land of Israel, our ancestral home. This perfunctory level of religious observance was to change in intensity after my marriage to Michael Rudolph, over two decades later.

At the age of five, being rather envious of Malcolm's regular piano lessons with our aunt Goldie Zaidel, a renowned Pretoria piano teacher, I devised a plan to garner my mother's attention and start piano lessons too. I had to prove that I had the potential to play this beautiful instrument and also needed a teacher. I proceeded to imitate by ear what I heard my very talented brother, Malcolm, practising. I climbed onto the piano stool (my feet dangling well above the pedals) and confidently reproduced my own 'version' of the pieces he was learning. My mother had little choice after that but to request that Auntie Goldie add me to her long list of pupils for regular piano lessons. I was exceedingly fortunate and privileged to have my very own devoted aunt (who had no children of her own) take charge of my music education. Not only did she teach me piano performance from a very young age, but also the study of music theory and appreciation. I loved the instrument and the material, but I remember not relishing the long hours of practice required to be her piano pupil.

Malcolm and I were enrolled at Arcadia Primary School, which was within easy walking distance of our home. I remember the headmistress Miss Matthews (with her stereotypical tightly-rolled grey bun) and the headmaster Mr von Broembsen well. As a child, the school appeared to be extremely large and imposing and the game of marbles (nicknamed 'arlies' by the kids) dominated the playground – leading to admiration and hero-worship of the best players. Malcolm and I were very proud to be chosen to play Schubert's *March Militaire* as a piano duet every day for pupils to walk in to 'assembly' in the school quadrangle.

I was extremely excited to have some of my early piano pieces published in our school magazine. Arcadia Primary School was where I made lifelong friends – Ivor Shain from Pretoria being among them. I also have a beautiful memory of my very first 'boyfriend', Alexander Durr, carrying my little brown school case home. Over 50 years later, I picked up a voice message in my WitsMusic office from the same Alex Durr, inquiring whether I was the same Jeanne Zaidel he had known at Arcadia School in the 1950s. I have since struck up a wonderful friendship with Alex and his wife Natalie, devout Christians; our friendship is based on our mutual love of the Holy Land and biblical texts.

I was born with a very developed music memory and perfect pitch. This meant that playing by ear was far easier than sight-reading for me. If I heard a piece of music for the first time, I could go to the piano and reproduce what I had heard in the correct key exactly and write it down accurately. I never found it strange that for every tone I heard, I saw a particular colour in my mind. I later learnt that this is referred to as 'synaesthesia'. As a child, I relied far more on my auditory memory than on my visual memory. It reminds me of the Biblical reference in the Torah[2] that was given at Mount Sinai to the children of Israel, where the congregation *saw* the thunder and *heard* the lightning – I wholly perceive and experience my world through my auditory sense much more than visually.

2 Compilation of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible: Genesis; Exodus; Leviticus; Numbers and Deuteronomy - Also known as the Five books of Moses.

Because of my ability to hear any pitch or tone and give it a note name, I had a great deal of fun identifying, for example, the pitch of a car hooter or the hum of a neon light. I am always conscious of sounds intruding on me from the outside world – whether it is dogs barking in the night or car radios blaring away, which I find so intrusive. I adored playing the radio game with Malcolm of listening to the first two notes of a song and trying to identify it, as well as guessing the name of a piece of music by someone tapping the rhythm on my back. I vividly remember the tunes of various nannies who sang to us as children, mainly in Setswana and isiZulu, for example the song *Kazena Mama Zulu* (*It's Late, Mama Zulu*).

There is a beautiful passage in an autobiography of the art historian and critic Kenneth Clark, *Another Part of the Wood* that deals with his ability as a 'born visualiser', which is a similar gift to mine (though mine is as a born 'audioliser'. In it, he describes his innate ability to visualise:

> I have always been a visualiser. Even as a child, I found it difficult to remember names and dates, but faces, landscapes and pictures I could see in my mind's eye with extraordinary clarity. For me, visualising is not an effort; it is something that happens naturally, almost involuntarily. And I know that this has given me an advantage as a scholar, because it allows me to see connections and patterns that might be invisible to someone who relies solely on written or spoken words (Clark 1975).

I recall a saying, 'Be careful what you wish for, or it might just come true'. And, indeed, blessed as I was to have Auntie Goldie as my superb and dedicated piano teacher, I had not reckoned with her unbridled enthusiasm at teaching her 'talented' niece, frequently at 6.30 in the morning for extra lessons before school. As can be imagined, there was a great deal of resistance on my part, but my grumbling went unheeded in the face of her generosity of her time and expertise. She was reputed to be one of the finest piano teachers in South Africa at the time, greatly admired by the Pretoria public and especially by members of the University of South Africa (UNISA) Music Department; most

notably the legendary Hennie Joubert, erstwhile Music Head of Department (HOD) and John Roos, who led UNISA Music so commendably for many years. Goldie produced a generation of superb young pianists, including Wessel van Wyk, Kobus Maritz, Leonie van Wyk, Bernice Marais, and the Cuttner sisters. Aunty Goldie passed away in Pretoria in April 1997, leaving a legacy of highly accomplished pianists. I wrote a tribute to Goldie Zaidel which was published in 1997 in the UNISA music journal *Musicus* (Vol. 25 No 2).

It seemed that my future was charted as a concert pianist (though as a child, it was more a case of a 'can't sit' pianist when it came to practising!). Pianism dominated my life to the extent that if I was away from my piano for even a couple of days, I would begin to experience withdrawal symptoms. However, a later occurrence was to change the course of my life from my aspirations of becoming a professional pianist to becoming an enthusiastic and very active composer. My parents did not allow me to embark on anything as hazardous as horse-riding or ice-skating, as my fingers were extremely precious and I dared not risk injuring my hands. There was even a time when my father took out extra insurance for my hands, but it became too costly for him to continue.

I began performing in concerts as early as the age of five and had completed some childhood compositions in pencil by the age of six. These included several '*Rushen*' Dances (proudly misspelt on the music manuscript paper). At age six, I competed in the Pretoria Eisteddfod in the 'under-16' category and shared first prize with a girl who was 16. This earned me the epithet of a 'child prodigy'. However, right from the beginning of my 'concert career', I experienced very troublesome perspiring hands and a pounding heart, symptoms of stage fright and nerves, which endured throughout my years of performing on stage. There even came a time when I was at university that I had to take beta-blocker medications to slow my hammering heart rate down before a performance or exam.

The very first piano in our house, bought originally for Malcolm, was a very small, but charming second-hand

'miniature' Betsy Ross spinet, a lightweight American piano, which my parents had acquired at great financial sacrifice. However, as expected, its very presence in our home became the natural catalyst to igniting my lifelong love for music-making. It was considered by some, though, to be more a toy than a piano and I longed for an instrument that could reward my efforts with large and varied tone, colour, and volume. However, since we had always lived in a flat in Pretoria, we had to be cautious of not disturbing the neighbours. This became very restrictive, especially when having to practise before exams. It took many years and much 'doing without' before my parents could afford to buy a second-hand *Rönisch* baby grand piano for us – and, boy, did I feel 'grand' practising on my very own grand piano.

Auntie Goldie inculcated in me a great love for Western art music and she particularly nurtured my ability to interpret music with deep understanding, greater shades of light and colour – and highly expressive interpretation. To her great credit, she was one of the few teachers at the time that researched and ordered piano scores by contemporary living composers for her pupils to play. These modern pieces allowed one to be far more imaginative and expressive to perform in public concerts than music by the old masters like Mozart and Beethoven.

In fact, Auntie Goldie – who frequently travelled overseas – made a point of sourcing recently composed and exciting new works. She discovered unique pieces of sheet music and obscure scores, which were unknown in South Africa at the time. These new works inspired my early forays into writing my own original piano compositions that were more experimental and far less tonal than the usual classical repertoire. During the next several years, Goldie helped to prepare me for countless competitive performances at Pretoria eisteddfodau, UNISA graded piano exams, prize-winners' concerts, music festivals, and invitations to perform at prestigious events.

My parents never forced me to practise the piano, but encouraged me with much love and conviction – though I admit, more frequently with a bribe of soft-serve twirl ice cream, which I loved. In any event, I far preferred spending time with my brother

Malcolm, who was my protector and my hero. Playing table tennis in the basement of our flat in Pretoria with him and his friends, or flying kites on the vast expanse of lawn in front of the Union Buildings in Pretoria was infinitely more attractive to me than practising the piano for hours at a time, but I was mostly dutiful and disciplined.

Yet life was by no means always rigorous and there was plenty of laughter as well. My mother, who had a brilliant sense of humour, would send me into fits of helpless mirth by reciting Wordsworth's *Daffodils*, accompanied by comical physical dramatisation to the words "tossing their heads in sprightly dance". I also recall an hilarious list of 'excuses' she wrote out for me and placed by our landline telephone to use later when declining requests for dates with boys in whom I had no interest. Among them was: "My mother ties me down to the piano legs, so I'm terribly sorry, but I can't go out with you."

My family tree

As children, having first cousins visiting was a great treat. Since it was only me and my brother in our nuclear family, we valued our aunts, uncles and particularly our first cousins very much and were a very close-knit family. My mother (*née* Evelyn Gold) was the youngest of six children, growing up in Arcadia, Pretoria with three sisters and two brothers. She was particularly close to her sisters, especially to my Aunt Dobbie Schelsin[3], who had no children of her own and grew to become like a second Mom for us. When introduced to people, she would irreverently give her

3 Aunt Dobbie deserves a great deal more than a footnote, as she was exceptionally kind to me and Malcolm and was ever-present in our daily lives. She took over many school lift schemes for our children and assisted in indescribably helpful ways. During my year of chemotherapy for lymphoma in 1996, she arrived every week with several thousand rands for me in cash, knowing that I could not work or earn. Ironically, I later took her for many months of radiation therapy when she was afflicted with a tumour, which was the very least I could do for her. She adored my own children, who in turn adored her. Dobbie was indeed like my second mother, whom I loved dearly. I miss her every day since she passed away in December 1999.

surname and unfailingly add: "That's Schlesin without the 'ger' – and without the millions."

Her eldest sister, my Aunt Tilly Simon, had emigrated with her family to the USA many years before, though I remained very close to her children, especially my beloved cousin Glenda (who recently passed away), her brother Arthur Simon and sister Ethne Silberg. My Aunt Ruth Burman, a recluse who loved reading lived in Nelspruit – and we adored going down there for school holidays to be with our cousin, Cynthia. I can still conjure up the warm pungent smell of the Lowveld with its rich, creamy avocados, sweet mangoes, delicious litchis and lush tropical vegetation. We always returned home with a full bag of pecan nuts from Hall and Sons, a well-known name in the Lowveld. One year my brother and I unfortunately also returned home with a virulent dose of chicken pox.

My father was one of four children, growing up near the Pretoria Zoo in Boom Street, a most undesirable neighbourhood these days. Several of his siblings had passed away in their youth, as was quite common in those days, predominantly due to lack of good sanitation and hygienic conditions. My father's brother, Alter and his wife, my Aunty Goldie (piano teacher), had no children and were very fond of my brother and me. My beloved Aunty Esther (wife of Professor Sam Israelstam of Wits Chemistry Faculty renown), was one of the most generous and giving people I knew. When I first began lecturing at Wits in 1975, she hospitably opened her home to me and I stayed there until I found my own accommodation. I recall being most impressed by the fact that world-famous paleoanthropologist Prof Phillip Tobias was a frequent visitor to their home. Esther was possessed of a delightfully wry wit which never failed her, even in extremis. The following is a funny-sad story that has entered into family folklore:

Upon coming round after major surgery for cancer, she asked her son, Dennis: "What did the surgeons do?" He replied: "They unfortunately had to remove part of your bowel." With characteristic Aunt Esther wit, she responded: "Well, it's better to have a semi-colon than a full stop!"

Esther and Sam had three sons and two daughters. The oldest child, Leonard (wife Ros), was instrumental in founding the first International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) computers in South Africa, while his brother, Dennis (wife Helen), of whom I was exceptionally fond, became a much-loved and popular gynaecologist in Johannesburg. He, too, had an irrepressible sense of humour and shared my 9 July birth date, although he was 11 years my senior. We would compete as to which of us would be first to wish the other a happy birthday each year, sometimes resorting to a 6h00am telephone call to be first. Myra Winton, the eldest daughter, moved to Toronto many years ago with her husband Ian, who was tragically killed in a car accident in his youth. Happily, I recently renewed contact with Myra in Toronto. The youngest two children, twins Kenneth, (a psychiatrist) and Carol, who passed away several years ago, also emigrated from South Africa. My father's younger sister, Aunt Molly married Jack Lewkowski and they had a son, Myron and a daughter, Ruth. Aside from Ruth, who is still living in Los Angeles, the family has passed on.

My hugely competitive streak

My A-type personality had its roots in those early years of competing in the annual Pretoria Piano Eisteddfod until my late teens. Receiving anything less than an A+ or a gold diploma for any music section was completely horrifying for me and upset me deeply. Fortunately, the gold diplomas flowed happily in these very rewarding years. My devoted mother filled up many scrapbooks with my diplomas, as well as newspaper reviews and reports, with written accolades of every performance in an array of venues, a priceless documentation for me and for posterity. These meticulous records, so lovingly preserved by her in several scrapbooks, form the finest resource for creating this memoir, for which I am eternally grateful. My mother's meticulous records have greatly assisted in my reflection of the many years of an active career in music, both locally and internationally.

My young life was dominated by music examinations – and my continually sweaty palms attested to that. I was too young and obedient to be rebellious but so often wished I could just go out

and play with friends. I obtained excellent results in the annual UNISA graded piano examinations, with honours in both piano and music theory. There were also often accompanying bursaries (as prizes), which were very welcome indeed. Looking back on my records, I note, however, with great amusement that the value of these bursaries was in the range of R4 to R10 – perhaps a considerable sum of money back then, but certainly not enough for my music education.

As Auntie Goldie focused exclusively on my advanced piano instruction, she sent me to Richard Cherry for theory and harmony tuition. He was a renowned teacher of music theory, harmony and counterpoint in Pretoria and this elderly, rotund, rather 'fuddy-duddy' Dickensian Englishman rigorously taught me the basics of harmony, good voice-leading, chord progressions and species counterpoint[4]. This stood me in great stead upon entering university.

Life as a young girl in Pretoria

In 1961, when I was 13, I was given the dubious honour of being asked to play for the first State President, Charles Robberts ('Blackie') Swart in Pretoria[5]. I knew little about politics at that young age and was terribly nervous to be playing at the official imposing government residence. I had been born in a year of notable change in both South Africa and Israel: 1948 heralded the voting in of the Nationalist Government in South Africa and the attendant official apartheid policy of the regime. In the same year, the State of Israel was proclaimed, which was a historically profound and significant event for the Jewish people. In 1961, South Africa was declared a republic. These global changes were to have a powerful effect on the future of the two countries with which I am most closely connected.

4 A music technique of writing independent melodic parts, combining them harmonically against one another (beginning with only one tone against another) and then gradually writing more pitches against a single tone.

5 There is an online history of CR Swart (a pro-apartheid adherent), in which he is depicted as an intellectually brilliant man who matriculated at the tender age of 13 and was undeniably a genius.

However, politics was not a focal point for me or any of my friends as children. The vast majority of white South Africans were largely shielded from the realities of apartheid. Indeed, the signs of '*Blankes alleenlik*' ('*Whites only*') and '*Nie-blankes alleenlik*' ('*Non-whites only*') on entrances to shops and hotels, on park benches, playgrounds, theatres, cinemas, beaches and public transport were so ubiquitous that – unless one was politically conscientised – one became frighteningly inured to them. The absence of black faces on the streets or public places after dark each evening was not something one questioned. The existence of 'locations' (townships) into which millions of black South Africans vanished at nightfall was acknowledged but felt distant and removed. The appearance of black nannies, gardeners, and domestic servants in white homes every morning was perceived as unremarkable and these individuals were habitually docile, unobtrusive, and largely anonymous, other than their first names. Yet it didn't trigger outrage at that early stage.

Although the proclamation of the State of Israel meant a lot to South African Jews, we had no reason to uproot ourselves and emigrate to Israel. Life in Pretoria was comfortable, safe and predictable. Moreover, the government of the day was tolerant towards Jewish citizens, permitting us to live as part of a 'white minority'. Also, the attitude of the Calvinist Dutch Reformed Church, to which almost all Afrikaners belonged at the time, was one of genuine respect for Judaism and Jews as 'people of the book'. For the most part, anti-Semitism – when and if it manifested – was limited to verbal abuse, rather than anything more serious. Possibly the evident academic achievements of Jews, especially in the science and medical fields at Wits University, or financial success in the business realm of notable figures in the Jewish community as compared with other South Africans, resulted in envy or resentment.

Such a figure of affluence was Samuel (Sammy) Marks (1844–1920), a powerful Jewish industrialist, entrepreneur and influencer who came to South Africa from Lithuania (like most of the South African Jewish community) in 1868. He played a huge role in industrial and agricultural development in South Africa, predominantly making his fortune in mining. He lived a lavish

lifestyle in a 48-room mansion with his large family near Pretoria in Zwartkoppies. This estate and its contents are preserved in a beautiful museum near Pretoria, frequently referred to as the Sammy Marks House. Marks contributed enormously to development in the country and became a personal friend of President Paul Kruger.

Even those unacquainted with South African political history have mostly heard of the magnificent Kruger National Park, named after Paul Kruger (1825–1904), who was an ardent conservationist, having grown up on a farm and understanding the need to protect wildlife. When the British were defeated in the first Anglo Boer War in 1880, Paul Kruger was instrumental in negotiations with the British, having entered politics shortly before. In 1882 Paul Kruger was elected president of what was then called the Transvaal. In fact, he was elected as president four times! But when he faced a final defeat by the British in 1882, he took refuge in Europe, finally moving to Clarens in Switzerland, where he died in 1904. However, he was buried in his homeland in the Church Street cemetery in Pretoria, the burial place of most of my family.

Legend has it that my grandmother Florence Zaidel, knew Paul Kruger personally and frequently retold the family her fascinating story relating to him. A friend of the Zaidel family had unexpectedly come across what seemed like a discarded lottery ticket lying in the street. He picked it up and when that ticket miraculously won the lottery, he claimed the winnings. The original owner who had lost his ticket reported this to the police and the family friend was locked up in prison. My grandmother Florence met with President Paul Kruger and begged him for clemency on their friend's behalf, resulting in the man's release from prison. This remains a charming story in the Zaidel family folklore.

Involving oneself in politics in the late 1960s when I was a student was always a risky venture, particularly for Jews, who – barely 20 years after the devastation of the Holocaust – were mindful of the need to keep a low profile and avoid doing anything to bring catastrophe down on the community. However, Jews like

Joe Slovo, Helen Suzman, Denis Goldberg, Arthur Goldreich and my distant cousin Gill Marcus, to name a few, were politically active in the struggle against apartheid. My personal role in the South African landscape changed dramatically once I returned from my life-broadening experiences as a student in the UK and Europe and began teaching at Wits University in 1975. As a privileged white South African I committed myself to sharing knowledge gained and mentoring previously disadvantaged black students, creating capacity in the underserved communities and attempting to bridge the terrible disparities existing, academically, politically, economically and socially. To this end, I devoted decades to my students, including those whose talent wasn't matched by opportunity, in helping build their future careers in music.

In my early years in South Africa, I was seldom affected by anti-Semitism or racism for being Jewish; apart from a rather crude – and hurtful example, namely a rebuff from the parents of an Afrikaner friend, delivered through her, informing me that "Jews weren't welcome in their home". Anti-Semitism – the most pernicious form of racism – has again become a terrifying reality today and has reared its vicious head since the massacre and atrocities perpetrated by Hamas on Israelis and others on 7 October 2023.

That said both South Africa and Israel have played central roles in informing my career and my understanding of who I am. Israel was a continual teleological marker in my home – both during childhood and in adulthood. However, its significance – as a spiritual crucible and an inviolable, though distant, rampart of my Jewish faith – was necessarily diminished by its geographical location and by my love for my country of birth. My career, my social life and my daily existence were entirely immersed in the immediacy of South Africa, whose landscapes, peoples, colours, and above all, sounds and music were inextricably rooted in my identity. For that reason, it claimed the greater part of my passion, and it drove, and continues to drive, much of my creative impetus. Despite its history, this beautiful, inscrutable country – full of contradictions, cruelties and daily miracles – has endless stores

of compassion. It is connected to me in ways that are sometimes understood, and sometimes enigmatic, but always powerful.

Lure of the concert stage

My youth was dominated by my music: thankfully I do not ever remember resenting this – only relishing the artistic gratification. By the age of 14, with practice and dedication, I had won 57 gold diplomas at the Pretoria annual Eisteddfod, been awarded the cup for the highest marks for five consecutive years and performed for four successive years (1960-1963) at the prize-winning festival concerts at the Pretoria University Aula. At the same time, I received honours grades and bursaries for every UNISA piano examination.

I lived in a cocoon of perpetual piano practice, preparation and performance. I experienced my fair share of 'stage fright' with my sweaty palms attesting to that.

I was privileged to première contemporary piano works like the Jean Françaix *Concertino* for piano in 1960 when I was 12 years old, the *Toccata* by Aram Khachaturian and other works like *The Cat and the Mouse* (*Le Chat et la Souris*) by Aaron Copland. I adored performing the latter showy work, which was to become my signature *encore* piece and the inspiration for my later commissioned work *Catch Me if You Can* for the SAMRO International Piano Scholarship Competition in 2019.

A most exciting event in my young life was presenting the South African première (at age 14) of the exciting and jazzy Morton Gould Concerto, *Interplay* for piano and orchestra, a contemporary American work that no one in South Africa had heard about. This performance initially took place on 13 October 1962 at the 38th Pretoria Music Festival concert at the Aula. I was accompanied on the second piano (in lieu of an orchestra) by Valerie Kalish, an accomplished Pretoria pianist.

The full orchestral performance took place on 8 December that year, when I played this exciting modern work at the Youth Concerto Festival in the Wits Great Hall with the Johannesburg Symphony Orchestra (JSO), conducted by Jeremy Schulman.

It was a scintillating affair and a prestigious concert for all the young performers, who were chosen to play *concerti* or movements from *concerti* with the orchestra. The Gould work was extremely challenging, technically and musically, for both soloist and orchestra.

A rather bizarre thing happened after the final orchestral rehearsal: the double bass player in the orchestra confronted my mother and said: "I hope your daughter has an appendicitis attack before the public performance tomorrow night!" Seeing the look of horror on her face at this comment, he qualified his awful remark by adding: "We can't get these complex rhythms right at this lightning speed." My mother, who was initially very taken aback by his comment, was also bemused at this back-handed compliment. A pre-publicity article in the Pretoria News on the day of the Youth Concerto Festival Concert headlined (immodestly, if I may), "Modest Jeanne is a Musical Genius" (1962).

A critic from *The Star* newspaper (JD 1962) reviewing the performances at the Youth Concerto Festival generally appeared not to be enjoying the concert or appreciate the choice of modern repertoire – contemporary music was perhaps not to his taste; he did, however, write that "the best performance of the evening was Jeanne Zaidel's interpretation of the Morton Gould *Interplay* for Piano and Orchestra. The folksy, jazz-like cross-rhythms were typically American and were handled well and with feeling." This mini-concerto was to become one of my favourite 'signature tunes', going forward;

I adored the work so much that I performed it whenever and wherever I could – my mostly having to substitute the orchestra (of course a rare and expensive luxury for a young soloist) with a second pianist. Aside from Valerie Kalish, my other wonderful accompanist was Robert Clough, a well-known Pretoria musician, later to become my lecturer in Harmony and Counterpoint at Pretoria University.

Another of my favourite 'show-stopper' piano pieces as a teenager was the 1888 *Concert* Étude Opus 36 by Edward MacDowell, a late Romantic American composer. It requires

impressively fast playing and contains many successive octaves which create loud dynamic contrasts. I revelled in this, as I had developed bold technical skills and it was a perfect vehicle for flaunting them. I performed this classical 'lollipop' at the 39th Pretoria Music Festival on 8 November 1963 and many times thereafter.[6]

My broadcasting début and introduction to the general public as a pianist was through the radio programme "Young South Africa". I took part in the first of many in this series which were recorded and broadcast at the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) in Johannesburg on 16 February 1964; this was one of several radio broadcasts I participated in over the years, including a programme on LM Radio (then Lourenco Marques Radio, in Mozambique). In fact, if I recall correctly, my parents were paid the grand sum of R3 each time I recorded piano music for a broadcast. What a shame such series fell by the wayside!

Another well-loved piece I performed at concerts as a teen was the *Caprice* Opus 24 No 3 by Jean Sibelius, all part of an unusual repertoire at the time (sourced by my aunt), but pianistically very flamboyant and rewarding. These pieces seemed tailor-made for me to demonstrate challenging finger- control and exhilarating dynamic contrasts.

Highs and lows

In 1965, to my joy and amazement, I had the singular honour of being appointed Head Girl of the Pretoria High School for Girls (PHSG), which comprised nearly 1000 pupils, apparently the first Jewish girl to hold that title in the long history of the school. My music career had to take a back seat during that year, as the leadership position demanded vast and varied school responsibilities – some of them great fun; like being invited to 11 matric dances that year (by all the other heads of leading high schools in Pretoria). I did, fortunately, receive a glowing testimonial from our authoritarian and formidable headmistress Mrs. RE Nelson at the end of the year, thanking me for my loyalty

6 Concert programmes in my home archive.

to the school despite my demanding music activities at the time. My matric year was one of huge activity, excitement and personal development and I frequently performed at school at the piano for assemblies and many school events.

In the middle of my matric year, a rather disturbing incident occurred: my father was one of very few people at the time to have invested in a home reel-to-reel tape recorder. He bought a second-hand Philips tape-recorder to document, record and preserve events like my concerts and broadcasts. We accumulated precious and valuable recordings of my piano performances and some early compositions over several years, which we kept in the basement of our block of flats in Pretoria.

In July 1965, my matric year, after experiencing a most distressing burglary, an article in the *Pretoria News* (1965) read: "The entire repertoire of a brilliant young Pretoria concert pianist recorded on about 20 tapes has been stolen from her Arcadia home. The pianist, Jeanne Zaidel and her parents are beside themselves with worry and are prepared to do anything to recover their most valuable possession... 'The tapes are of inestimable value to us,' Mrs E Zaidel said today. 'The person who took them can keep the tape recorder – but for the sake of Jeanne's career, I appeal to him or her to return the tapes ... The family would pay a substantial reward, if required and would even be willing to replace the tapes with new ones.'" With reference to the thief, the article stated: "We hope he has some conscience and returns the tapes."

I was very fortunate that my school friend Diana Gill was the daughter of the editor of the *Pretoria News* at the time and her father agreed to print our appeal. In a follow-up report, it was revealed that "a man telephoned the Zaidels to say that he had taken the tape recorder and the tapes because he was poor and needed money for himself and his family. 'For four hours we were kept on tenterhooks, waiting for the phone to ring again. It was like a kidnapping case,' said Mrs. Zaidel. The man phoned at 9pm and said that the recorder and tapes could be found wrapped in newspaper in the yard of a block of flats not too far from the Zaidel flat. The family rushed there, left some money in the bin and

found the stolen recorder and the tapes intact. A few of the tapes had been wiped clean, but the remainder were in good condition."[7]

In the years following my happy school days, I organised the 25th and 50th reunions for the Pretoria High School for Girls with the kind help of fellow matriculants, Dianne Berry-Amey and Diane de Villiers-Adelaar. Very close friendships were forged during our matric year, particularly among the prefects – and to this day, I count Deirdre Barrowman-Barrett (prefect) and Joan Hayman-Houston (vice-head girl) as two of my dearest friends. And if I am, G-d willing, still alive and well by October 2025, I will undoubtedly organise and attend the 60th reunion!

As the reader can imagine, it is a daunting task tracing women who have not only moved away (several overseas) but have changed their names once or even twice due to marriage, divorce and remarriage! Sadly, some are deceased. I have happily reconnected with Dorothea Scheibert-Hartenstein, whom I hardly knew in matric, but who returned for the 50th school reunion held in Pretoria at the school and stayed with us in Johannesburg. Michael and I had the joy of staying reciprocally with the Hartensteins in Munich, Germany, after an international music conference that I attended in Hannover in 2019.

Almost 40 years after my matric year, in January 2004, the school (PHSG) opened the Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph Music Centre, a singular honour for me, in recognition of my musical contribution to the school and South Africa. I still donate an annual prize to the scholar at PHSG with the most impressive musical record for the year. I value the fact that we remain connected in this way.

Tertiary tenacity

In 1966, I enrolled in the Music Department at the University of Pretoria (UP) to read for a BMus degree. The University had acquired the nickname of 'Tukkies' or 'Tuks' (abbreviated from the founding name, *Transvaalse Universiteits-Kollege*). During my undergraduate years at UP, my devoted piano teacher was the well-known pianist and lecturer Philip Levy. He encouraged me

7 Seventeen of the 20 tapes were recovered.

to study difficult and virtuosic works. Under his able guidance, I rose to the challenge and was awarded a *Pretorium Trust* bursary for each of the four years of study. These bursaries covered my university fees, a welcome bonus that was greatly appreciated by my parents, who frequently struggled financially. The bursary winners were obliged to play in concerts which were held in June each year, either at the Musaion or the Aula Auditorium at UP – it was a 'duty' which I savoured.

A particularly challenging but 'audience-friendly' piece which I often performed at university concerts was the *Alborado del Grazioso* by Maurice Ravel (composed in 1904/5 from the piano suite *Miroirs*), which incorporates lively Spanish rhythms and castanet-like colours and timbres. It was also a work which allowed me to display a fiery technique, and I 'danced' my way through the music. I performed this work as part of the *Pretorium Trust* Bursary winners' concert at the Aula in June 1967 and often thereafter. In a review of this work which I played at the Pretoria Women's Club (September 1967), the critic referred to "memorable moments" and described the art music of Ravel as "the French tongue touched with a Spanish accent... which Jeanne played with accomplished technical skill, as well as understanding and insight". I sometimes feel that part of me must have been Spanish in a previous life, as I resonate so beautifully with the flavours of flamenco and Andalusian music.

Included in this same programme was the 1913 work *Feux d'artifice* (*Fireworks*) by Debussy, a piano piece which I performed in many concerts. The piece again provided the perfect vehicle to express the fire within me, with fingers flying over the keys with a sense of 'aplomb'[8]! In fact, at age 14, I gave a public piano performance of this work – and after suffering a devastating lapse in memory, I continued to improvise the music in the 'Debussy style' (pretending nothing was amiss), until I regained the thread of my music memory and finished with a dramatic flourish – to

8 One of my dearest friends, Pauline Nossel, a legendary doyenne of piano teaching in South Africa, uses the term 'aplomb-b-b-b' (as she humorously articulates it) to describe the most comically ebullient and vigorous gestures of expression imaginable by a musician.

resounding applause! This was my first real act of 'composing' – or, more accurately, recomposing – someone else's music.

In June 1967, during my second year at Tukkies, I tackled (almost literally) the Bach-Busoni *Chaconne* (a very difficult virtuosic transcription for piano by Busoni of Bach's pyrotechnic violin work in D Minor) at the Pretoria University Musaion auditorium concert. In 'Die Burger' newspaper 9 June (1967), the reviewer stated that my interpretation of the *Chaconne* compared most favourably with that of the renowned pianist, Pierino Gamba (1936-2022), who had performed the work a few days earlier at the Aula in Pretoria; a singular compliment. It is one of the most demanding piano works, both interpretively and technically – especially for average-sized hands, requiring huge stretches. Practising these demanding finger figurations and stretches for hours at a time came at both personal and professional cost – and served to sow the seeds for my future physical wrist problems. This portended an inevitable change in career direction – still within music, of course, but to the creative composition side. Perhaps it was a fortuitous misfortune for me.

In 1968 (the third year of my degree), I was awarded the *Bond van Oudstudente-medalje vir Instrumentale Musiek vir* 1967[9]. In the same year, I obtained the FTCL (Fellowship of the Trinity College of Music) for piano performance and the Licentiate of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (LRSM), as well as the UNISA Licentiate in Piano Performance, all with distinction. I was always of the opinion that if one had a music programme prepared and ready for one examination or assessment, it was a good idea to notch up other qualifications and diplomas at the same time if the requirements were very similar. This philosophy served me well.

Under the press heading "Musical History made in Pretoria", an article in the *SA Jewish Times* of August 1969 read: "For the first time, a student from the Music Department was invited to perform a concert with the PACT (Performing Arts Council Transvaal) Orchestra... Her performance at the Aula was

9 Medal for instrumental music for 1967 by the Organisation of Past Students.

impeccable and she received an enthusiastic ovation." (South Afrcian Jewish Times 1969). At the annual University Bursary Winners (Jeanne-Zaidel, Bursary Winners Concert 1969) concert that year, I performed the *Poisson d'or (Goldfish)* by Debussy, this time *thankfully* without any memory lapses.

At a student composers' concert at the Musaion auditorium in October 1969, I presented the first performance of my original composition called *Sonata No 1 for Piano* (not a terribly original title, though it was my first substantial work towards my music degree and an important composition milestone). Despite overwhelming pressure in the composing environment to be experimental and melodically fragmented, my *Sonata* still displayed hints of conventional tonal centres and fairly regular phrases and rhythmic devices, making it accessible to a general audience. The harmonies, though, were dissonant, 'crunchy' and 'clustery' in my determination to use jarring chords. These displayed my conscious avoidance of anything as pleasant and easy on the ear as octaves (G-d forbid), the latter being totally *verboten* by any self-respecting composer in the mid– to later 20th century.

Concurrent with my intensive undergraduate piano studies, I was fortunate to have Prof Johan Potgieter as my first teacher of composition. He encouraged my breaking away from tradition and experimenting with music involving more exciting horizons and unfamiliar sound-worlds. Although I had produced some original, though conventional, piano pieces as a very young child (in the pastiche style of Mozart or Beethoven), I approached the writing of new original works with far more experience and knowledge when becoming an advanced piano student, possessing a developed piano technique. I was never known to produce compositions that were 'easy' to play – apart from the piano pieces I was specially asked to write for young performers, mostly commissioned by UNISA for their volumes of 'graded' exam pieces. Prof Potgieter was a strict taskmaster, but stimulated the most imaginative works from my pen (pencil actually).

The *avant garde* movement was beginning to be powerfully felt in the arts in South Africa from the 1950s onwards. I became

an admirer of artworks by the Spanish painter Joan Miró and Wassily Kandinsky, the Russian painter. Their artworks embodied colourful and vivid musical forms that felt to me like abstractions, which I could almost 'hear'.

By 1969, it was *passé* to compose in a sweetly tonal style, certainly among my peers and lecturers at the university. Like all changing artistic phases and style periods, the 20th century demanded music that reflected drastic post-war *angst* (as found in Krzysztof Penderecki's *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima*) and discordant drama. The gentle 'Impressionism' in music of the early 20th century, represented by composers like Debussy and Ravel, gave way to fragmented, dissonant and violent music outbursts and gestures. I myself was in the post-war phase of influence of the Second Viennese School comprised of Arnold Schönberg (1874-1951), Alban Berg (1885-1935) and Anton Webern (1883-1945) and suffering from 'tonality-phobia'. It would have been embarrassing to produce 'tuneful' music written in a particular key, or in a regular metre or rhythm. In truth, the uglier the sound-world produced, the more acceptable was one's music in the contemporary art music scene locally and globally.

At the end of 1969 I was awarded my BMus degree *cum laude* – a rewarding day for me and a proud day for my beloved parents

Personal pain

All my achievements to date were gratifying to me, my parents and my teachers. My career was on a consistently upward trajectory. However, in my personal life, I was embarking on far more treacherous terrain, possibly because my intelligence in music and academia had not been matched emotionally. As a young, sheltered woman, I was socially rather naïve compared to my peers, and far less romantically experienced – I could possibly have been described as a nerd or 'country bumpkin'.

At the age of 21, on 7 December 1969, after a whirlwind courtship, I married Alvin Berman, a medical student whom I had met in Pretoria and was swept away by the idea of romance with a charismatic handsome young man possessing a beautiful crooning voice. In retrospect, and proven by subsequent events, I believe

that we were both too young for the responsibilities that marriage entailed, especially dealing with the pressures of developing independent careers. A personal issue, rather painful to relate, was my being diagnosed by a gynaecologist in Pretoria as having an advanced stage of *endometriosis*. The doctor warned me that I would probably never be able to conceive or bear children. This was particularly devastating news to Alvin. The irony, of course, which revealed itself after my second marriage, was that I was never the infertile one. The four beautiful daughters Michael and I were blessed with (alongside the heartbreak of two miscarriages) stand as a testament to that.

After a little over two years of marriage, Alvin and I were officially divorced in July 1972. At this time, I was already in London and signed the final papers at South Africa House in Trafalgar Square, supported physically and emotionally by my longtime friend Ivor Shain. This was a tumultuous and a very traumatic period in my life. I was later told that Alvin, by then a practising general medical practitioner (GP), had left South Africa and had become a renowned gynaecologist in New York – most ironically, in the field of infertility. He passed away in 2021 and although he remarried, he remained childless.

My 'awakening' to the impermanence and vicissitudes of life took the form of a sudden and heart-rending realisation that nothing and no-one can protect one from heartbreak, loss and especially death. I lost my treasured father in 1982 when I was in my early 30s, my much-loved brother in 2006 and my cherished mother in 2010.

More joyful journeys

In 1970 I was awarded the Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Scholarship (a grand sum at the time of R300) for post-graduate study for a Master's in Music degree at Pretoria University. I had the privilege of working under Arthur Wegelin, Professor of Composition in the Music Department. It was thanks to him that I became passionately interested in contemporary music techniques and immersed myself in the world of creative composition. Wegelin had frequently visited the Darmstadt

Summer School of Music and brought back truly mind-boggling modern scores of new music, particularly those by György Ligeti (my future teacher in Germany), Iannis Xenakis, Luciano Berio, Pierre Boulez and others. These scores inspired me to listen to as much contemporary and *avant garde* music as possible and to emulate the new styles and techniques.

I often performed my own piano compositions, but when they became too complicated, (only my fault of course) I relinquished the role to anyone else happy to play my music. While still a post-graduate student at Pretoria University in the early 1970s, I was invited to perform my *Seven Variations on an Original Theme* at a concert at the Wits[10] University Great Hall on 26 August 1971. The *Wits Student* newspaper quoted the following in a review on my piece: "The work is extremely well-written and has much *bravura* writing in it and is well controlled in its construction." Dr Ulmont Schneider, HOD of Wits Music at the time wrote: "These well-constructed *Variations* showed a considerable knowledge of the romantic style, as well as ability in polyphonic technique. They were extremely well performed by the composer, who is obviously a pianist of promise," (1971) while the reviewer Philip Miller (1971) in The Star (August, 1971) wrote: "The piano writing throughout had a spiky quality, but varied greatly in style." I had been anxious about the reception of my music – after all I was still a Tukkies student hailing from the 'competition' in Pretoria across the Jukskei River. Little did I know then that my lifelong lecturing stint of over 43 years would play out at the 'opposition' campus of Wits University!

Of particular interest is that at the same concert at Wits, the renowned South African composer Peter Klatzow performed a work, as I recall, most imaginatively representing the experimentalism of the time. It was titled *Compositions for Composer* by Kevin Volans – a notable collaboration of these two composers at the time. However, these two competitive 'creatives' later had an unpleasant public spat during a Festival of Contemporary Music, held at the SABC in July 1983 and they apparently never reconciled.

10 Abbreviation for the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Through the Kaleidoscope

There is always a 'first' as well as a 'last' piece in the *oeuvre* of any composer. My first substantial orchestral work was called *Kaleidoscope* for Wind, Brass and Percussion. Having composed this towards the end of 1971, it was still in an experimental, uncompromisingly modern style. As with so many pieces written by living composers, these compositions have to wait a considerable amount of time before being premièred, or as is often the case are doomed to oblivion. A visual artist can put her/his painting up on the wall for all to see. Similarly, an author can print the written word for all to read. However, a hapless, dependent composer can only wait patiently (or not) for performers to actually *play* the music, or it remains unheard, unappreciated and exists simply as little black dots on a page, often languishing in a bottom drawer somewhere.

Indeed, such was the case with my *Kaleidoscope*! I waited for over 10 years to have the first live orchestral performance (which sadly was the last to date, as is so often the case with 'new music'). However, I have to express to you, my readers, that it was well worth waiting for. On 26 November 1982, the work was included in a concert series showcasing contemporary works, presented by the SABC in the iconic Studio M1A – and magnificently performed by the SABC Symphony Orchestra under the baton of international conductor Othmar Maga. Having already taken on Sabbath observance, I chose to sleep over at the home of the hospitable and renowned Nabarro family – Dr Margaret and Prof Frank, in nearby Melville, so that I could walk, rather than drive, to the concert at the SABC Radio Park Building in Auckland Park. I would not repeat this fearsome feat today as their house was several blocks away and walking in the pitch dark alone late at night in a deserted area was terrifying.

In *Die Vaderland* of 29 November 1982, the reviewer, Daan du Toit, opined: "Beautiful tone-colour effects are achieved in Jeanne Zaidel's musical *Kaleidoscope* – an ingenious work of ever-changing musical patterns that hold a special charm. This work should occupy a unique place in our South African *avant garde*

repertoire". This was a case of 'from G-d's mouth to rather *deaf* ears', I'm afraid, regarding that particular work.

Notes on *Kaleidoscope* can be found in the Appendix (1) at the back of the book.

As with a first love or a birth of any kind, a première performance of a work, especially a new orchestral work, engenders a level of excitement in a composer that is very difficult to describe. As the composer, one sits comfortably in the audience, while the heroic performers onstage battle through a brand-new score and bring it to life; *l'havdil*[11] like G-d blowing life into the nostrils of an inanimate being! The score becomes a living, breathing entity, removed from the central control room (brain) of the composer – and now in the competent (one trusts) hands of a conductor and interpreters. Then the little inanimate black dots jump off the page and into the ears of the listener. What a sacred moment!

In 1988 I was extremely thrilled when Adele Blank, renowned choreographer and dancer "of substance and savvy" (Sichel, 1988), requested that I provide some of my original music for her Free Flight Dance Company's performance in the Wits Theatre on 5 consecutive nights in November. I have always felt absolutely exhilarated when my music is used in a multi-media manner, especially for dance performances, as I love to see the visual and movement aspects coming together in my music. My works *Kaleidoscope* and *Three Dimensi*ons (discussed in Ch.4 p.20) for piano were also spectacularly choreographed by the highly talented Christopher Kindo and formed the soundtrack to a spirited dance which he called *Elements.*

Following my divorce in 1972, until Cupid once again aimed his arrow directly towards me in 1976, I focused exclusively on my music studies and specifically on composing. It was around this time (beginning 1972) that I met Malcolm's future wife, Pamela Bortz, who was to become not only my sister-in-law, but my closest ally, friend and beloved confidante.

11 A term to distinguish sacred from non-sacred

After graduating from the University of Pretoria with my MMus degree in composition (*cum laude*) on 25 March 1972, I was determined to go to London to study advanced post-graduate composition and piano at the Royal College of Music – and later to apply to the *Hochschule für Musik* in Hamburg to study with world-renowned composer György Ligeti. The latter plans required much strategic thinking and careful planning. My life was about to change radically.

~

Paternally mine

I have written about my mother at length in this Memoir and the mammoth role she played in my life. However, she had a 'helpmeet' in the figure of my father.

In those early years, like many fathers of his generation, my beloved father David, was somewhat old-school in his interactions with us children, preferring to leave the managing of our day-to-day routines to my mother, rather than taking a hands-on role himself. So our daily interaction was mostly meeting at night over supper. Not unexpectedly, my relationship with my father, though extremely loving, was largely a musical one. Even today, 43 years since his passing, it is my nostalgia for his 'golden voice' that makes me feel remarkably close to him. How fortuitous it was that we produced amateur recordings at the time of his singing that we were later able to transfer from reel-to-reel tape onto CD. To this day they are amongst my most treasured possessions.

David Zaidel's golden voice was known far and wide, but particularly at the Fountains Valley tea garden in Pretoria, when every Sunday people came from far and wide and threw coins at him when they heard his rich tenor voice, singing love songs to my mother. He would pick up his worn guitar and serenade her with all the golden oldies. They had already pledged their love for one another as young teens.

Those were the days of drive-in cinemas, ice-creams and cheap takeaways. As children, we could think of no better treat than to be taken to the drive-in on a Saturday night by our

parents with our take-away burgers and '*slap* chips'[12]. Our daddy always obliged. This South African cultural phenomenon was magnificently captured in Jeremy Taylor's *Ag Pleez, Deddy*, whose words are a superb parody of the South African culture and its heavy local accent. The words are so deliciously apt to the time, that I have reproduced them below:

"Ag Pleez, Deddy"

Ag pleez, Deddy, won't you take us to the drive-in?
All six, seven of us, eight, nine, ten
We wanna see a flick about
Tarzan an' the Ape-man
An' when the show is over you can bring us back again

Chorus:
Popcorn, chewing gum, peanuts an' bubble gum
Ice-cream, candy floss an' Eskimo Pie
Ag, Deddy, how we miss
Candy balls an' licorice
Pepsi-Cola, ginger beer
and Canada Dry

Ag pleez, Deddy, won't you take us to the funfair?
We wanna have a ride on the bumper cars
We'll buy a stick of candy floss
And eat it on the Octopus
Then we'll take the rocket ship that goes to Mars

Chorus

Ag pleez, Deddy, won't you take us to the wrestling?
We wanna see an ou called Sky High Lee
When he fights Willie Liebenberg
There's gonna be a murder
'Cos Willie's gonna *donner*[13] that blerrie Yankee

Chorus

12 A favourite South African comfort food: potato chips seasoned with salt and vinegar – crisp on the outside and soft inside.
13 Donder means 'to beat up' in Afrikaans.

Ag pleez, Deddy, won't you take us off to Durban?
It's only eight hours in the Chevrolet
There's spans of sea an' sand an' sun
And fish in the aquari-yum
That's a *lekker*[14] place for a holiday

Chorus

Ag *plee-e-e-e z*, Deddy?

(Daddy roars): VOETSEK[15]*!*

Ag sis, Deddy, if we can't go to the bioscope
Or go away to Durban, life's a heng of a bore
If you won't take us to the zoo
Then what the heck else can we do

But go outside and *moer*[16] all the outjies[17] next door?

Chorus

My father, however, was much more than just a gifted singer. As a travelling salesman, having sacrificed his own singing career to put his brother through pharmacy school, he had been unable to take full advantage of his voice professionally.

Nevertheless, he was a dedicated provider for his family and in later years, he made sure that, despite his financial constraints, there was enough money to put down as a deposit on a house for me, Michael and our growing family.

He was also a deeply compassionate man who never hesitated to help anyone in need. I recall one occasion when he was driving my mother, my brother and me to Johannesburg – at that time, a journey that took well over an hour in a good vehicle, and significantly longer in a somewhat battered car like ours. We had already left Pretoria and were well on our way when we passed a lone soldier hitchhiking in the opposite direction. My father pulled up and asked the young man where he was going. He

14 'Great' or 'wonderful' in Afrikaans.
15 Expletive: 'Bugger off' or 'get lost' in Afrikaans from '*Voert seg ek*'.
16 Expletive: go outside and beat up (kill) all the guys next door.
17 Outjies means guys.

said that he had been trying for hours to find a ride to his army base in Voortrekkerhoogte near Pretoria, where he needed to be in order to avoid incurring a punishment. Without even conferring with us, my father turned the car around and told the soldier to hop in. My dad drove him all the way to his base, adding at least two more hours to our journey. However, this was his typically kind response and we knew better than to question it.

In the early 1980s, when I was already married to Michael, my parents would regularly visit us in our home in Johannesburg on Sundays. Without fail, my father would arrive with a huge sack of vegetables which had cost him the (then) considerable sum of R10 – a sum he could ill afford. There was not a child's birthday party in the family that passed without my father singing a favourite song called *Farmer Brown* for the little ones, with all the accompanying snorts, whistles, amusing noises and outrageous sounds. Our friends, the Erster family, with whom we go back over 40 years, will no doubt remember those highly entertaining and musical birthday parties.

My father was also a lover of sports, particularly soccer, for which he often refereed at the Caledonian Grounds (the Callies). During my childhood, Trevor Gething – hailed as the best goalkeeper of his time – was a constant visitor in our home and often stayed with us for long periods of time. We were devastated to learn that he had taken his own life. His winning team was called Arcadia Shepherds. Another frequent guest was cricketer Peter Heine, in fast-bowling partnership with Neil Adcock, who – in his Test debut – took five wickets in the first innings against England at Lord's in 1955. He went on to play 13 more Test matches until 1962. As children we boasted unashamedly about these famous celebrity guests.

Today, reflecting on my gentle, unobtrusive father, who always preferred to be in the wings, rather than on centre stage, I find myself wondering how these passions for music and sport were accommodated in the soul of a man who had long resigned himself to working in an un-stimulating job to support his wife and children. Singing with his family or at the tea garden on Sundays, or basking in the tales of young sporting heroes in his

sitting room vitalised him, but must have exacted a twinge of regret. Knowing that he could never aspire to achieving glory on an opera stage or the sports field, he had learnt to cut not just his cloth according to his means, but also his dreams.

And yet...

Communing with him now, across the barriers of time, I find myself holding him closely and telling him that, sports field or not, he was indeed a hero – and that his voice kindled in his daughter a blaze from the same spiritual kiln. The poignant epitaph on my father's gravestone at the Pretoria cemetery reads: "The song has ended, but the melody lingers on."



Jeanne at age 15 months in Pretoria



Father David Zaidel, mother Evelyn, brother Malcolm and Jeanne (me) at home in Arcadia Pretoria



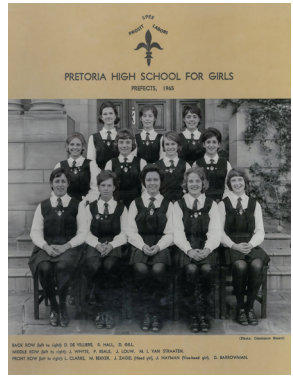
Jeanne aged 8 at Arcadia School, Pretoria



Jeanne at age 14 at a rehearsal before her performance of the Morton Gould Piano Concerto with the Johannesburg Symphony Orchestra under conductor Jeremy Shulman



Pretoria High School for Girls Grade 12 matric class (1965) with Jeanne, head Girl and class teacher, Mam'selle Verdier



Pretoria High School for Girls, Hatfield - Prefects of 1965



Student Jewish Association Committee (SJA) at Pretoria University: Back Row (left to right): Eli Goldstein, Harry Bauer. Front Row (left to right): Sharon Cohen, Malcolm Zaidel (brother), Jeanne Zaidel



The Music Centre created in my honour at Pretoria High School for Girls in January 2004 which I inaugurated at a special event



Jeanne graduating with a B.Mus (Bachelor of Music) degree in the summer of 1969

Teachers

The shoulders on which I was privileged to stand

It is curious and often humbling to think of how profoundly the hand of a teacher can touch the ethos and sensibilities of a student – and how the timing and synchronicity of meeting such a teacher is part of one's pre-ordained journey. In having imbibed the charismatic genius of British pianist John Lill, the deep understanding of the essence of tone colour of Hungarian-Austrian composer György Ligeti, and the complex, rich and introverted musical substance of South African composer Stefans Grové, I have been truly blessed.

Powerful Li'll pianism – the Beethoven blessing

During the 1980s, on the fringe of the contemporary music world, there was a spirit medium named Rosemary Brown. In an article by Lynn Picknett (1981) in 'The Unexplained: Mysteries of Mind, Space and Time' she interviewed Brown and selected musicians, including my renowned piano teacher John Lill[1] (1944–). She revealed the mysterious phenomenon of Lill's embodiment of the Beethoven spirit and Brown's ability to take music 'dictation' from the spiritual world inhabited by the Great Masters and thereby reproduce new music works from the 'other side'. I may not have previously given such an article about the paranormal a second glance; however, my personal experience bore out quite vividly the wonderment I experienced in this realm when I was Lill's piano student at the Royal College of Music in London. It left little doubt in my mind that he indeed embodied, in some measure, the reincarnation of the Beethoven spirit.

1 John Lill was the first British pianist to win the Moscow International Tchaikovsky Competition in Russia (on 24 June, 1970).

Even the circumstances surrounding my meeting with Lill seemed to possess an air of predestination. It was 1973 and I was still a student at the Royal College of Music. The Dartington Summer School of Music in Devon, UK, was hosting a July summer school which featured a two-week composition course led by the renowned British composer Sir Peter Maxwell-Davis. I was very keen to take part in such a learning opportunity for young composers and applied to the summer school's reading jury; this comprised submitting a recent selection of my own original compositions. To my delight, I was accepted!

Dartington Hall was a castle estate that was built in the 13th century. From the days of King Henry VIII to the end of the First World War, it was one of the homes of the ancient Devon family Champernowne and, in the early 1930s, took on a new life under the hand of its owners, the Dartington Hall Trustees, who were responsible for presenting the establishment's world-class classical music treasures to the art music public. The great hall is decorated with huge colourful tapestries representing the original clans, their crested heraldic standard flags hanging from the side walls and projecting brightly into the magnificent stately interior.

It was a magical time for me – and starry-eyed, I excitedly attended the opening concert on the first of many evenings which offered a gorgeous 'bouquet' of great music and musicians – held in Dartington Castle's famed banqueting hall. The opening concert featured Lill, the first British winner of the coveted Moscow International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition at age 26 in 1970. I was exceptionally impressed with his performance of works by Mozart, Chopin and Prokofiev, but particularly by his powerfully profound and faultless interpretation of Beethoven's *Sonata No 23*, popularly known as the *Appassionata*, which left me awe-struck.

On the fourth evening of this life-changing course, the world-renowned Amadeus String Quartet performed works by Mozart and Bartók. Completely uncharacteristic of me, I left the hall alone during the interval to get some fresh air – and as I turned a corner of the castle in the dark, I *literally* bumped into a tall and imposing young man. I immediately apologised, but all he

said to me was: "It's no problem. I knew I was destined to bump into you here at Dartington. Will you join me for a drink?" I was amused at this rather unoriginal pick-up line, but when I realised that it was the Maestro John Lill himself, I was so bowled over that I readily accepted his invitation. Again, it was atypical of me to just leave a brilliant concert and go somewhere with a 'stranger' but even more unexpectedly, to forgo the rest of the long-awaited treat of hearing the superb Amadeus Quartet.

Over coffee that night with Lill, I found out that he was in fact on the teaching faculty of the Royal College of Music. I decided there and then to apply for a change of piano teacher at the College, so enchanted was I by the personal and musical power exuding from him. In any case, I had been allocated a teacher at the college who seemed singularly uninterested in my performance and progress.

Lill inquired about my experiences in my composition course in Darmstadt and I had to admit to him that I was finding it somewhat uninspiring, as the lecturer had a young favourite in the class, to the general exclusion of the other participants, and I felt that I had gained very little. Lill implored me to play one of the piano works I was currently studying at the college for him. I nervously agreed and the next morning, before the various classes commenced, I played Chopin's *Scherzo No 4* for him in one of the practice rooms. That particular work is one of Chopin's most difficult pieces to play; in addition to being technically and musically very demanding, it can sound disjointed if one does not pay very close attention to the phrasing, dynamics and general shape of the music.

As I finished the final phrase, Lill turned to me and said: "I welcome you into my piano master class, starting immediately." For me, it was a 'no-brainer' as all my instincts were telling me to accept immediately – especially if he was going to be my piano professor at the Royal College. The only apparent impediment was that I had been accepted on a full composition scholarship under the tutelage of Sir Peter Maxwell-Davies; I did, however, manage to successfully exchange my composition scholarship to a full piano scholarship at Dartington for the entire two-week duration.

I immediately left the composition master class run by Maxwell-Davies (which comprised only young males at the time) – not unhappily, I must confess – to join the scintillating piano master classes conducted by Maestro Lill. I cannot express sufficiently how stimulating and exciting these piano classes turned out to be. I recall a young Dutch pianist who gave an exceptional performance of the Brahms *Piano Concerto No 1* – becoming one of my best-loved pieces of music. I was in proverbial heaven.

Friendly Phantom

On that first evening in Dartington, John had begun telling me (very matter-of-factly, it must be noted) about his intense spiritual communication with the 'Beethoven spirit' via an *ouija* board in séances, together with Jean Lloyd-Webber[2]. Jean was a very caring person and had looked after John (in their Knightsbridge flats during my time in London) in the absence of his parents, who lived in the East End of London. I'm not sure whether it's my retrospective imagination or factual recall, but I do remember Jean's black cat being present at the time in her flat during these paranormal sessions, which I soon joined. Through these communications, a great deal of osmotic and valuable information emanating from the spiritual realm was shared; from Beethoven himself, factual information which informed John in a way that could only enhance his depth of knowledge and therefore his interpretation of Beethoven's vast amount of piano music he performed. Naturally, I was initially very sceptical, though at the same time curious about this phenomenon – so when I was invited to join this select little séance group, I accepted immediately.

In broad daylight (no darkened room or crystal ball!) and frequently over a glass of wine, I was the privileged observer of a most illuminating and instructive, though somewhat otherworldly scenario. The little glass under John's hand flew unhesitatingly, strongly and swiftly over the board, denoting that the powerful Beethoven spirit was present – spelling out words,

2 Jean was the mother of the famous composer of stage musicals, Andrew Lloyd-Webber and the renowned British cellist, Julian Lloyd-Webber. She was also a most kind and caring mother-figure to John Lill.

facts and places, even referring to his nephew, Karl – and sharing vast amounts of hitherto undiscovered information regarding the origins of the music, Beethoven's intentions, the structure of the works and their purpose; bearing in mind, of course, that the piano as an instrument in the 18th century had lighter mechanisms. The keyboards were smaller and far less advanced than the instruments of today, with their current technological and mechanical developments, as well as superior materials, enabling them to influence modern modes of composition and execution.

What I found completely fascinating was the amount of detail revealed in the sessions – the 'voice' of Beethoven suggesting (perfectly rational) adaptations in performance regarding the pedalling, dynamics and even the choice of pitches and octaves (to be extended upwards or downwards), given that the ranges on the piano are so much larger today, making new ways of playing possible.

I never felt totally at ease delving into these spiritual realms; and today, having adopted orthodox Jewish observance many years ago – and knowing and understanding the prohibitions in this area – I would absolutely decline taking part in sessions such as these. However, at that time, I had neither the knowledge nor the inclination to pathologise or judge what I witnessed. Judaism, in its wisdom, forbids any form of necromancy or any attempts to communicate with the spirit world, recognising that it is not only dangerous territory in which to dabble – particularly for suggestible or vulnerable individuals – but a deviation from the more urgent focus of the here and now.

In its prohibition on occultism of any kind, Judaism tacitly asserts the existence of a spiritual world but reminds us that our business lies in *tikkun olam* in this world – correcting it as it is now, in its imperfect state, and rendering it fit for the Messiah – and in living our best and most moral lives in *this* world.

As our great sage Hillel asked: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And, being for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?"

At the time, however, my thirst for knowledge and overwhelming desire to be privy to the secrets of the piano

repertoire were enough motivation for me to attend these sessions in absolute awe – and to conscientiously scribble down the information pouring forth like pearls of wisdom, emanating out of this circle of three. At one point, John asked me to place my hand on the upturned glass; the frantic energy it had exuded changed abruptly to a much gentler one. The new 'spiritual' force controlling the glass identified itself on the *ouija* board as being that of Clara Schumann, the wife of composer Robert Schumann and a great composer in her own right; a woman who was seemingly acting in the role of my mentor and music guide. Naturally, I was deeply moved and extremely flattered that such a great composer would be looking after me in this physical realm.

Most importantly, though, after several sessions with Jean, John decided that he would (quite sensibly I thought) not continue with this form of communication, but would rely instead on his own depth of knowledge, experience and wisdom to interpret the great masters, in particular Beethoven. His preoccupation with Beethoven was supplementary – rather than central – to his interpretive brilliance and his agency as an artist. As an interpreter and not a composer, John, unlike Rosemary Brown, did not need to be in ongoing spiritual contact with the composers to continue his valuable contribution to performance. He eventually took full custody of his decisions in his art. The power and truth of the composers' works speak for themselves more distinctly than any spiritual medium. However, if the composer is still alive, it would naturally be greatly beneficial to hear about the composition directly from her or him.

One of the first challenges that John put me through, as my new teacher, was to read through the four-hand piano arrangement of the Beethoven *Grosse Fugue Opus 131* with him at the keyboard (though, in retrospect years later, it may have been the arrangement of the *Opus 134).* I was being put under the proverbial microscope of pianism (and it demanded huge courage), testing my ability to sight-read a new score. Terrified though I was, I pushed through valiantly in order not to disappoint Maestro Lill.

The benefits of studying with him were enormous. Apart from the educational and musical benefits of his wonderful classes, he would also book seats for me in the front row of the Royal Albert Hall for his numerous recitals and concerto appearances. I frequently attended his spectacular performances sitting next to Jean Lloyd-Webber. Given her supernatural powers as a medium, she would mention the presence of the 'ectoplasm' of Beethoven's spirit embracing John on stage, near the organ pipes. This was of course anathema to me. For me, however, John in his own right, and his own power, was a complete – and consummate – artist.

His musical prowess was matched only by his wry wit, his coruscating intellect and his compassionate, generous nature, which drew people to him like moths to a flame. We shared many a pint together and I learnt a great deal about life, hard work, innate musical expression and sheer perseverance from him. I am sad that at this time in his life, he is unable to pursue his brilliant career due to health problems and, that even more regrettably, he no longer plays at all it seems. My time studying with John until I left for Hamburg was seminal in my own career and we have remained very close friends throughout the years.

Becoming a Hamburger and 'Hungary' for knowledge

Prior to my later doctoral studies at the University of Pretoria (1977-1979) with supervisor Prof Stefans Grové, I had the good fortune to study with the teacher who had the most transformative influence on my compositional style and technique. This was the world-renowned Hungarian composer and teacher György Ligeti (1923-2006) in Hamburg during 1973 and 1974.

While pursuing post-graduate composition and piano at the Royal College of Music, London in 1973, I attended a concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on the South Bank, featuring works by Ligeti. After the concert, I went backstage and spoke earnestly to him about coming to Hamburg to study with him. I left several of my scores with him. A few weeks later, he wrote back to tell me that I would be accepted into his class, though I would need to do an

entrance exam at the *Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst* in Hamburg – a prospect I wholeheartedly embraced.

Life of Ligeti – living legend

Ligeti[3] (1923-2006) was born in Transylvania, Romania and died in Vienna, Austria. He was indisputably one of the most profoundly influential composers of the second half of the 20th century and beyond. Scores and recordings of his music at the time were largely unavailable in South Africa, mainly due to the cultural embargo. However, several scores and recordings of Ligeti's music were brought back to South Africa by my much-loved composition teacher Professor Arthur Wegelin, following on his attendance at the *Ferienkurse* (summer school) in Darmstadt in 1972. Wegelin, who was of Dutch origin and a very fine composer himself, made South Africa his home and was known for his works for violin and for his 'Oom Willem' songs for children. He taught many of South Africa's prominent musicians, 'opening eyes and ears to the wonders of avant garde music'. He introduced me to the music of Ligeti, and I was enthralled by the starkly innovative, original and beautiful sound-world produced by this master composer.

Chief among these new Ligeti scores was *Atmospheres* for Orchestra, *Aventures* for Voices and Instruments and *Continuum* for Harpsichord – masses of shifting sound blocks contrasted with frenetic and fragmented music pulses. I had never heard anything quite like it and it figuratively blew my musical mind. These three works opened up new and magnificent horizons for me. At the time, I knew nothing about Ligeti's interest in African music, but later the rhythms and micro-polyphonic layerings in which he so revelled resonated strongly with me. I resolved to study with Ligeti, whatever it would take – and, indeed, it took much strategic planning, many motivational letters for funding and a smidgeon (or, rather, a bucketful) of sheer *chutzpah*.

3 Please note: All references to Ligeti in this text are to György Ligeti. I make this distinction as Lukas Ligeti, his son, also a renowned composer, performer, teacher and musician is a dear friend of mine; he was a successful PhD candidate under my supervision at the University of the Witwatersrand, graduating in 2020.

My parents were understandably less than thrilled with my decision, as a young Jewish woman, to go and study in Germany a mere 28 years after the end of the Second World War, with the dark clouds of Nazism and the Holocaust still hanging over the world, especially over the Jewish world; but my desire to learn from the great master Ligeti himself, a Hungarian Jew, superseded any anxieties about travelling alone to Germany. My arrival in Hamburg was made considerably easier by the assistance I received from fellow musician and friend Dr Peter Cohen, who had made his home in that city – and by my finding lodgings with a German-Jewish returned émigré, Frau Helga Arna. Like many of her generation, Helga felt so aligned with her German cultural roots that she regarded Hamburg as her home and returned to live there after World War II.

It was a complete conundrum at the time for me to conceive of any German-Jew who had lost family to the Nazis in the Holocaust wanting to live again in Germany. Even more baffling to me was that Frau Helga had left a husband and six children living in Israel to return to her little apartment in Hamburg after the war. She tried to explain to me at the time that she identified strongly with German culture, with poets and writers like Goethe and Heine – and that she felt most at home near her *Kaufhaus (department store)*, where she did her shopping. She found Israeli culture to be too foreign for her. This gave me an interesting perspective of my own life in South Africa. I picked up conversational German by watching television and chatting to Helga, who appreciated having my company.

When I joined Ligeti's composition class in 1973, there were two other students besides me: Manfred Stahnke and Wolfgang von Schweinitz, both of whom have since made their mark as renowned and significant composers and teachers.

My memories of that semester are of a man and musician reflecting a kaleidoscope[4] of brilliant colours, shifting shapes,

4 I composed a work for wind and percussion called *Kaleidoscop*e as early as 1971, before my time studying with Ligeti, which already evidenced my fascination with the spectrum of brilliant tone colours achievable in a new sound-world. This work was performed by the SABC Orchestra in 1972 under Othmar Maga.

intense micro-polyphonic application and transformative concepts. There was nothing monochromatic about the man, his music or his teaching. Learning from Ligeti was a holistic and life-changing experience. He communicated a plethora of technical advice and ideas, not always in words or even in music, but subliminally through his engaging persona. He urged me to speak English to him so that he could improve his fluency in the language and although I was rather anxious to advance my ability to speak German, I readily agreed.

Like some of Ligeti's earlier compositions, his ideas flowed – indeed, overflowed – faster than he could express or contain them; sentences went frequently unfinished and his music conveyed a sense of being *abgerissen (torn off)*, as though it simply and inevitably carried on, even when no longer audible. He was a teacher-musician of fascinating contradictions and eccentricity. While being steeped in the contrapuntal traditions of the past as far back as Ockeghem and Palestrina – and greatly solidifying in Bach – he was simultaneously breaking every convention and stretching the horizontal and vertical *tessituras*, complex rhythmic groupings and dynamics into the realm of the 'impossible' in his compositions; revealing unmelodic magical madness (as in *Nouvelles Aventures* (1962-65)), yet somehow always with innate musical integrity and 'Ligeti logic'! Pushing the parametric boundaries of ranges and dynamics became a signature element in his music.

In retrospect, I rather wondered whether he might have been a 'closet Schenkerian'[5], with his fastidious attention to architectonic shapes, contour design, conscious directionalism and voice-leading choices. These may have sounded random on the surface, but they never were. Ligeti was a brilliant sound-designer whose imagination accepted no limits.

5 Heinrich Schenker (1868-1935) was a music theorist who analysed tonal music with a methodology that sought to reveal the organic coherence of a work. He applied the idea of a fundamental structure (*Ursatz*) as an abstract concept common to all music in a tonal idiom. This theory united melody and harmony at a basic level. A fundamental principle in his analysis was that of logical voice-leading progressions.

His music often evoked an element of shock, even in the banal, as he had a way of presenting the expected in an unexpected manner and *vice versa*. All this – and much more – was communicated in his lessons.

Dedicated didact

There are teachers who teach with a carefully constructed manual of notes. And then there are teachers like Ligeti. He taught by example, by infectious osmosis and as a role model to be emulated. The latter role led to an entire generation of young composers globally attempting to apply their craft conceptually to the Ligeti 'sound-world' of micro-polyphony, blended with sustained, but shifting sound blocks of continuum.

A pictorial term he used to describe his own music was "micropolyphonic-stratification" (I'm often tempted to write this wonderfully imaginative 11-syllable word as one long word); a real mouthful, but a term which means 'layers of different voices pitted against one another in very short note values'. I know of no other contemporary composer who has had so many imitators, admirers and researchers into his music.

I recall with some embarrassment trying to emulate Ligeti's style and contoured music in several pieces I presented to him as a new student – with sustained voices in close clusters (à *la* Ligeti's *Lux Aeterna*), changing 'imperceptibly'; but I was soon sternly redirected by him not to – and realised that, although the concepts resonated with me, my music material had to be original and not a Ligeti imitation. I remember at the time being quite intimidated by Ligeti, the teacher. I reasoned that if he demanded so much of his performers and of himself, how much more would he demand of his students? And, as I recall, he did demand a great deal. He was often critical, but fair in his observations.

Our meeting of minds, interestingly enough, was the result not only of a shared love of tone colour, but also of Ligeti's fascination with compositional principles grounded in the creative collective music psyche of Africa. I had grown up in Africa surrounded by music with repetitive rhythmic cycles and shifting and invigorating polyrhythms (concurrent multi-rhythmic

usage). I acquired this knowledge by visiting the platinum mines in Rustenburg and listening to the music of the migrant workers (elaborated on in my African Music chapter).

I thus identified with the material of Ligeti's early string quartets with polyrhythmic designs and later with his glorious and dreadfully difficult piano *Etudes*. The *Etudes* particularly demonstrate most coherently how music lines shift horizontally in and out of synchronisation, either in a 'granulated continuum' or in contrasting groupings requiring very difficult and independent rhythms between the separate hands on the piano – a technique that fascinates piano beginners and those who do not play.

Ligeti's use of African polyrhythms (a fairly new concept at the time in Western art music, though composers Steve Reich and Terry Riley in the USA were composing with these African-based techniques too) influenced me greatly, going forward. I started to use additive rhythms, derived from African drumming, frequently applying 12/8 metre in irregular African sub-divisions of 5+7 (2+3 plus 2+2+3), not the usual 3+3+3+3. In my own *oeuvre*, I have used instruments such as the *chopi* piano, *mbira*, *kalimba*, African marimbas and various xylophones in different tunings, *djembe* drums and bows such as *uhadi* and *inkinge* (gourd/calabash bows of the Ngqoko Xhosa group).

The compositions in which I use these African instruments and techniques include my ballet *Abantubomlambo* (the River People); *Five African Sketches* for Guitar; *Tempus Fugit*; *Fanfare Festival Overture*; *Lifecycle* (which features voices employing overtone/throat singing); *Piano Concerto* (2010), especially the third movement; and *AfrEtude* for piano.

Intercultural composition has dominated much of my original writing. I would like to disabuse anyone of the idea that African music reflects indigenous simplicity; it is a sophisticated complexity of inflected sounds, frequently speech-based in polyrhythmic and unpredictable melodic and harmonic layers. There is, of course, not only one, generalised 'African' music, since there are as many musics as there are cultures and countries on the African continent, but the point is made.

During our time together, Ligeti made certain comments that remain embedded in my mind – in particular, that he tried to imagine the totality of his vision for a piece before he started writing it, from its inception to the end – perhaps not in great detail, but in concept, shape and design. The structure (or 'form') had a visual pictorial relevance to him holistically. The currencies of his mind were fantasies, dreams, memories – and definitely fears, with his music frequently reflecting a bizarre fabric of shapes, colours, sonic shocks and extremes. Although he became known as a 'tone-colour' composer because of his vivid and heightened sense of timbres, colours and textures, he chose to re-imagine composing and teaching in his own personal, liberated way and defied being labelled in a particular style or genre.

His memories and dreams of 'mechanical' clocks often contrasted with amorphous, cloud-like shapes pictorially (illustrated in his 2002 work *Clocks and Clouds*). Yet the contradiction remained in his music (and perhaps in his life as well) of frenetic internal movement, though often presented in static blocks of sound, contrasted with movement so imperceptible that the metamorphosis was almost unnoticeable. For me, his music always demonstrated sophisticated and complex thought processes, but at the same time accessibility and listenability. He did not slavishly follow any other living composers.

He shared many stories and ideas with his students: for example, he would draw our attention to his jacket and ask us what colour it was... brown? No, no, he protested! It was a complex weave containing threads of red, green, blue and other shades in a counterpoint of colours. All of these together created the impression of the brown whole. For Ligeti, the adage that 'God is in the details' was not a philosophical construct, but an intrinsic creative principle of his.

One of the most salient questions for me regarding Ligeti's art is what it is about his works that influenced and inspired, and still influences and inspires an entire generation of composers. If we can answer that question, we can hopefully discover some of the mystique and beauty that draw people to his music. It was not simply that he did not identify with serialism or formalist

systems, but that he established a totally distinctive sound-world, unlike anything that had been produced before – a tantalising world of illusion and magic: *no* mean feat in an era of vast experimentalism and atonal discoveries.

I believe that these mysterious elements were what drew me, and possibly other students and audiences, to the man and the musician. I do not believe that Ligeti consciously created a new aesthetic. Rather, he intuitively gathered the threads of his expansive imagination and harnessed them in an exceptional way. His own aesthetic was more about *not* subscribing to others' aesthetics than kowtowing to them.

Today, years later, I recognise that my rapturous reaction to Ligeti was sparked by liberation. Having spent years steeped in the often rigid strictures of composition, with its prescribed formulas, tonal equations and the intricate calculus required of musical crafting, I had suddenly been exposed to a 'heretic' who flouted all the rules, but still created music that breathed, wept and jubilated. It gave me the confidence and conviction to pursue my own path and – above all – take the risks which are crucial in any art form.

Identity and injustice

I noted vulnerability in Ligeti, the man. Despite his global reputation in the sphere of contemporary music, he was surprisingly lacking in self-esteem. In a 2007 article in the *Guardian* (23 February, 2007) by George Benjamin, who frequently conducted his work, Ligeti was quoted as saying: "I know I should [have confidence in myself], but I don't. I'm basically doing all I do in the most amateur way, just trying to realise something that I imagine in my ear, in dreams. I use techniques, of course, but I forget them after writing and I have no overall scheme or permanent procedures."

My subjective interpretation of this ostensibly self-effacing statement is that it reveals a sense of Ligeti's humility, artistic vulnerability and his intuitive creative process.

Having been taught by Ligeti, I also believe he was saying that each new work is entitled to a rationale of its own and does

not have to justify itself by any prior system or method. I wonder if, during his life, Ligeti ever realised the extent of his genius, the great power of his music and the force it would extend over generations of composers and musicians. Whether he did or did not, though, his need to compose was inherently compulsive.

Ligeti's identity, like mine in many ways, was fluid. He stated:

> "I was born in 1923 in Transylvania as a Rumanian citizen. As a child, though, I didn't speak Rumanian, nor were my parents Transylvanians... My mother tongue is Hungarian [Magyar], but I'm not really a true Hungarian, as I'm a Jew. Yet I'm not a member of a Jewish congregation, therefore I'm an assimilated Jew. I'm not completely assimilated, however, because I'm not baptised. Today, as an adult, I live in Austria and Germany and have been an Austrian citizen for a long time. But I'm not a real Austrian either – only an immigrant – and my German will always have a Hungarian accent" (Amy Bauer 2011, p.5).

I resonate with this statement regarding my own identity. As a Jewish white female composer living in South Africa, I have often felt like the 'other', an outsider – functioning in a man's world, belonging to the 'other' gender group and the 'other' religious and race groups.

I came to understand that Ligeti was still suffering from a great injustice having been exploited musically by certain people. Perhaps this was because of his reticence to assert his worth as a composer, his conflicted national identity and his inability to balance his yearning to belong, with his yearning for solitude. He was essentially a fugitive, both politically and artistically.

In 1968, the well-known American film director Stanley Kubrick, in his film, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, saw fit to appropriate Ligeti's choral work, *Lux Aeterna* – among other compositions – for the movie in order to depict its otherworldly, futuristic and sometimes primitive aspects: a spacecraft hovers over primeval apes and a powerful monolith takes centre stage, representing not only the unfathomable expanse of outer space, but the equally

unfathomable human shortcomings of jealousy, hostility and inflicted death. The riveting, cosmic sound-world of Ligeti's *Lux Aeterna* suited the visuals of desolation and emptiness which Kubrick was creating, cinematically. However, Ligeti remained cruelly unaccredited until well after the film was released.

It was only after a protracted court case that Kubrick was eventually compelled to recognise Ligeti's work and include his name in the film credits. This was a serious violation of a renowned composer's rights to be acknowledged and paid for his work. Sadly, such grotesque copyright infringements and piracy exist to this day globally.

My awareness of my own intellectual property may well have been ignited by the story of Ligeti and the Kubrick film. I became a member of the South African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO) in early 1974 to protect the copyright in my compositions to date, even though I did not yet possess a substantial body of music. Musicians are frequently exploited by having their music copied illegally, plagiarised or 'stolen' by other composers or entities – and commercialised as their own ideas. Music piracy was rife globally in the CD era, particularly in the illegal duplication of CDs, which were being sold for next-to-nothing on street corners. It is also commonplace in the advertising industry, where soundtracks for commercials often include illicit snatches of compositions.

It may have been to Ligeti's advantage that he did not excel as a performer on any particular instrument, having begun to study piano only in his teens. This may have emboldened him to demand the 'almost impossible' application of dynamics, piano technique and applied rhythmic complexities of his soloists and orchestras. He had ultra-sharp hearing (both physically and musically) and pointed things out in class while listening to certain recordings that one had to concentrate fully to hear. In the middle of a class one day, he suddenly stopped what he was saying and fell silent. We waited. Finally, he said: "That electric light is humming and I think it sounds like a G#!" It was a random comment, but one which again demonstrated the eccentricity and music-centricity of the man.

His own music and his teaching (with only the occasional contradiction between the two) represented the totality of his life's experience. As a young Hungarian, caught between the ravages of Nazism and later Communism he was a 'sponge' that simultaneously soaked up music tradition (in the form of Zoltán Kodály and Béla Bartók's music in Hungary), yet later rejected it – as a refugee and survivor in a hostile world. He lost his loved ones in the Holocaust, which must have scarred him in transformative ways that tainted his entire world view and simultaneously created a unique artistic expression.

His own experiences were so dark that to compose 'out of tune' music seemed the only appropriate vehicle to reflect the nightmares of his life and psyche. Although he completed his satirical work *Le Grand Macabre* (1975-1977) soon after my time with him, it greatly impacted my own sense of life and death. Ligeti's music is almost impossible to explain by applying any conventional analytical terms. His musical mind required an overhauled lexicon demanding new terminologies – new descriptive terms to define his music parameters, such as *micropolyphonic stratification*, rhythmic textures, harmonic fields and many others.

Ligeti ensured that his students invested time and effort in studying the techniques of the past – with the main focus on counterpoint, instrumentation and orchestration. He emphasised originality after mastering styles of previous eras. He stressed to his students that he did not want them to compose like a clone of himself. He encouraged experimentation in colouristic and registral freedom, pushing the music parameters to their outer extremes. He told his students that it was better to write in conventional 4/4 meter and achieve the required complex effects, rather than keep changing meter simply for the sake of innovation. In this way, the conductor would have an easier task than the performer, who has to play extremely intricate irregular groupings within a regular beat unit.

Ligeti also encouraged deep listening and ear training. As previously mentioned, he referred back to early masters of polyphony by playing madrigals and motets – later, of course,

foregrounding the genius of Bach. For orchestration tuition, he played us Haydn, Mahler (whom he greatly admired for his orchestration), Berlioz, Holst, Debussy (whose music he adored), Rimsky-Korsakov and Ravel. I recall him referring us to the book *The Technique of Contemporary Orchestration* by Alfredo Casella and Virgilio Mortari, originally published in 1950, and at that time only available in German and Italian. An English translation was not forthcoming until 2004. I have sentimentally kept the original printouts of achievable woodwind harmonics that Ligeti himself handed out to our class.

While still a student in Hamburg, I attended the *Darmstadt Ferienkurse*[6] in 1974 and again in 1976, after I started teaching at Wits University in Johannesburg. Ligeti was a featured lecturer and composer in Darmstadt in 1976, as were composers Karlheinz Stockhausen and Iannis Xenakis, icons of the *avant garde* at the time.

I cannot sufficiently emphasise the extent to which Ligeti influenced my own teaching and lecturing as evidenced back in the music department of Wits University in Johannesburg from 1976 to 2021, when I fully retired (I had officially retired at the end of 2013). I was determined to introduce Ligeti's powerful new aesthetic and teachings to my students through performing and scrutinising his music in class. This included analysing his works, such as *Chamber Concerto*, *Continuum, Lux Aeterna, Requiem, Lontano* and others in great detail as material for learning contemporary composition techniques.

I observed that several of my black students resonated easily with Ligeti's music – its polyrhythmic complexity, horizontal voice layerings, vivid timbres and especially its cyclical techniques; elements frequently found in African music. I taught virtually all these aspects of music, using Ligeti's compositions as examples – especially contrapuntal techniques (independent voice-leading music lines), composition, orchestration, analysis, harmony and Schenkerian analysis. Ligeti's multi-layered, dimensional music could also be viewed as falling into layers

6 A summer holiday course for contemporary composers held every two years in Darmstadt.

called *Schichten*[7] – with *Hintergrund*, *Mittelgrund* and *Vordergrund* found in so many of his earlier works.

On my return to Johannesburg in 1975, I gave lectures to various organisations on Ligeti and his music, both academic groups and the general public. I also played one of the piano parts in his two-piano work *Three Pieces for Two Pianos – Monument, Selbsportret and Bewegung* (2 December, 1981, NMN at Bobolink). I simply felt I had to enlighten the South African public about this musical genius, who lived and composed on another continent.

African Safari and Stefans Grové

In 1977, after a hiatus of a couple of years, which saw me married, living in Boston, relishing being a new mother to our first daughter and moving back to South Africa, I enrolled for a DMus degree in composition at the University of Pretoria. The illustrious composer, pedagogue and writer Professor Stefans Grové (1922-2014) became my doctoral supervisor. Unlike Ligeti, who was outwardly animated and expressive, Grové, albeit an imposingly tall figure, was shy and mostly reserved; an enigmatic, inscrutable man with a superbly acerbic wit and clearly a person of unusually sharp intellect. Having heard about his sardonic humour and colourful stories, I was somewhat disappointed to find him behaving rather formally with me. I felt that Grové, who was a very private person, found it difficult to open up to me though I would have enjoyed his raconteurial skills!

Among the characteristics that Grové shared with Ligeti were his eccentricity and his link with mythology and the power of dreams, mysticism and African superstition. Creative brilliance, particularly in music, has historically been associated with an element of madness, a topic explored in an essay by Stephanus Muller (2002).[8] These eccentric characteristics enabled a smooth

7 *Schichten* in German can be translated as 'levels'. It refers to the 'distance' of the music from the 'immediate' and obvious level of music for the listener, calibrated in concepts of 'background', 'middle-ground' and 'foreground' of what is hierarchically the most important material at any given point in a music work.

8 "Madness, Creativity and the Musical Imagination": Indaba Lecture (2003) in *NewMusicSA* 2002; University of

and seamless transition for me from one exceptional composition teacher (Ligeti) to another (Grové).

Grové was the first South African to be awarded a Fulbright Scholarship in 1953, which took him to Harvard in the USA, where he was taught by luminaries such as Walter Piston and also had master classes with Aaron Copland at the Tanglewood Summer School in the Berkshires. To his credit, I never saw an attempt to imitate the style of his teachers in his music. However, he was ostensibly influenced in his formative years by the sound-worlds of Debussy, Ravel, Bartók and Hindemith. Grové was also an admirer of Messiaen's complex harmonic formulations, but – like Ligeti – was steeped in the brilliance of Bach and his contrapuntal intricacies. Through the brilliant craftsmanship of these past masters, Grové taught me the technique I needed and the love of creating my own original music – albeit subliminally with an African flavour.

Thomas Reed, the much-travelled American violinist-composer who was familiar with the best music schools in the USA, such as Juilliard and Curtis, referred to him as "the finest one-on-one teacher of music I had yet experienced"[9] after encountering Grové at the Peabody Institute of Music in Baltimore.

Grové was hugely knowledgeable in all aspects of classical music and possessed deep musical insights and talent. He analysed Bach, Beethoven and Brahms in our lessons to teach compositional concepts and techniques. In the words of one of his American students, Elam (Ray) Sprenkle, he was "a man who thought about music, taught music, wrote music, performed music, conducted music, and *was* music".

I only knew the Grové who had returned to South Africa in 1972, the country of his birth, and met his delightful and charming new wife Allison (*née* Marquard) whom he married in 1977. Their overt happiness and warm hospitality made my student visits to their home (first in Hatfield and then in Lukasrand, Pretoria) experiences to which I always looked forward. I became extremely

Stellenbosch printers.

9 Quoted by Sprenkle in his chapter: 'Stefan' in *A Composer in Africa* 2006: eds. Stephanus Muller and Chris Walton.

fond of Allison and recall many animated conversations with her, either before or after my lessons with my teacher. She herself came from the liberal anti-apartheid Marquard family.

I was fascinated by the complexity of Grové's original music in the late 1970s and early 1980s. There was a general feeling that his works were not very accessible or popular to audiences and it became apparent from his students that he was governed by the atonal movement and adhered mainly to the conventions of the Second Viennese School.[10] I, too, was following the more experimental and *avant garde* methods of the time.

Grové and I had frequently discussed the role of indigenous African music in contemporary art music – and I had already made forays into this intercultural realm as early as 1974 with my piano work *Three Dimensions* (referred to in Ch.2). Grové expressed a sincere and almost naïve love of the African soil and communicated his natural affinity to the African sound-world, which resonated so totally with me. Chris Walton, in his book on Grové, relates that after he returned to South Africa in 1972, "Grove exchanged the plane ticket he was given for a second-class train ticket in order to travel the breadth of his country from Cape Town to Pretoria at leisure, to reacquaint himself with his homeland, and to confirm what he himself terms his 'romanticised' view of Africa. Grové's memories of seeing the vastness of the Karoo desert are inextricably intertwined with those of standing in the third-class, segregated carriages, listening to the guitar-playing and singing of his black fellow passengers." This is South African nostalgia in sound!

The 1980s were years of extensive research into and experimentation with African-sourced music materials for me too, sharing many generative ideas with Grové. Sourcing African elements as inspiration within Western art musics had been germinating in both our musical minds. These productive 'chats' in our lessons would later manifest in my composing of signature

10 This experimental 'school' comprised primarily its key members, Arnold Schoenberg and his pupils Anton Webern and Alban Berg. Each one had set trends of music modernism that greatly influenced composers, especially in the latter part of the 20th century.

works like *Suite Afrique* for Cello and Piano. It seemed like the most natural path to follow, given the fact that I was a third-generation South African and had been surrounded by the African sound-world since birth. I have much to thank Stefans for as a mentor, teacher and friend.[11]

Grové began composing artworks in a style that incorporated African music elements in the early 1980s. His usage of these melodic, rhythmic and harmonic aspects, however, remained arguably exotic – and not in a literal manner, as composer Kevin Volans had done. There is no doubt that one's teachers can have an enormous influence on one's musical choices and Grové's love of African music definitely rubbed off on me. He had an epiphany of sorts and commenced his *Africa Series* of composition (*Afrika Hymnus II*) starting around 1982, which was underpinned by his mystical dreams and immersion in African mythologies.

Muller (2003: p.70), rather unkindly I feel, calls the dreams which inspired Grové's music creativity a 'strategy', which "may be allied to immunising his art from certain kinds of post-colonial critiques or even to reinforce his aesthetic claim of authenticity", yet again demonstrating Muller's rather unhealthy obsession with reproaching white composers who chose to continue composing in South Africa during the apartheid era.

Thankfully, though, in his chapter in the definitive book on Grové,[12] Chris Walton refutes this pejorative view of Muller by arguing: "The justification for that act of appropriation must surely reside alone in the aesthetic value of the resultant musical artifact." Walton further rebuts Muller by stating: "Nor has Grové followed certain colleagues from the white establishment in their hasty and demonstrative adoption of the ideals and policies

11 Further illuminating information on Grové, his life and his music can be found in his definitive biography, *A Composer in Africa* (eds S Muller and C Walton). Included in his book is my chapter, *Stefans Grové: Teacher and Mentor*.

12 Walton, C. 2006. "Connect, Only Connect: Stefans Grové's Road from Bethlehem to Damascus" in *A Composer in Africa: Essays on the Life and Work of Stefans Grové* – (eds.) Muller, S and Walton, C SUN PReSS, Stellenbosch.

of the ANC (their haste being often in direct proportion to their complicity with the previous regime)" (2006: p 67).

A phenomenon which emerged post-democracy (1994) in South Africa was one which can be referred to as 'retrospective activism'. Some Afrikaans-speaking putative 'intellectuals' applied the tenets of the New Musicology to absolve themselves and their forebears of feelings of guilt and to self-atone, having been identified as part of the ruling class during the apartheid era. Adherents of the apartheid regime 'suddenly disappeared' overnight and these writers 'miraculously' transformed themselves into anti-apartheid activists. One of the methodologies was to transfer their guilt to other parties in written and published texts. These texts, bolstered and affirmed by the tenets of the New Musicology, afforded certain musicologists the courage to point accusing fingers at others – in this case, selected white composers.

I had to ask myself: "Have we swapped one form of cultural oppression for another?" Have the much-feared 'apartheid police' *been replaced by the equally destructive 'cultural police'* – self-appointed masters who vilify and denigrate art that does not fit into their view of what is now relevant, either socially, politically or musically? Attempts were made to delegitimise the work of composers like Grové, Hans Roosenschoon, Hendrik Hofmeyr, Martin Watt, myself, and others.

A love for indigenous African music had always been in my consciousness and my affair with African choral music had begun many years before. My choice in the early years of radio from the mid-1960s onwards was to tune into a station that was broadcasting indigenous choral music, a sound-world that I would come to love as part of my identity. The seeds had long been sown, and I entered a period of deep desire and passion for the richness of our African music heritage and location – artistically and musically.

These were the teachers who played the most crucial formative roles in my life as pianist and composer. There have, of course, also been others who have prepared fecund ground for my development as a composer and musician. Some have done so

adventitiously, unaware that a conversation or observation took root in me and slowly germinated. Others have been students who questioned things I taught them, dislodging assumptions I had long held and forcing me to dig deeper and to refresh my habitual mindset with new and more current modalities and methodologies. Still others were individuals I never met, but whose works or words hooked into my inner repertoire, casting new light (and, with it, new shadows) on my creative choices. And then there were also individuals who taught me to listen to silence and learn to hear the pauses between the notes, where music frequently resides.

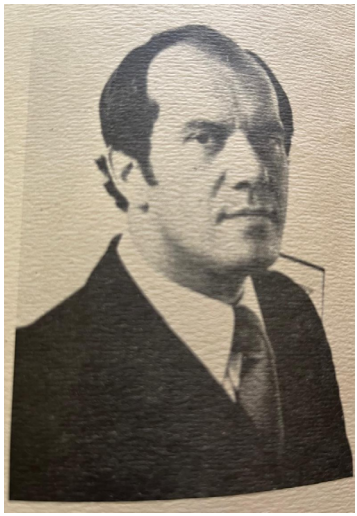
There are too many music icons to mention here, but I remain indebted to each of them.



Gyorgy Ligeti, my teacher and guest lecturer at Darmstadt in 1974 with me standing behind him and surrounded by many other young composers on the course



My beloved teacher at Pretoria University, Prof Arthur Wegelin (left) and composer David Hoenigsberg (middle) with me and composer-teacher, John Coulter on the right



My treasured piano teacher and dear friend, John Lill, the renowned British pianist

Gender Agenda

Don't call me 'woman', hear my work!

When I won first prize in the first Total Oil Competition for composers held in South Africa in 1986, the local press tended to focus on my being a female rather than on my professional accomplishments, one headline in the Citizen Newspaper read: "Woman composer wins competition" (1986). While their journalistic intention had clearly been positive, they had unwittingly portrayed gender partiality (and that of the world in which they existed). As a woman composer, I have occasionally been beset with condescending epithets of this nature, some more patronising than others. It was, however, with pride that I read the caption relaying news of this coveted prize.

Even though I grew up at a time when feminism was gradually on the rise, I never felt compelled to adopt it as a personal ideology. When I became a student in the Music Department at the University of Pretoria (UP) in the mid-1960s, the field of *avant garde* composing that I entered into was difficult enough for composers of either gender. It was about enticing audiences and concert programmers alike with an unfamiliar musical sound-world, one which was not all that tuneful or memorable. Thus, composers of the time in this genre, particularly in South Africa, were focused on finding a platform and opportunities for their original compositions to be performed. Espousing women's rights was the last thing on our minds.

As I recall, second-wave feminism at that time appeared to be quite embryonic globally, though feminists of the ilk of socio-political activist and journalist Gloria Steinem were already active in the USA. Feminist ideology was still far from the militant and emasculatory crusade it later became, especially in a traditionally patriarchal society like South Africa.

Feminism in the 1960s was a comparatively marginal issue in this country I believe; it was considered to be the domain of overly headstrong, embittered and bra-burning women from 'overseas' such as Betty White and Germaine Greer: a kind of afterbirth of the suffragettes, not to be taken too seriously. The aggression and outspokenness of these women, and their seemingly deliberate eschewal of any attempt to enhance their looks, seemed to detract from their credibility.

Pervasive prejudice

In South Africa, particularly, feminism appeared to be regarded as a white woman's indulgence. Black women, especially in rural areas, were living in communities which were historically patriarchal. Besides, the far more urgent inequality issues of apartheid were forcing the majority of the population to struggle for basic human rights, among which gender equality was far down on the list. For millions of black women, finding work, putting food on the table for their families and avoiding arrest or assault by keeping their heads down, left no time or energy for Western identity issues. Just as the hippie movement in the USA was largely ignored by young people of colour, who were more concerned with survivalist concerns, the feminist movement in South Africa was both distant and irrelevant.

Black women in apartheid South Africa were the most vulnerable and disempowered citizens in the country, by virtue of both their colour and their status in the traditional ethnic pecking order. Yet, ironically, it was these same black women, led by the indomitable Lillian Ngoyi, who marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria on 9 August 1956, demanding human rights and social justice. Many women, (predominantly black, but also white), such as Helen Joseph and members of the Black Sash movement, including Sheena Duncan, Jean Sinclair, Helen Suzman and Selma Broude, to name a few, were articulate and courageous anti-apartheid voices.

I was eight years old when the women's march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria took place in 1956, protesting the pass book legislation imposed by the government. Due to severe censorship

and blackout of most of the written media during the apartheid era by the ruling Nationalist Party and the fact that television as a medium was only introduced to South Africa 20 years later, the white population was largely ignorant of much of what was happening politically in the country.

I grew up in Pretoria in a socio-cultural 'bubble', with a sense of below-the-surface restlessness and intimidation by the apartheid regime. If we, as children, saw an injustice being perpetrated, there was nowhere to report it. The kind of injustices we were privy to included the rounding up of domestic servants into the so-called *nyalas*, jail-like vans with bars. Their crime was failing to carry their notorious *dompasses*[1], as these documents were insultingly nicknamed. Afraid of challenging the system and being turned on by either the authorities or our white neighbours, classmates and employers, we kept a low profile, especially in the ultra-conservative enclave of Pretoria where we lived. We were protected by our white privilege and were largely guilty of inaction. I write this through the lens of my own perceptions growing up and not as an authority on the subject.

We also kept our heads down as Jews in an environment where anti-Semitism although not a daily experience, was never far from the surface. Many members of the ruling Nationalist party had been Nazi sympathisers and as a student at Pretoria University, one tried to fly under the radar. I have a strong memory of being huddled around a radio with Jewish friends in the Tukkies (UP) canteen during the Six-Day War in Israel in June 1967, applauding the quick victory of the Israeli Defence Force. However, we were given sidelong, suspicious looks by young Afrikaner students at the tables nearby. This experience taught me to guard against a 'victim-mentality' when prejudice is present.

1 Literally a 'stupid pass' – the official document that black people in South Africa had to carry during apartheid to prove their identity and where they were allowed to live and work. Any white person of any age had the right to demand that a black person produce their *dompas.* Likewise, any white person of any age was authorised to sign a note granting permission to a black person to walk through a white area after the curfew hour, if circumstances required them to do so. Thus, a child of seven or eight could legally permit an adult of 50 or 60 to walk back to their township if they had been delayed at work.

Barely two decades after the Second World War, in which at least 6 million Jews perished at the hands of the Nazis, anti-Semitism with its pernicious face, has once again reared its ugly head, particularly on campuses in the USA and around the world, including some universities in South Africa. To this day, it remains alive and well, even in our 'new dispensation' in South Africa, though thankfully to a far lesser extent.

My parents could not afford to send me to the University of Cape Town (UCT), my first choice, so I bit the bullet and tried to blend in at Pretoria University. Although a moot point, I imagine that, had I been a student on the far more liberal campuses of Cape Town or Wits University, I would have had the courage to join the anti-apartheid student protesters. I looked forward to the day when I could leave South Africa and escape the sheer madness and abnormality of the abhorrent apartheid system. The opportunity to do so arose only in 1973 when I was independent enough to study overseas, having been awarded the Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Trust (EOMT) Scholarship. I chose to go to London and happily accepted a place to study at the Royal College of Music.

While in London at the Royal College in 1974, I was commissioned by the SABC to compose a piano work for the inaugural SABC Piano Competition. I named the work *Three Dimensions* (referred to in Chs.2 and 3) in which the three sections reflected my life influences at the time, namely, "*A European City Awakens*", "*An African City Pulsates*'" and "*An Eastern City Meditates*". Each section was stylistically and aesthetically infused with the sound-worlds of the regions with which I so closely identified. Journalist Vivien Allen reported on this commission in *The Durban Daily News*, (1974) and in *The Star*, (1974).

Three Dimensions was an early and rather naïve attempt at writing protest through music. In the section of *Three Dimensions* reflecting African influences, I created a musical parody quoting the opening of the official South African national anthem – *Die Stem* – placing the melody in jerky, arhythmic, repetitive bursts under a dominant African *ostinato*[2].

2 Repetitive short, rhythmic melodic figures.

Wessel van Wyk reflected on this musical usage in his tribute article in *Musicus* (2008):

> Against a shifting *ostinato* that reminds one of the sound of an *mbira*[3] the left hand plays varied, but larger intervallic shapes, the melodic contour of which (although rhythmically transformed) makes a direct reference to South Africa's erstwhile national anthem, *Die Stem*. This quotation was meant to be a tongue-in-cheek reference. (Interview with composer: 2008). Little did Zaidel-Rudolph know, in 1974, that she would be the composer chosen to blend this melody with that of *Nkosi Sikilel' iAfrika* for the country's first democratic official national anthem in 1995, 20 years later!

To digress briefly, Wessel van Wyk, the brilliant pianist and Emeritus Professor of piano studies at UP, became a valued friend of mine. We first met when I did a 'locum' for my Aunty Goldie as piano teacher in Pretoria in the early 1960s and I enjoyed teaching young Wessel enormously.

When he gave one of his final piano recitals at the Musaion for his Doctoral requirements on 24 June 1999, four out of the six piano works he performed were my original piano compositions, in company with Beethoven and Prokofiev. He has been one of the finest exponents of my piano music, giving premières of many of my works.

In the same articles mentioned above by Allen (1974), she elaborated on my formative and enriching time as a student in London:

> She has studied composition with John Lambert (at the Royal College) and during last year, won both the top prizes for composition ... Piano she studied with John Lill. Perhaps

3 A traditional music instrument of the Shona people of Zimbabwe - also called a thumb-piano, which is plucked.

> the most interesting part of her study has been work in the college's electronic music studio under Tristram Cary[4].

Allen quoted me as saying:

> One has to acquire a technical knowledge of it (electronic music) or be inadequate as a composer when referring to this area of music composition.
>
> I changed my mind in this regard after studying with Ligeti, who eschewed electronic music in favour of acoustic music, through which he achieved all the colours and tones he desired. I too no longer regarded electronic music as an indispensable compositional tool.

Regarding my views on being a woman conductor, Allen wrote:

> Jeanne has conducted symphonic works of her own at the Royal College of Music. She nurses a secret ambition to conduct the London Symphony Orchestra, but says that it is even more difficult to be accepted as a woman conductor than as a woman composer (1974). This, however, is no longer the case today, with several well-known female conductors on international podia.

Gender issues began to register on my personal radar, albeit subtly and unconsciously, during my late teens, probably in response to a hint of condescension from the odd performer or male composer. Moreover, as both an under- and post-graduate student, I was accorded ample opportunities as a pianist-in-training to publicly perform my original piano compositions, as well as works by other composers. Several of my original smaller chamber ensemble works, too, received exceptional performances by instrumentalists, generating public exposure for me as a composer, initially largely at the university.

I worked hard at Pretoria University and practised long hours. In reality, regardless of my gender, in the late 1960s and

4 Renowned not only for his electronic music skills, but also as a radar engineer during World War II.

early 1970s, I was afforded many privileges, largely due to the high grades I achieved in all my music subjects. This earned me the support, mentorship and encouragement of my professors and teachers alike, virtually all of whom were male. At the time, I was grateful to the men who mentored, encouraged and taught me, including the legendary Adolph Hallis (1896-1987), doyen of piano teaching in South Africa and famous for his puns ("*Hallis sal regkom"*[5]) who served as external examiner for Pretoria University's Music Department. He was also known for his poetic ability to put amusing words to a Bach fugue for piano, in order to encourage beautiful and soulful interpretations of the music by his students and bring it to life. As a humorous touch, he frequently added the student's name into his lyrics for practising Bach.

I took voice as my second instrument as an undergraduate student. I had considered it a 'soft option' because I wanted to focus fully on my piano and composition studies. At my final singing exam, Hallis, was heard to say to Prof JP Malan (erstwhile head of the Music Department) that "Jeanne Zaidel was de-*Zaidel*-dly a better pianist than a singer", having awarded me a distinction grade the previous day for my final piano exam.

Even my singing coach, Xander Haagen (1924-2000), renowned for his opera lyrics and beautiful voice (appearing in operettas in the 1970s), humorously took to singing loudly about himself during our lessons, substituting his own lyrics, "Won-der-ful, won-der-ful Xander Haagen" (to the tune of Danny Kaye's *Wonderful Copenhagen*), to pass the time, I imagine. The book of *Italian Songs and Arias* and German Lieder were evidently not my *forte*. Though I loved singing, voice training became more of a burden than a pleasure for me – neither Maria Callas nor a Diva was I going to be!

Fortunately, I found my *true voice* in creating new and original pieces of music, albeit as a *female* (not my preferred designation!) composer. I naively believed that gender would play no part in my development and acceptance in that capacity.

5 Hallis played on the Afrikaans saying, '*Alles sal regkom'*, meaning 'everything will be alright'.

A-broad Exposure (unapologetically – it is in my nature to pun at every opportunity)

The years 1972 and part of 1973 were generally and musically most informative for me. It was only when I left the safety of South African shores to study abroad that my awareness of gender inequality appeared on my radar. I registered as a post-graduate student at the Royal College of Music in London in 1973 to study advanced piano performance, composition techniques and electronic music. Apparently, there was some intriguing speculation among the college students as to who and what I was, since they observed me only rarely entering the college for my weekly private lessons. During those days, I was an attractive young South African woman (hardly the romantic vision of a starving composer!) with a fashionably 'teased' (bouffant) hairstyle and a visible tan. I was later informed by fellow students that they had unanimously decided behind my back that I must be a 'mediocre opera singer'! It was the adjective 'mediocre' that irked me most!

A sore bruise to my musical ego!

I was exceptionally happy living in London, where I boarded with ex-pat South Africans - the Margolis family, who kindly allowed me to practise on their rather ancient, rickety old piano. Avra Margolis was the sister-in-law of Jeremy Isaacs, famous producer of the British series, *The World at War* on ITV, recordings of which I was privileged to attend several times. It was in London that I first met Judy Arnold, who was to become a mentor and life-long friend. Judy, who lived in Highgate at the time, was very invested in music – both performers and composers. Several renowned celebrities were privileged to be invited to rehearse in her gorgeous music room – performers of the calibre of cellist, Ralph Kirshbaum, violinist György Pauk and many other music luminaries. As I recall she even had Arthur Rubinstein (1887-1982), around 1974, playing on her ornate grand piano. Judy was the official biographer of the renowned British composer, Sir Peter Maxwell-Davies.

I was personally privileged to have been allowed to practise on Judy's large, beautiful, ornate grand piano. I lived

a typical student life with many exciting outings with friends, including opera at Glyndebourne (cheap seats on the lawn), South Bank concerts (student seats *on*stage featuring world-renowned performers), West End shows (when I could afford them) and relishing all that London had to offer, culturally and gastronomically – although Google described Britain as being "probably the most gastronomically backward place on earth 50 years ago!". I enjoyed a steak only when my teacher, John Lill, treated me to one. A British friend of mine took umbrage at my remark and indignantly stated that London currently is a gastronomic delight for the 'foodie cognoscenti'.

The fact that I could go to the Rice/Lloyd-Webber live musical, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* as well as the film, *A Clockwork Orange* when they both opened, was quite overwhelming yet exhilarating for an un-initiate like me! I was extremely fortunate to be able to earn extra cash by giving piano lessons to children of exceptionally prominent and well-to-do families. I taught young Julia Hobsbawm, daughter of the famous left-wing historian, Eric Hobsbawm, who authored several notable works and was a leading light in the Communist Party of Great Britain. They lived just across the Hampstead Heath from where I was living. I thought it rather ironic that their home was not too shabby by any standards, given their political views!

I also taught Jane and Virginia, daughters of the illustrious Lord Baron Mark Bonham Carter, British publisher and politician – uncle of the renowned British actress, Helena Bonham Carter. Jane became Baroness Bonham Carter of Yarnbury (though no hyphen is admissible in her name I believe!). I did not even take umbrage at the time to being asked to use the servants' quarters when arriving to teach the girls, as I was so grateful for the job. The greatest perk at the time was when the family could not use their box at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and offered the tickets to me. I suspect, looking back, that they decided (understandably) on one occasion to offer me the tickets for the five-and-a-half-hour Wagnerian opera, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* – a music marathon which took almost inhuman endurance, but suited me just fine as a young student needing to become acquainted with these gargantuan works.

Still, though, my gender – as a *stigmatum* – did not yet play a significant role in my life. In fact, when I rallied together an ensemble of female instrumentalists at the Royal College to play my new work, *Reaction,* for piano, cello and percussion (1973), I was accorded new-found respect, some fascination – and "tut-tutting" behind hand-covered mouths. To my great delight, renowned British composer Sir Lennox Berkeley, the adjudicator, remarked after the adjudication, that *Reaction* was a work of "the utmost ingenuity and an extremely high standard" and praised the trio for its "superb performance, with the composer (herself) at the piano".

Reaction won a Cobbett Prize for Composition that year. The piece itself, as the title suggests, mirrored my growing frustration with being treated differently from, and frequently condescendingly by, my male counterparts in the composition world – as though I somehow had more to prove than they did, intellectually, musically and technically. My music reflected rather assertive and dynamically driven gestures. I was reacting to an age-old prejudice that was so aptly captured in the words of the renowned British conductor, Sir Thomas Beecham: "There are no women composers – there never have been and most likely never will be." Life having proved him so wrong, he may have been required to "eat his baton".

A further 'coming-of-age' experience as a young composer-musician in a cosmopolitan society, both in London and in Hamburg, was my awareness that as an attractive young woman, I could use gender to my advantage. However, reality reminded me that by being the recipient of dubious favours (promises of performances of one's original work, participant at festivals, financial support, etc.) always came at a distasteful price - namely providing other, less desirable favours in return. I became aware that it was happening all around me. It became completely personal when I was propositioned in exactly that manner, which was unpleasant and offensive.

Equal but different

Being introduced in London for the first time to the writings of Germaine Greer, Gloria Steinem, Sylvia Plath and Alice Walker, among others, my eyes were opened to feminist literature and to the concomitant reality of an omnipresent gender imbalance that I had happily not yet personally experienced. However, as I understand it, there is a notable difference between the terms gender 'equality' and gender 'equity'. The latter relates to fairness and equitable compensation in the workplace for both sexes, respecting all human beings without discrimination, regardless of their race or gender.

Equity thus recognises that each person is in different circumstances, with different needs, so there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution. Who can argue with this more individualised and therefore more equitable approach? I am conscious of trying to devote my energies to ensuring a more equitable society with pushback against discrimination of any kind, particularly when it comes to supporting equitable salaries for women and ensuring that female voices are heard. As an example of gender discrimination in the music world, it was only relatively recently (1982) that some orchestras, like the Berlin Philharmonic, accepted women performers into their midst.

Equity is an issue in the male-dominated realm of music composition. One glance at mainstream concert programmes and curated music festivals shows historically the absence of female composers. This, of course, has nothing to do with the reality on the ground. There are literally thousands of women composers all over the world who have written glorious music over many centuries, often under extremely difficult circumstances. These women were initially obliged by societal norms to publish their music under the names of their brothers or husbands.

Fertile females (musically speaking)

In the 19th century, for example, Fanny Mendelssohn, sister of the composer Felix Mendelssohn, composed over 460 music works, yet neither she nor her works are popularly known.

Mozart's sister, Maria Anna (more fondly known as Nannerl), was reputed to be a far greater talent than her younger brother, Wolfgang Amadeus (according to their father!). In 1770 she sent one of her compositions to her brother, who responded: "My dear sister! I am in awe that you can compose so well; in a word, the song you wrote is beautiful." (Sylvia Milo, 2015). It is believed that her compositions were very likely published under Wolfgang Amadeus's name.

As early as the 12th century, Hildegard von Bingen became renowned, not only as a healer, writer and visionary, but also as a composer of over 70 works. She was a Benedictine abbess who composed *Ordo Virtutum*, one of the oldest extant mystical-morality plays. Though von Bingen is still not exactly a household name, it is exciting to know that there has been a huge revival of interest in her compositions, albeit predominantly by women's arts organisations, such as the International Association of Women in Music (IAWM) and the International Association of Women Composers (IAWC).

The baton (metaphorically speaking) was later most ably taken up by Clara Schumann (1819-1896), wife of the Romantic composer Robert Schumann, who composed her *Piano Concerto in A minor* at the tender age of 14. She was the mother of eight children and was the breadwinner due to her husband, Robert, having been committed to an asylum. My highly respected piano teacher in London, John Lill, shared the story with me that during one of Clara's piano performance tours in Russia, a Russian dignitary ostensibly approached her husband and asked: "Are you musical too, sir?" One can only imagine (not without a wry grin) the offence and humiliation the great composer, Robert Schumann must have felt. I cannot imagine what it must be like to be married to another musician - a recipe for cacophony, perhaps?

One of the most colourful female characters, composers and social activists was Dame Ethyl Mary Smyth (1858-1944), known for her work among the suffragettes and for serving time in London's Holloway prison for her political activities. Her opera, *The Wreckers* (1906), was considered by some critics to be one of the finest English operas composed after her 17th Century

compatriot, Henry Purcell (1659-1695). There were also the highly talented Boulanger sisters – Lili (1893-1918), who was the first female winner of the prestigious Prix de Rome and her renowned elder sister, Nadia (1887-1979), who taught many great musicians and composers, including Aaron Copland (1900-1990), Astor Piazolla (1921-1992), John Elliot Gardiner (1943-) and renowned South African composer Peter Klatzow (1945-2021), to name but a few. Nadia Boulanger became a household name for young emerging composers with whom to aspire to study.

I once asked a class of younger pupils if they knew the names of any composers at all; to which they responded: "All composers are dead, aren't they?" Not an unexpected answer, but a perception which I felt compelled to rectify. So, to have expected those same children to have known about the existence of *women* composers would have been a stretch indeed.

It became patently obvious to me very early on, though, that the term "gender *equality*" is, in reality, a contradiction in terms. Motherhood and the female anatomy instantaneously disavowed me of any notions of gender equality, requesting my husband to give birth to our babies or even breast-feeding them would have been stretching the 'equality' notion beyond the realms of possibility. Becoming a mother changed my entire relationship with the world and, after giving birth, I mutated into a 'tiger mom' who would protect her offspring at all costs – even at the cost of my career!

Thank heavens I was never faced with the challenge or put to the test of having to choose between family and career. I enjoyed unstinting and ongoing support and assistance of major role-players in my life: my husband, Michael who has been an exceptionally involved father; my loving and devoted mother, Evelyn Zaidel and Ruth Mogorosi, my helper of 44 years who made it possible for me to pursue my career without the stress of my absence at home. However, I am aware that many other professional mothers have had to make sacrifices and difficult choices between family and career.

Launching my local career

In June 1976, prior to any thoughts of marriage to Michael (or to anyone else, for that matter, having been erroneously diagnosed as unable to bear children), I was accorded the singular honour of being invited by the Cape Performing Arts Board (CAPAB) to be featured in a series of proposed lectures and concerts called *The Composer Speaks* at the SABC in Sea Point, Cape Town. I was to conduct, play and introduce several of my original compositions for piano and chamber ensemble, sharing a full evening programme with composer Neill Solomon. Players were to be drawn from both the CAPAB and Cape Town Symphony Orchestras. This was a vital affirmation for me as composer.

I later discovered that my esteemed colleague and friend, composer Peter Klatzow, had taken it upon himself to write a highly complementary letter about me to the manager, Tom Veldhuis, extolling my virtues as a young composer. He wrote: "She is certainly the most important of the young Transvaal composers", and he urged for my inclusion in the *Series*. Not once did Peter mention the word 'female', for which I was deeply grateful. I felt validated for this recognition solely on merit, particularly since he was not given to insincere effusiveness. Sadly, it is not often that one's fellow composers show such generosity of spirit, especially in the highly contested composing space in South Africa.

It was literally an obsession for journalists to focus on the external female aspect of my person, rather than on my compositional skills. One headline (The Star 1976) appearing before my CAPAB concert read: "She's glam, isn't she?" with the subheading: "Jaap Boekkooi looks at woman composer Jeanne-Zaidel – one in a handful of rare birds in South Africa ... it's difficult to imagine her in the grave company of a bewigged Bach, a frilly Mozart or a bearded Brahms." Since I knew Boekkooi personally, I didn't take umbrage at this and, at the time, found his comment somewhat humorous. To an outside reader, though, the gender reference may well have come across as quite distasteful.

It was also refreshing to read a critique which focused exclusively on my music, rather than my gender. In a piece titled,

"'*n Ekstra ster vir dié program",* Arend Koole from *Die Burger* (1976) wrote: "*Sy [Jeanne Zaidel] behoort gewis aan die verteenwoordigers van die nuutste progressiewe skryfwyse en ekspressie: die toepassing van twaalftoon, die aleatoriese en die serieële tegniek... en dat [sy] baie aan* [Hongaarse komponis, György] *Ligeti, haar professor in Hamburg, te danke het. Met die eerste aanhoor van haar nuutste werk,* Vyf Stukke vir Houtblasers en Sopraan, *het ek egter sterk die indruk gekry dat hier 'n meesterwerk van sprake is ... Jeanne Zaidel het hiermee onteenseglik bewys van uitsonderlike begaafdheid gelewer.*[6]"

However, that particular concert was momentous for me in other ways too. Sitting quietly in the audience that evening was one Dr Michael Rudolph, who had flown from Johannesburg to attend the concert – portentously and (in retrospect) with a personal ulterior motive. Despite my prior protestations, captured in newspaper articles, that I was exclusively devoted to my music career with no wedding plans on the horizon, my destiny took a different path. Very much out of character for both of us, after the concert, we borrowed a friend's car and hot-footed it out of the SABC and went to a nightspot in town, where we talked until the early hours of the morning. The die had been cast. A few short months after my Cape Town appearance as composer, conductor and pianist in *The Composer Speaks,* we became engaged.

After my marriage to Michael in September 1976, we moved to Boston, USA, where he pursued his studies for his Master of Public Health degree at Harvard University. I remember how remarkable I found it that the keynote speaker at his graduation ceremony delivered his address in *Latin*! What I found equally remarkable was that people in the audience apparently understood the speech and laughed at appropriate times during his Latin jokes. Having studied Latin in high school, I was able to understand a few words, but not enough to laugh raucously, as

6 "An extra star for this programme... She [Jeanne Zaidel] certainly belongs with the representatives of the latest progressive writing styles and expressions: the application of 12-tone, the aleatoric and serial technique... and the fact that [she] owes so much to [Hungarian composer György] Ligeti, her professor in Hamburg. On first hearing her latest work, *Five Pieces for Woodwind Quartet and Soprano*, I got the strong impression that here was a masterpiece ... Jeanne Zaidel has delivered irrefutable proof of her exceptional giftedness."

they did. No doubt it would have brought both the atrium and the togas down in ancient Rome.

While in Boston, our first precious daughter, Natalie, was born in May 1977. It was there too, while living at the Harvard Business School Residence in Soldiers Field Park, that I began preparing material for my doctorate in music through the University of Pretoria. We rather reluctantly returned to South Africa in August 1977, in spite of our efforts to be accepted as immigrants to the USA; efforts which were rejected.

Journey from Jeanne Zaidel to Dr Zaidel-Rudolph

An actual example of the intersection between motherhood and career was soon to follow; my doctoral thesis was delivered by my husband to Pretoria University on 10 May 1979, a day before our second daughter, Sara, was born: a 'delivery' of a different and exhilarating kind. Motherhood brought with it many things – unquestionably exhaustion in the early days, leaving me little energy to compose. There was no dramatic epiphany of how my life would change, but a gradual realisation that, in future, the needs of my children would supersede my need to compose. Additionally, my approach to composition was to alter positively, due to the joy and enrichment that children bring to one's life – and this new, deeply creative consciousness and wonderment became embedded in my works: an attitude of gratitude – yes, a platitude, but one imbued with depth and meaning. Motherhood became my most transformative life growth experience and inspiration for new ideas and music creativity.

My doctoral[7] work through UP required a composition portfolio consisting of five original compositions in a Western art genre for various sizes of ensembles, ranging from solo piano to orchestral and opera works. Additionally, I was to endure an oral

7 Until fairly recently, a professional doctoral degree in music at most South African universities was designated as DMus, a professional doctorate, as opposed to the purely academic degree of PhD; though several universities currently offer a professional doctoral degree referred to as a 'creative PhD'. Besides a thesis, this requires a portfolio of compositions or a series of public recitals on an instrument of choice.

examination for several hours by a panel of academics on my chosen fields of study – this while feeling like a beached whale at almost nine months pregnant! This examination incorporated questions on 30 years of contemporary post-war music (1945-1975) by notable European composers, including Peter Maxwell-Davies (1934-2016), Pierre Boulez (1925-2016) and my mentor and teacher, Hungarian composer György Ligeti (1923-2006).

I was awarded the DMus degree at the university's 14 September graduation ceremony in 1979. Since I was something of a curiosity as the first woman to achieve this academic honour in composition, the newspapers had a field day reporting the event – mostly milking the motherhood angle:

The Afrikaans newspaper *Die Vaderland* (September 1979) reported that I came from a very musical family and that my second baby had been born the day after I handed in my final composition portfolio. All of the newspapers of the day, including the *SA Jewish Times*, *Pretoria News* (Konya, 1979) and *the Star* (Jenny Dyer, 1979), observed that "in spite of having two young children to look after, *Mrs* Zaidel-Rudolph[8] hopes to soon start lecturing full-time at the University of the Witwatersrand, write music for friends and complete her opera". Marilyn Segal in the *Zionist Record* and *SA Jewish Chronicle*, in an article entitled "How Baby beat Ma's deadline", quoted me saying: "I had to sacrifice certain things like time with my little one, who was then only a baby ... socialising, preparing meals for my husband ..."

It was the first time a doctorate in music composition had been awarded to a woman at a South African university thus most of the journalists at the time seemed to be more preoccupied with my wifely and motherly duties than my academic achievements. I do (on a level) understand that it was an interesting journalistic angle.

Soon after returning to South Africa from the USA, Michael went back into dental practice and found that many of his patients consisted of rabbis and their families. One in particular, Rabbi

8 My long-suffering husband, Michael Rudolph, has on more than one occasion been referred to as 'Mr. Zaidel-Rudolph', but has laughed off such inadvertent and well-intentioned mistakes.

Mendel Lipskar, exercised a profound influence on Michael, bringing us closer to our Jewish roots. We adopted Jewish customs, began keeping a kosher home and sent our children to a religious Jewish day school. There is a perception that an observant Jewish woman is somehow a second-class citizen, wearing an apron, subserviently 'barefoot in the kitchen' and acting as a full-time mother and carer. This is by no means true. After we became part of the Chabad Chassidic community, with the Lubavitcher Rebbe *z"l* as our guide and leader, I believe that I debunked that myth, as many Jewish women had repeatedly done before me. With the encouragement of my husband and family, I have led a very full and enriching professional music life.

So, what is the role of a woman/wife/mother who is a composer – in my case, a composer of so-called 'serious' Western art music? I'm generally disinclined to use the terms 'serious (a misnomer) and 'female' composer, which I regard as pejoratively separatist. It has been widely documented that women musicians – particularly composers – suffered prejudice and were discriminated against for centuries in a male-dominated realm and I thus found the gender-centricity to be counter-productive. Volumes of books and articles have been written on how, historically, women were unable (disallowed) to publish compositions under their own names and were largely ignored by concert organisers (and the public alike). This phenomenon was, of course, not exclusive to composers; several authors and painters produced their art using either male or neutral pseudonyms – George Eliot, author, being a fine example. The debate on gender equality has been raging for over two centuries and I believe that it will rage on for several more.

Hidden identity

A delectable cameo illustrating my experience of gender patronisation goes back to my time as a young composer in South Africa, entering the first ever Total Oil composition competition in 1986. Being overly conscious of my scrawl-like music handwriting (since these were pre-computer days), I hired a music colleague with a reputation for beautiful and legible calligraphy, to reproduce my orchestral score for submission to the competition.

In pursuit of fairness, the official rules stated that an entrant was required to remain anonymous and to use only a pseudonym on the entry form.

As Pretoria Girls' High was such an integral and happy part of my life I used the school motto, *Spes Prosit Labori* (*We Work in Hope*), as my pseudonym for my competition entry.

There were at least 50 people in the adjudication room at the Total Oil Braamfontein building, some of whom were judges, but mostly aspiring young composers. The time came for the chairman of the adjudication committee to open the (confidential) envelope to declare the winner of the competition by revealing the secret *nom de plume*. When I heard *Spes Prosit Labori* being announced, I realised, with utter exhilaration, that I had won the competition! My winning work was *Tempus Fugit* for orchestra.

The chairman's proclamation, however, was greeted with dead silence – surely it was not possible that the only woman to enter could be the winner in an area totally dominated by males - and fraught with artistic rivalry? The head judge was then heard to say: "I could have sworn that the beautiful music calligraphy belonged to [...], a male colleague of mine at the university." Needless to say, in future local composition competitions, the requirements of anonymity were scrapped; in fact, one's name was a requirement, to be prominently displayed on one's score.

Mary Rörich (1988) described *Tempus Fugi*t as follows:

> Its philosophical essence, as the title *Tempus Fugit* suggests, lies in a contemplation of the various aspects of time – real time, limited time, the passing of time, musical time, and illusory time. Thus its rhythmic dimension is paramount, unfolding as a montage of diverse metres, polyrhythms and accentuations. Its harmonic and textural conceptions also reflect the multi-dimensionality of South African society, most distinctively in the clever layerings of different tonalities and instrumental ambiences, which are woven together by the foregrounded colour and idiom of the African marimba.

[Notes and a full analysis of the work can be found in the Appendix (2)].

This curious story about *Tempus Fugit* is reminiscent of the story of French composer, Lili Boulanger, whose experience echoed mine and was similarly relevant and disturbing. She entered her music score *anonymously* for the *Prix de Rome* Composers' Competition in 1913 at the tender age of 19 and became the first woman to win that prestigious prize with her cantata, *Faust et Hélène*. Predictably, the next year, anonymity requirements were removed. Sadly, two years later, Lili passed away at the tender age of 24, a huge loss to the world of music. Unsurprisingly, in order to address and redress the unequal situation, several important organisations were formed in the latter part of the 20th century to research, celebrate, publish and perform music exclusively by women.

Male mentor and friend – the voice for women composers

In the early 1970s, a lone male voice in the wilderness, Dr Aaron Cohen (a retired South African town-planner and amateur musicologist), began researching works by women composers globally, a passionate hobby of his, which I found charming but totally irrational. He found over 5000 women composers from 70 countries dating from the year 2500 BCE to the present. He also amassed the largest collection of music by women ever recorded. He published his trailblazing book, *International Encyclopaedia of Women Composers,* first edition, in 1981 and the Discography in 1984 *(*Bowkers New York*)*. This encyclopedia was the first international study of its kind to ever be published. In an article in the *Federal Times*, Washington, DC (December 1981), John Barkham quoted Cohen (who had encountered some bizarre challenges in his research on women composers) as saying: "Two of the women turned out to be men." Moreover, another composer, Walter Carlos, had undergone sex change surgery and become *Wendy* Carlos during the writing of his book – hazards of an author!

Among the women Cohen wrote about were three queens who composed music – Anne Boleyn, Mary Stuart and Marie Antoinette – all of whom were beheaded. I seriously heeded the message to beware of marrying a king!

I met Aaron Cohen on my visit home from London in 1973 and we became firm friends, even though we were separated by 40 years in age. He was exceptionally helpful to me in those early days by making copies for me of my music scores on the photocopying machines in his home office. He used to humorously opine that someday he would have a 'petticoat attached to his gravestone'. His monumental pioneering work at long last put women composers on the map. Barkham (1981) wrote: "Cohen's lodestar has been the words of the Greek woman poet, Sappho: 'Someone, I tell you, will remember us. We are oppressed by fears of oblivion, yet are always saved by good men's judgements." Aaron Cohen was one such man.

Soon after his ground-breaking publication, the International Association of Women in Music (IAWM) was formed in the USA, as well as the International Association of Women Composers. Many festivals were organised in several countries under its auspices, with "Call for Scores" reaching thousands of women composers internationally and encouraging them to take up the cudgels of their own music promotion and performance. Similar organisations were formed in Italy, Germany, France and elsewhere. Local chapters were created in many countries – I was appointed the African representative – and lists of female composers and their works were made widely available.

Congress camaraderie

I attended the first "International Congress on Women in Music" at New York University from 26-29 March 1981. It drew 750 delegates from around the world – all women musicians, among them performers and many active composers, some unpublished and undiscovered, as well as others whose music had already reached the hallowed stages of concert halls. As a participant in the Festival, several of my scores and recordings were housed in a temporary library, to be later catalogued in the Library of

Congress (Washington). I was invited to be part of a panel of composers from outside the USA and I also presented a lecture entitled *Music in South Africa*. At the Congress, the historical field of the female composer was put under the spotlight, one of the highlights being a lecture-recital given on the life and work of the most renowned Polish composer, Grażyna Bacewicz (1909-1969).

Just over a decade later, I was to meet this great composer's sister, Wanda Bacewicz (1914-2011), in Warsaw during the World Music Days festival run by the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM)[9] in 1992, at which my work for cello and piano, *Four Minim* (no, not 'minims), was performed by me (piano) and Peta-Anne Richardson (cello). Wanda, custodian of Grażyna's memory and archive, who was herself a renowned writer and poet, devoted most of her time to perpetuating her sister's music and name. She very kindly took me to a patisserie for coffee, and we chatted at length about her remarkable sister. She was a most refined lady in her 70s, with beautiful auburn hair and was extremely gracious towards me, generously presenting me with several of Grażyna's most precious scores and recordings, which I treasure to this day. She told me that within Poland itself, her sister was amazingly regarded as a much greater talent than any of her male composer counterparts (possibly even Lutosławski), though of course this was not a general perception globally.

Nearly 30 years later, in 2020, my work, *Trio for Piano Violin and Cello* was chosen by the same ISCM out of hundreds of music submissions from around the world (initially selected by the local South African chapter and submitted for adjudication to the international body) to be performed at the "World Music Days" to be held in Shanghai, China in March 2021. Sadly, however, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Festival was cancelled. I did, however, have the honour of having the work performed in November 2023 right here in Johannesburg during the World Music Days of the

9 The ISCM is a network of members from around 50 countries devoted to the promotion and presentation of contemporary music – the music of our time. A festival is held annually called World New Music Days, which is committed to the equitable representation of nationalities, genders and ages.

ISCM held in South Africa – [in the African continent for the very first time].

Soon after returning to South Africa from the International Contemporary Women in Music (ICWM) Festival in New York (1981), fellow musicians and I founded the New Music Network (NMN) in 1981, aimed at creating an audience for *avant garde* music by promoting and performing contemporary South African pieces, among others. Many lectures, concerts and workshops were held during the early 1980s under the banner of NMN, but the audiences were relatively small and elitist and there was not a great demand or appreciation for contemporary music. It was regarded by largely conservative audiences as being too esoteric, too *avant garde* and too dissonant for ears that were accustomed to the standard repertoire of Bach, Beethoven and Brahms. Contemporary audiences found the melodic lines too abstract to follow and were fazed by rhythms unfamiliar to Western listeners. I embarked on trying to educate audiences whenever and wherever I could.

Daring debutantes: *Donne in Musica*

There was an astounding breakthrough for female composers in 1980; *Donne in Musica* (*Women in Music*) was established in Rome by the artistic director and renowned British-Italian soprano Patricia Adkins Chiti. I was privileged to be invited to attend the organisation's third annual festival in that beautiful historical city in 1982. During a week of workshops and concerts, both published and unpublished manuscripts of 62 women composers from 28 countries (spanning 14 centuries) were presented, 34 of who were still living and 10 of whom were present to hear their works performed – some for the first time (1982). The setting was the magnificent Palazzo Braschi in Rome, with top instrumentalists performing works by women composers and all performances were recorded for radio or TV.

The music of South African-born composer Priaulx Rainier (1903-1986), who was hardly known in her home country (as she had lived in London most of her life), was also presented and received a very warm response. I'm somewhat embarrassed

to admit that even I was staggered at the quantity and quality of music by women.

Generous sponsorship by the South African composer and philanthropist Eva Harvey made my visit to Italy possible. My work, *Five Pieces for Woodwind Quartet and Soprano*, was given a superb performance in Rome featuring Philippine soprano Lilia Reyes; this performance elicited a standing ovation, a quite overwhelming experience for me. The South African Embassy was represented at the concert by its ambassador in Rome and I embarked on a lovely friendship with him and his wife beginning at a delightful reception held at their home after the concert. I subsequently attended many festivals devoted to promoting and performing the music of women composers. Lasting friendships were forged with fellow composers in Rome – and over the years, an exciting and warm correspondence and friendship ensued with Patricia Chiti, who urged me to try to return to one of the annual festivals of women's music if ever possible.

With the birth of our third daughter in September 1981, it became more difficult for me to travel to conferences outside of South Africa having three small children. It took 36 years before my dream of returning to Rome for a festival could materialise. The opportunity finally arose when I won the *Global Women in Human Rights* (GWHR) Composers' Competition in 2018, co-presented by the International Foundation for Human Rights and *Donne in Musica*. My work, *Oratorio for Human Rights* for soloists, choir and orchestra, was chosen out of 400 music submissions globally, to be performed as a celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights (for further details see my Chapter on 'Festivals'). The Winner's Concert of my *Oratorio for Human Rights* took place on 4 November 2018 in the magnificent *Teatro Argentina* in Rome, which we attended.

Entering the repertoire

It was around this time that young piano performers in the main centres in South Africa, who were searching for new repertoire to perform, began playing some of my compositions, such as my 7 *Variations on an Original Theme, Three Dimensions* and my

Sonata No 1 for Piano. These works were also included in the piano repertoire for competitions. Later, pieces such as *Mosaic*, *Mixed Feelings for Sara*, *Awaiting Game*, *Times They are a-Changing* and *5 6 7 8* were incorporated into the piano volumes for the UNISA graded exams. I dedicated some of these earlier works to our three daughters at the time. Our *laat-lammetjie*[10] Devora Nisi was born in 1989, nearly nine years after our third daughter, Tamar.

Fantastic festival and festivities

I was the only South African composer to be invited to the International Festival of Women's Music in Beersheva, southern Israel from 23 -29 June 1986. It was a festival dedicated to the brilliant British cellist Jacqueline du Pré (1945-1987), wife of conductor Daniel Barenboim, who had been stricken with multiple sclerosis at the zenith of her stellar career. Unable to perform any longer due to impaired muscle co-ordination, she had taught her instrument for a short period, but died prematurely at the young age of 42.

Frankly, active local female art music composers were not thick on the ground in the 1980s in South Africa – in fact, I can hardly think of any women actively composing in Western art music style at that time. I initially submitted some of my contemporary chamber music for consideration, but it was suggested that I submit something 'lighter'.

I agreed to present an audio-visual production of my rock opera *Rage in a Cage,* which featured lyrics by Myrna Greenberg. Women composers, conductors, performers, journalists and radio stations gathered from different parts of the world in this desolate, but beautiful desert town of Beersheva. Representatives came from the USA, the UK, France, Denmark, Holland, Austria, India and Germany, as well as South American, and Eastern Bloc countries. An eclectic mix of genres and styles was presented, ranging from modern classical to fabulous jazz and pop music.

10 Literally, a 'late little lamb' – an Afrikaans idiom, meaning a baby born to parents in later life.

The founder and director of the festival, Liora Moriel[11], opened it with the following powerful statement:

> "From the dawn of peoplehood, women have sung and composed, but for a while this song was silenced and forgotten. We are here to place those rediscovered works in the mainstream of music today so that all people will be able to share it."

Attention to, and promotion of, women composers on this scale was a complete eye-opener for me and I felt very privileged to be among such talented and like-minded women musicians. I should *not* have been so astounded at the high level of music presented – but we women have for many centuries been made to feel *less* in many fields and have had to contend with propaganda promoting the superiority of music by men.

My rock opera, *Rage in a Cage* was originally staged in Johannesburg by the National Youth Theatre in 1983. I was determined to have at least part of the presentation live in Beersheva, so I arranged to take the original star of the show, Ilana Green, with me to Israel. She was a second-year music student at the time with an exceptional voice - and we faced some resistance from Wits University to permit her to leave during exam time; but I finally persuaded the powers that be to agree to it.

Some 36 years later, I fortuitously reconnected digitally with Lana in November 2022, following Facebook reports of her son Jaren Ziegler's winning the BBC Young Musician's String Competition 2022 as a violist. My posting her a congratulatory message resulted in her sending me a copy of the short report she had written all those years ago (1986) about her experience in Beersheva, particularly performing my rock opera during the festival. She reminded me of events I had long forgotten. What was so impressive in her letter was the careful documentation of a spectacular line-up of accomplished women composers, conductors, performers and radio broadcasters featured.

11 In programme from personal archive.

The opening concert of the festival began with the world première of a symphonic tone-poem for orchestra titled *Ruth*, composed by New York-born prodigy, 11-year old Dalit Paz Warshaw, a phenomenal young composing talent - and performed by the Israel Sinfonietta conducted by Buka Ben Dor. This was followed by the *Piano Concerto in A Minor* by Romantic composer Clara Schumann (wife of Robert Schumann and my own spiritual 'music guide'). Her lifelong closeness with the composer Johannes Brahms, is legendary. The programme closed with Symphony No 4 by the Romanian composer Liana Alexandra (1947-2011), professor at the Bucharest Conservatory, who passed away at a young age.

A most informative series of lectures was also presented at the festival, titled, "The History of Women in Music", chaired by Dr Carolyn Lindeman from the San Francisco State University. Another exciting experience was listening to four young females from Amsterdam called the Syrinx Quartet. It seemed at the time that the saxophone was a masculine choice of brass instrument, yet here were four young females masterfully playing it. Since then, of course, the popularity of the instrument has risen sharply among women – particularly in jazz, with artists like Candy Dulfer and Melissa Aldana creating new repertoires. South African-born Shannon Mowday is another virtuoso who has not only evoked much excitement internationally with her technical and interpretative brilliance in improvisational jazz, but has performed with all the major South African orchestras as a soloist. I had so much to learn!

Back in Beersheva: with Lana on vocals and me on the keyboard, we successfully presented excerpts from *Rage in a Cage* with powerful backing tracks and an audio-visual of colourful slides. The audience clapped along enthusiastically, moving to the pulsating rock rhythms, together with Lana's glorious voice lilting above into the desert air. The cassette tape (the format at the time) was taken by the BBC and Danish radio for broadcast. My 'entourage' (mainly family) and I celebrated after the performance at a local restaurant called the 'Red Rooster' – and were amazed and delighted to find that the owners were an ex-pat

Afrikaner family who had converted to Judaism because of their love for Israel and the Bible.

Despite reaping the benefits of all the initiatives emerging on behalf of women composers and the festivals dedicated to women exclusively, I developed an unsettling ambivalence towards the whole gender issue. On the one hand, it was commendable and, indeed, crucial that initiatives had begun to redress the flawed and protracted discriminatory situation – initiatives which were encouraging and necessary at the time (namely, to throw our collective female weight together and fight against historical chauvinism and exclusion in the field). On the other hand, creating further divisiveness in a realm already fraught with prejudice and jealousy seems to me to be counter-productive. In her book *Lioness: Golda Meir and the Nation of Israel* (2017), Francine Klagsbrun refers to an incident in which a reporter asked Britain's 'Iron Lady', Margaret Thatcher, whether she had learnt anything from Golda about being a woman prime minister, to which she snapped back that there were "more important issues to discuss". My sentiments exactly!

I believe that the solution to this vexing gender issue is definitely not to further separate (and perhaps alienate) composers into categories of 'composers' and 'female composers'. Unlike several of the Romance languages, such as German, French and Italian – which have separate gender-specific categories – the English language, thankfully, has only one word for 'composer'. I dislike, and will always dislike, being referred to as a 'female composer' – not because I have any desire to be anything but female, a role which I cherish, but because it feels discriminatory to me. I have yet to see a heading in a newspaper to the effect of: "Father of two lands lucrative contract", or reference made in articles or reviews, at least since the mid-20th century, to, for example, the 'male author' of a particular book or the 'male painter' as a class distinct from their female counterparts.

Too often have I received the dubious distinction of being referred to as 'the best female composer' in South Africa – as though this were somehow a special compliment. In fact, it is a patronising classification, implying that my work cannot

stand up to the work of my male peers. I was also paid the rather extraordinary compliment, by a South American composer, of 'writing like a man' (as though this was somehow a big step-up for a mere female). I imagine it was because *some* of my writing can be heard and experienced as vigorous, assertive and authoritative, for which I offer no apology.

Finally, as an artist, I find the idea of genderising and politicising what is essentially the domain of the soul, objectionable – and ineffably sad. Music occupies a realm of experience far beyond reproductive or intellectual anatomy. Those seeking to qualify or judge it in terms of historical or contemporary prejudice do it, and all those who love it, a disservice. It is a transcendent and transformative force. As poet TS Eliot wrote: "You are the music while the music lasts."



Leading the all-male Sydenham-Celebration Choir as Musical Director and pianist on many overseas tours – choir conductor Jos Stern (far left), Phil Holder (sax top left), Prof Walter Mony (bottom left) and Cantor Oshy Tugendhaft (bottom right).



An auspicious meeting in Warsaw Poland with Wanda Bacewicz, sister of Grazyna Bacewicz, who was considered one of Poland's finest composers. Wanda bequeathed to me many of her sister's music scores and recordings



My young vibrant image at 27 with the world at my feet, enjoying performing, composing and teaching at Wits University

Years at Wits University[1]

By my wits for 43 years

Performing, teaching, composing and researching

1st Movement

In 1975, fresh from studying with György Ligeti, I was delighted to be offered the prestigious post as lecturer in theory and composition in the Music Department at Wits University, which at the time was headed by musicologist, Prof Ulmont Schneider.

Performance

Although I was looking forward to lecturing, I was still enthusiastic about remaining active as a concert pianist; thus, soon after starting to lecture in the Music Department, I relished an invitation to play in a public performance alongside my esteemed piano colleagues, Peggy Haddon and Carl Nietzsche. The exciting three-piano work programmed was one of Mozart's unusual showpieces – a performance of the *Triple Piano Concerto*. The newly-revived Wits Orchestra was conducted by Prof Walter Mony in the legendary Wits Great Hall, witness to many graduation ceremonies and superb concerts. John Davies (*The Star*, 24 June 1975) wrote that the pianists "combined well in this unassuming, but charming work". What a glorious start to launching my long career at Wits, which occupied a major portion of my professional life. During those years I experienced a remarkable range of opportunities, internally and externally – both musical and managerial.

Orion, the contemporary performing ensemble of which I was a member, was formed in Johannesburg in January 1975 to primarily introduce new, contemporary works to the local public.

1 The University of the Witwatersrand is known by its abbreviation WITS University.

I was pianist during many of their diverse concerts of modern music. At a concert in the Nunnery at Wits on 5 October 1975, my prize-winning work *Reaction* for Piano Cello and Percussion received an exciting interpretation and beautiful performance with yours truly at the piano. A newspaper review by journalist Phillip Miller (*The Star*, October 1975) stated: "A highlight was the first performance of a new work by South African composer Jeanne Zaidel, entitled *Reaction* for Piano, Cello and Percussion. The opening moments showed the admitted influence of György Ligeti, while later sections were not without an exciting element of tension." Those early years afforded many exciting performing opportunities! But my focus had already begun shifting away rather dramatically from performance towards composing.

Teaching

At the end of 2000, when Prof Carl van Wyk, Head of Music at Wits, married Nicolette Solomon (a much-loved Suzuki violin teacher to our three children) and emigrated to the USA, I was appointed to his academic post, teaching music theory and composition to senior students. I had previously chosen to teach part-time, due to my domestic responsibilities, but in I went back full-time in 2001 in the knowledge that my children were older and could be looked after by our skilled housekeeper, Ruth Mogorosi.

I embraced my new university post with fervent zeal and passionate enthusiasm to teach and influence musically-conservative South African music students to the wonders of the European contemporary music scene. Any remnants of tonality in a score were *passé* and archaic to me as the young *avant garde* adherent, and had to be dispensed with as soon as possible. The more dissonant, fragmented and outrageous the sounds, the more I felt that I was relevant on the current composition scene. I am sure I must have initially shocked some students with my radical views and experimental composition teaching materials, consisting of scores and recordings that reflected the extremes and madnesses of high modernism. Yet it was a style that all the arts embraced at the time in one form or another; a style that had to be engaged with, though ultimately dispensed with.

Malleable musical undergraduates

I was only a few years older than some of my third- and fourth-year students. They by no means gave me an easy time (especially a couple of the brash young men)[2]. After the conservative and respectful environment I had experienced at Pretoria University, where students were expected to stand up when the professor or lecturer walked into the room (perhaps the other extreme), Wits was something of a culture shock for me, with student 'progressives' and a politically charged spirit of defiance. Not only did the students not rise when I walked in, but a few demanded to know the topic of the day's lecture – and would loudly ask whether they would "find it interesting... or boring". My answer would then inform their decision to stay or leave the class. I was young, vulnerable and intimidated; I was teased a great deal, but in those days so was my hair! It was, after all, the 1970s, and a big *bouffant* hairstyle was the height of fashion.

During my early years as senior lecturer in Wits Music, I was responsible mostly for the teaching of theory, harmony, counterpoint, rhythm and form - subjects about which I was passionate and totally within my realm of expertise. These 'building blocks' of music are the bread and butter of a composer who relies on these basic parameters to create her/his 'masterpieces'.

It was somewhat later that I focused exclusively on teaching composition to under- and postgraduate students. The mid-to late 1970s were extremely happy years during which petty politics in the Music Department was minimal. That would come later! Over the years, only a handful of music students went into careers other than music, mostly into information technology, frequently with an association to digital music.

Among many wonderful undergraduates, there are a few gifted ones who stand out in my mind: Among these was Simon Wynberg, a most accomplished, award-winning and successful past music student; a virtuoso guitarist, who left South Africa

2 Among the 'brash young men' were Simon Wynberg, Iggy Wapenaar and friends.

for Scotland and became a celebrated recording artist, festival director, producer and arranger.

My erstwhile student, Adam Golding, held the position of Head of the Music Department at Redhill School in Johannesburg for several years; his love of conducting led him to be the founder and Director of the African Renaissance Ensemble and the Lewandowski Chorale. Samora Ntsebeza has established himself in South Africa as a composer, percussionist, electro-acoustic sound expert and performer in art and dance.

I did my utmost to encourage female composers (then a serious minority in art music) and greatly admired the talent of my student Sibongile Chamane. Disappointingly (for me), she chose to go into her family business rather than pursue her music talent. Susan Rendell obtained an excellent B.Mus in composition (my only female undergrad student that year) and went on to work in orchestra management, rather than as a composer. She currently lives in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Ignatia (Iggy) Madalane's journey was a little different as a musicologist, marimba player and later as programme coordinator for The National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS). She is now a registered traditional healer; not unexpectedly, given the power of music to tap corporeal, mental and spiritual depths. Iggy, together with Olaotse Mmileng, David Lephoto (currently active music entrepreneur) and the beloved late Joe Makhanza, ethnomusicologist and erstwhile lecturer in African music at Rhodes University (builder and performer of traditional African instruments), formed the inimitable, original Wits Marimba Band. This group stimulated great interest among students who realised the potential of not only learning the marimba as a solo instrument, but of being part of an exciting marimba band. Making music together like this is enormously satisfying and artistically rewarding for the performers. The marimba band became a prestigious part of the Wits brand in performances, within and outside of the university.

Other talented past students include Joan Lithgow, known today in South Africa as leader of marimba bands from disadvantaged communities, who became organiser of the

huge Education Africa Marimba and Steelpan Festivals, which incorporate hundreds of marimba school bands annually. Joan and her family also manufacture a wide range of marimbas. Diale Mabitsela, an extremely talented composer, obtained his undergraduate degree with me and later a Master's degree from Oxford University. He is currently Chairperson of NewMusicSA and educator at St Benedict's College.

Dunisani Chabalala, went on to occupy the important position as the South African Deputy Director of Cultural events in the Department of Arts and Culture. He spent months in hospital with a serious undiagnosed ailment. Curiously enough, I discovered that he was a suspected victim of witchcraft (African sorcery). Supposedly cursed by a perceived enemy, the emotional impact on him was devastating. This phenomenon is not unusual in the South African ethnic cultural landscape. Thankfully, whatever curse of which he perceived himself to be the victim, dissipated and he survived and thrived.

Teaching philosophy

My viewpoint and methodology in teaching composition has always been grounded in the principles of communicating the craft through deep listening to prodigious and diverse musics of different eras while studying and becoming immersed in the relevant scores. My teaching focused on encouraging critical analysis and applying several analytical methods, systems and range of notations to dissect and become familiar with the building blocks of fine music. I encouraged the accessing of contemporary compositions written over the past 80 years and the broad study of diverse genres.

My style of teaching is always collaborative, rather than prescriptive. I'm keenly aware of *not* imposing my preferred sense of style or choice of sound-world on a student, but to work within their chosen aesthetic and preferred material – and to thereby maximise their own talents and abilities, technically, musically and with originality. After the craft and technique are mastered, young composers reveal their innate and intuitive musical talent in imaginative and creative ways. At Wits I facilitated a group of

student composers who would meet regularly within a safe and constructive environment to share ideas; and thereby benefit from my critique and suggestions regarding their individual works, but also to learn from one other.

I was occasionally faulted by my colleagues for being too 'motherly' towards my students, giving them many hours of individual attention outside of their class times, even counseling them on their personal problems. Seeing as this is very much part of my nature, I took it as a compliment.

In 2002, following my appointment as Professor of Composition, I introduced a significant innovation for my composition students, a programme I named *Sound Us Out*, which later inspired the title of my memoir. I successfully secured substantial funding to host an annual public concert showcasing the talents and original works of my young composition students. The Distell and Rupert Foundations as well as the South African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO) were generous sponsors for these exciting live events.

These funds facilitated stage performances of new compositions by my fourth year and postgraduate students. Only in the hands of (preferably professional) instrumentalists, can music 'come alive' in performance. The players were hired to play student works at both exams and at public concerts. There is a vast difference for an examiner to assess a new work purely from manuscript rather than from hearing it performed live 'in concert'. The students were ecstatic to hear their own 'masterpieces' played; and were spurred on to be even more inventive and original. The standards improved dramatically. These designated "Sound Us Out" concerts became another exemplary brand for Wits Music.

As a teacher, one tries to keep up with the times. My stretch at Wits spanned a transitional phase in popular music. Rock was giving way to heavy metal, fusion, disco and hybrid takes on the soul and pop of the previous decade. Digital pop music, still in its nascent stage, was already singing 'new age' songs. I did not know what my students listened to in the cafeteria or in their cars on the way home, or at the parties they attended, but one

had to try to factor in the current student culture. My colleague and friend, Jonathan Crossley, co-lecturer, who was way ahead of the pack in contemporary music developments, made an invaluable contribution to WitsMusic and to me, especially in sharing his knowledge of emerging trends and his teaching of music technology.

One of our principles as teachers of composition at Wits Music was to expand our students' awareness of music other than Western art, namely to include the diversity of world musics. We were mindful about giving traditional African music the attention it deserved in our curriculum. So enthusiastic was our department in encouraging this kind of cross-pollination, that at some point our black students ironically protested that they had not enrolled to learn only about African music, but also about Western art music! My colleague and friend Tania Leon, Cuban musician, provided an interesting and relevant perspective on this. She described her excitement upon first hearing Chopin on her radio at home as a child in Cuba after long immersion in only local music. She emphasised the importance of teaching Western classical music in a college curriculum as a basis for teaching other world musics, a view strongly supported by the esteemed African ethnomusicologist, Kofi Agawu.

Behind the Scenes – crafting creativity

Over many years at Wits, my composer colleagues and I formed various music organisations for expressly giving young composers an opportunity for their works to be performed in public concerts. I gave many hours of my time to these associations to encourage the writing and promotion of new music. One of these societies was the South African Music Guild formed in 1988 (SAMG). We had to rely on external sponsorship.

These initiatives were launched with the generous financial assistance of SAMRO, mostly driven by Michael Levy. I fondly recall the camaraderie and excitement felt when presenting brand-new works at beautiful venues like the Johannesburg Art Gallery and the Atrium at Wits. But sadly, like so many other attempts to support young composers, the audiences were small,

and the projects could not be financially sustained, without government funding or commercial sponsorship. It was only in 2013, my last 'official' year at Wits (although I continued sessional teaching till 2020), that a unique opportunity presented itself in my quest to stimulate, encourage and promote original student compositions.

The National Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS) approached me in my last year of lecturing. I was asked to lead a catalytic project that it was inaugurating which focused on the development, upliftment and advancement of composers nationally – and composition within South African tertiary educational institutions. How fortunate I was to take this forward over several years! The project was to be curated within music in the Wits School of Arts (WSOA). My colleague, Dr Cameron Harris and I set about enthusiastically identifying active composer-academics and composition teachers in other South African tertiary institutions to join this unique opportunity and exciting national initiative.

A steering committee was formed, including representation from four universities: two in Gauteng – Wits, represented by Dr Cameron Harris and me, UP by Prof Alexander Johnson and two in the Cape: University of Cape Town (UCT), represented by Dr Martin Watt and the University of Stellenbosch (SU) by Prof Hans Roosenschoon – all excellent composers. In 2015 we invited Neo Muyanga, a successful composer with links to both Wits and UCT, to come on board. Gerhard Geyser, a most efficient administrative assistant, was appointed. This was a groundbreaking initiative as nothing of this nature or scale had ever been done before in the country.

The name 'Composers National Collegium' (CNC) was crafted with an accompanying attractive website. A great deal of interest nationwide was generated as a collaborative learning experience. It became clear that new compositions produced by young, enthusiastic South African composers - and the brilliant performances of these works - was the beginning of a 'golden age' in student music creativity in the local landscape. Over 50 newly-composed works were publicly aired over a 5-year period. Fresh

knowledge emerged, generated by vibrant interactivity between composers, young and not-so-young. Newfound friendships were forged and budding composers gained confidence to submit their works for selection. The joy at hearing their original works come alive on stage was deeply gratifying.

The CNC spawned talented young composers, who have gone on to make a decisive mark in their field, regrettably mostly moving abroad, where greater opportunities exist. These included young composers like Amy Crankshaw-Luyendijk and Lise Morrison (both SAMRO prize-winners), plus names like Arthur Feder and Antoni Schonken (now Stellenbosch University composition lecturers), Andrew Hoole (prize winner in the jazz realm), Conrad Asman (Western art music – now making *huge* waves as a young composer in Europe and the USA), Ruben Kasselman (UP), Chesney Palmer, PhD[3] student at the University of the Free State (UFS) and many others.

The NIHSS funding enabled our committee to present public concerts around South Africa of a broad range of music selected from many different styles and genres; from Western art music to jazz, electro-acoustic and African ethnic music. This diversity encouraged all possible skills required in the music industry, from music technology, sound production and studio work for film and television. Students from Stellenbosch University dominated the scene (always a cut above). We made a point of being as inclusive as possible in our choices. Since the recognition of composition as 'research' in academia, the quality of teaching and learning in this field has risen exponentially. The number of new compositions by students and 'teacher-composers' has contributed enormously to the body of music by South African creators and this, in turn, has provided a new repertoire for soloists and ensembles to perform.

Private students

I decided to take on a few private students at home in the mid-1970s:

3 Doctor of Philosophy is the highest academic degree awarded by most universities in many countries.

Hans Roosenschoon was one of the first – a most delightful and talented young man. Today he is a renowned South African composer and Professor Emeritus at Stellenbosch University. As was the case with many students at the time, Hans's original music was composed in a conservative tonal idiom within a hymn-like structure when he first came to me. My own vibrant exposure to the *avant garde* movements in Europe had made me a fanatical adherent of the more experimental contemporary style, which at the time seemed to be the only relevant way to compose. In my zealous youth, I viewed modern composition through a narrow lens, and the trends of the time dictated my creativity.

To Hans's credit, he enthusiastically embraced the New Music styles and was soon excelling at writing first-rate contemporary works with experimental zeal. I had brought loads of modern sheet music scores back from Europe. I recall how Hans admired and imbibed the music of the Polish *avant garde*. The experimental music notation of selected Polish composers provided visually attractive and valuable techniques for a young composer to be empowered to imitate the exciting sound-world of 20th century Polish icons like Krzysztof Penderecki, Witold Lutosławski, Kazimierz Serocki and others.

During our time together, Hans, on my recommendation, enthusiastically purchased the score of Igor Stravinsky's 1913 work, *The Rite of Spring*. For Hans it was an artistic leap to leave behind traditional composition methods and proactively embrace the sound-world of a composer like Stravinsky. I was recently deeply moved to learn that Hans had (nostalgically, perhaps) kept a handwritten testimonial letter of mine for him dated 31 May 1976. I believe that he is undoubtedly one of South Africa's finest and most talented composers and teachers – the superb results of his own composition students, mostly from Stellenbosch, bear testimony to that. Graduate composers like Arthur Feder, Antoni Schonken and Lise Morrison have been prominent and successfully active on the current composition scene.

When the composer Philip Miller first came to me as a private composition student, he was already a qualified lawyer employed by People Opposed to Women Abuse (POWA). He spent

time studying film music in Birmingham, UK and has excelled at composing multimedia and interactive music. He has acquired a sterling international reputation as a sound-artist. Philip shines in collaborative work in theatre, film and sound installations. He has also incorporated African elements in his musical style and is frequently commissioned to compose soundtracks for huge audio-visual artistic projects, several with the world- renowned artist, William Kentridge, best known for his superb artwork, drawings and animated films. I believe I was very helpful to Philip at the time when the skill of notating complex African rhythms was imperative.

Reflecting on the influences that informed my teaching years, it was undoubtedly György Ligeti, who had inspired me most profoundly. On my return to South Africa from Germany, I was so galvanised by my time with the great master that I focused virtually exclusively on his original music when teaching contemporary composition. Ligeti's work encompassed the fresh, new stylistic and musical techniques required in the world of modern Western art music. I delivered many lectures on Ligeti and his music to my Wits students as well as to outside music organisations and other groups, including Rotary and Toastmistress. These were, I believe, rare treats for the South African audiences, who had largely never heard about this brilliant, cosmic and other-worldly composer and his music.

Music Colleagues

When I first began lecturing at Wits in 1975, Peter Cohen also accepted a post in the Music Department. Though considerably older than me, we had met at UP in 1966, where we had both studied music. Peter's parents, like many who do not regard music as a viable career (*especially* for a male), viewed the study of music as a distraction, not a profession and pressured him to obtain a law degree first, which he did.

When I initially arrived in Hamburg in 1973 as a student of György Ligeti's, it was Peter Cohen who very kindly picked me up from the airport and helped me to find student accommodation with Frau Helga Arna, a Jewish German woman. I found Peter's

decision to study for his doctorate in Germany somewhat perplexing, being relatively soon after the Holocaust, particularly with such an obvious Jewish surname. Later it made sense to me when I learnt that his mother, a prominent Johannesburg lawyer, had outsourced her son's upbringing and education to German governesses. He was therefore proficient in the language and steeped in both German culture and rigour. He referred to himself as 'Herr Doktor Peter Cohen'.

In 1976, the Wits Music School boasted an impressive line-up of teachers, widely considered among the best in the country. In that year, Prof Douglas Reid, composer and lover of choral music, took over as Head of Department. Colleagues who stand out in my mind in those early years were Walter Mony, Pauline Nossel, Carl van Wyk, Cathy Primos, Robin Walton, Peggy Haddon, Joyce Barker, Marguerite Barker-Reinecke, Mary Rörich, and Marian Friedman. Malcolm Nay, still a student at the time but later a member of the music teaching staff, became one of my most trusted, supportive and closest friend at Wits. Pauline too became a cherished and beloved friend till today, a friendship of nearly 50 years. Regina Bodnya, a skilled pianist and teacher, who currently lives and teaches in Toronto, joined the piano faculty in 1993 and she too, became a valued colleague and close friend.

Gratitude for Graduates

My most rewarding and stimulating work was in my post-graduate mentoring, teaching and supervision; this one-on-one interaction allowed me to get to know the more advanced students, their backgrounds and the contexts within which they worked. The material was intellectually more challenging and inspiring, though infinitely more demanding.

Masters of the Art

I was most fortunate to be allocated post-graduate students with talent and potential.

Nikki Richard, currently HoD (music) at King David School, Victory Park Johannesburg and a dear friend, produced a powerful, well-researched and poetically rich Master's thesis on *Klezmer*

music[4]. She was one of several of my students to be awarded her degree *cum laude.*

Bryan Schimmel, renowned musician and veritable music genius, also obtained his Master's *cum laude* and is one of South Africa's most sought-after arrangers and music directors of stage shows, with many popular productions under his belt for example, "Chicago" and "Jersey Boys".

Angelique Mouyis, my Master's student, a South African woman of Greek descent, is a talented singer and composer who produced a definitive book on the music and life of national Greek cultural treasure Mikis Theodorakis of *Zorba the Greek* fame. She is active today at Rutgers University in the USA (where she obtained her PhD). We remain in contact to this day. There is little more satisfying professionally as a teacher than seeing one's past students succeed in the competitive world out there.

I worked with Bernett Mulungo on his Master's degree in multi-media composition for music theatre; being in a school of arts helped to facilitate performances across the disciplines. Today Bernett occupies an academic post in music theory and composition at UNISA.

Vusi Ndebele, my Master's student, explored his passion for cinema soundtracks by producing meticulous research into Hans Zimmer's film music. Vusi was a teacher at the Music Academy in Zimbabwe and is a highly underrated musician of great talent. He has now instituted his own school in Bulawayo. I am particularly fond of him. He honoured me recently by making a special visit to my home on his return to Zimbabwe from a holiday in the Cape. I was very happy to meet his beautiful wife, Eppy, and their exceptionally gifted son and daughter.

Chesney Palmer, a talented young composer, obtained his MMus under my tutelage through the UFS and is currently completing his PhD through UFS. He is a superb young composer who has won prizes for composition, the most recent coveted prize

4 Traditional instrumental music of Ashkenazi Jewish origin, played at social functions like weddings.

(March 2025) having been awarded to him in 2nd place at the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra's Young Composers Competition.

It has been my great pleasure to have been frequently invited to be external examiner for post-graduate degrees at virtually every other South African university. Financial reward never enters the picture, as the fees are not remotely commensurate with the hundreds of hours spent reviewing the material and producing a comprehensive report. It is truly a 'labour of love' in encouraging young developing and blossoming talent.

PhD doctoral degrees

Aside from my own Wits PhD students, there have been several students studying at other universities in South Africa who have requested that I be appointed as supervisor for their doctoral degrees. Among these was Dr Rexleigh Bunyard, talented composer, conductor, pianist and violinist (now living in the UK), who obtained her DMus at Pretoria University under my mentorship, having presented a portfolio of compositions focusing on stage musical works, including a beautiful oratorio titled *Requiem for the Living*.

Another well-known South African composer, whose DMus degree I supervised, was Hannes Taljaard (University of Potchefstroom, now referred to as North West University, NWU), who now lives, teaches and composes in Vienna. After taking several high-level courses he has specialised in a form of music plus movement called the *Dalcroze* (eurhythmics) method. I believe that he actively contributes to music and cultural life in Austria.

Another talented PhD composition student of mine at Wits was the gifted composer Waldo Malan, previously from the Eastern Cape now living in the United States. Waldo is a devoted family man and devout Christian who has worked in different missions globally.

I leap to the last years of my 43-year career as Professor of Composition and Theory in Music in the Wits School of Arts – to a period that reveals a meaningful and beautiful thread in the fabric

of my life that links me retrospectively with my revered teacher, György Ligeti and my final PhD student, Lukas Ligeti, his son.

2nd Movement

Coming Full Circle – *The Lukas link*

In 2005, the first *Unyazi* Electronic Music Festival was held at the Wits Great Hall, the Wits Theatre and in other venues around the campus. Seeing the name 'Ligeti' on the concert programme (not exactly a common name) and listening to Lukas's solo performance on an instrument called the *marimba lumina* (a digital form of the marimba), I decided to go backstage and introduce myself. I congratulated him on his superb performance, which was apparently his first on this electronic percussion instrument. When I was studying in Hamburg in the mid-1970s I did not recall the Ligeti family having a young son, but discovered that very evening that Lukas's father was indeed my esteemed past teacher, the renowned György Ligeti. I was enormously excited to connect these dots.

Lukas, sponsored by the Goethe-*Institut* in South Africa and the Austrian Embassy, was invited to participate in the festival. He developed an appreciation for Johannesburg and consequently decided to extend his stay by a couple of weeks. During this time, he gave a fascinating lecture on digital arts and electronic music in Africa. This was the beginning of a wonderful friendship and a collegial and professional relationship. Lukas shared a great deal with me about his life growing up in Vienna and though only 9 at the time may have recalled his famous father referring to me as his 'student from South Africa'.

Serendipitously Tania Leon, renowned Cuban-American composer-conductor and friend of Lukas Ligeti's had originally suggested to him that he contact me when in South Africa on concert tour. However, having personally met him at his 2005 concert, I invited him as our 'colleague in common' to be composer-in-residence at Wits Music for several weeks in 2006. He arrived on a very cold, rainy day in August. I enthusiastically hurried to his residence to welcome him and supply him with a

heater, knowing how freezing it gets in winter in Johannesburg. I hoped his love affair with the city would not be dampened by unwelcoming weather! Not only did it not 'dampen' Lukas's love for South Africa, but he has maintained a particular love for Johannesburg, with its diversity of people, cultures, sound-worlds and biorhythms.

While at Wits, Lukas gave inspiring lectures and workshops. During one such fascinating lecture he spoke about *fractals*, relating geometric shapes to the re-ordering of drums in a drum kit. He described how by changing the placing of the drums and applying a polymetric drumming technique, one could yield wonderfully unexpected results and intriguing new mathematical and rhythmic designs. It is frequently stated that music and mathematics are closely aligned.

Lukas returned to South Africa in 2009 and in 2010 and presented lectures to my senior composition class. This proved to be a life-changing experience for him, as at this very composition class he met his future wife, Ilke Alexander, an exceptionally talented flautist and one of my composition students. Not unexpectedly, Lukas frequently returned to Johannesburg.

I was surprised and singularly honoured when he requested me to supervise his PhD in Composition at Wits. He could have chosen any American or European university to read for his doctorate, but he chose Wits, with me as his promoter. I was thrilled and flattered as Lukas had already acquired an international reputation as an accomplished drummer, improviser, and formidable composer. From a Ligeti student (of his father) in the past, I now became the mentor of his son – this link completing our beautiful circle.

I resonated well with Lukas's topic, *Hand in Hand into the Unknown: The Potential of Experimental Intercultural Collaboration in African Music* but found myself having to read numerous books plus supporting sources to update my knowledge. I was always enriched by this research, my own passion for African music alive as ever. In 2013, Lukas took up part-time residence in Johannesburg and registered for his doctoral degree. This was submitted in 2019, and in 2020 he graduated with his PhD

in composition. Cognisant that he would often return to South Africa, he bought a beautiful home in Johannesburg. He accepted a post as Assistant Professor in Composition at the University of California in 2015, Irvine which he occupied until his decision in 2021 to resign and move on. He currently holds a coveted composition post at the university in Brussels.

A further link of my Ligeti-related studies is the work on Lukas by my Master's (and later my PhD) student Ntshengidzeni Netshivhambe, fondly known as Evans, who hails from Venda. Evans fortuitously wrote his Master's dissertation on Lukas's music, entitled *Lukas Ligeti as Unique Electro-Acoustic Composer-Performer: With Specific Reference to the Instrument, Marimba Lumina.* As an academic supervisor of a thesis, it is imperative to have knowledge within a particular topic. I was thankfully already familiar with Lukas's music.

Some 20 years ago, I took Evans under my wing when he joined Wits as an undergraduate BMus student; I facilitated several bursaries and scholarships throughout his academic career. His dedicated mother, Irene, sacrificed a great deal for her son to reach the pinnacle of his academic potential and to escape the ravages of poverty. She crafted a meticulously knitted blanket and sewed an elegant linen cover for me featuring the inscription, 'Thank you' along with an embroidered image of a keyboard. I was very moved by her gift, and we continue to keep in touch.

In 2019, Evans completed his PhD in composition in the Wits School of Arts under my supervision – as the first black South African to obtain a doctoral degree in composition at a South African university. As part of his African music studies, he researched Venda music with specific reference to *Tshigombela* and *Tshikona* dances. Because of his integrated cultural knowledge and passion for indigenous music, he was a joy to work with, especially my pleasure at becoming informed and enriched by Venda music.

Evans incorporates layers of Venda rhythmic elements into African art music. His unique contribution lies in developing written notation for African dance modes to be incorporated into the music score, something that has never been done before.

His doctoral thesis on the use of traditional and contemporary music composition in South Africa continues to reshape intercultural research.

I assisted Evans over the years in obtaining employment positions in the local music industry and in academia; the first in 2012 at the South African Music Education Trust, where he taught music theory, education, arts, culture, and heritage; in 2015 at SAMRO, where he was responsible for stakeholder management and the archive. After occupying an ethnomusicology post in the Music Department at UP, he has been appointed to a theory and composition post at UNISA. His focus lies in African music identity through African art composition. This is a wonderful success story in our current need for skilled black employment in the Arts where Evans is a notable role model.

Another of my talented PhD students, of whom I am exceptionally proud, is Jonathan Crossley, a world-renowned guitarist, covering diverse genres in performance practice. One word to define Jonathan would be 'innovation' – a visionary with inventive energy, unbridled talent and brilliance.

Jonathan's emigration to the UK in 2021 was a devastating loss for me personally and for Wits particularly – indeed, for music in South Africa generally. He briefly took a position at Northampton University in popular music, but in February 2022 was appointed lecturer in music technology in the Music Department of Liverpool University; there he is making huge waves with new and disruptive programmes, introducing quirky and ground-breaking courses to final-year students, titled, for example, "From Hardware Hacking to Hyper-Instruments". They are most fortunate to have Jonathan's expertise and pioneering skills in Liverpool, home of the Beatles and the 2023 Eurovision Contest – a success story for a past "Witsie"!

I found my years of teaching remarkably rewarding and inspiring. I was when my *alma mater*, Pretoria University recognised my many years of teaching and lecturing, as well as my commitment to advancing music education and student upliftment in South Africa. In early September 2008, I was awarded an honorary Doctorate in Education by the University

of Pretoria (D.Ed. *honoris causa*) inscribed with, "in recognition of her dedication to academic, scholarly and practical music education at tertiary level". After a delicious luncheon at the alumnus house, *Kaya Rosa* on campus, the dean, dignitaries, my family and I walked across the familiar lawns to the Aula for the ceremony, jogging nostalgia for the many exceptionally happy memories there that I treasure to this day. I was duly capped by the Vice-Principal, Nthabiseng Ogude and given a medal, as well as the doctoral scroll. My lecture to the esteemed gathering was titled *Saying it With Music*. My address emphasised my support for music education and women's rights, especially in the arts.

3rd Movement

The Composer in me

Despite an extremely heavy teaching schedule at Wits Music, I was determined to continue being creative and to carry on composing. As mentioned, my awakening to new styles had been a seminal one, culminating in my composition studies with Ligeti and Grové. This arousal though, originated earlier during my MMus studies with my distinguished supervisor, Prof Arthur Wegelin, who upon his return from Darmstadt to South Africa in 1970 had introduced me to mind-expanding experimental *avant garde* scores and recordings. I became fully receptive to the musical neurons which connect composers, performers and listeners in a global endeavour to create, and find new meaning in sound, symphonic sensation and semitone sequences; softly, sometimes in silence, other times in chaotic cacophony.

Going back in time to June 1976, soon after my appointment at Wits, the Cape Performing Arts Body invited me to participate in the lecture series "*A Composer Speaks*". This was one of the most affirming opportunities a young composer could experience, introducing and promoting one's new music to the public. I addressed an enthusiastic audience in Cape Town about my goals as a composer and presented a concert of my original compositions, including in the role of conductor and pianist. The programme included *Seven Variations on an Original Theme* for

Piano, *Three Dimensions* for Piano and *Five Pieces for Woodwind Quartet and Soprano.*

I feel that composers should be able to conduct and play their own works, but it is generally better for other instrumentalists to interpret instrumental solos or works for small ensembles. Having said that, I freely admit that this belief may largely be prompted by my envisaging myself as a *wannabee* Toscanini, a conductor of note! Nevertheless, objective instrumentalists can bring much more to the music; they approach it as a new challenge, with fresh eyes and ears, discovering profound elements and associations that even the composer may not have realised. I had long since decided that my compositions were better off in the skilled hands of active exponents who could enhance my work with their insightful new interpretations. I'm often stunned by performances of my works by others, who deliver unexpected and alternative readings. I rarely perform my compositions, leaving piano performances up to the professionals like Wessel van Wyk, accomplished pianist and lifelong friend.

Wendy Shapiro, in *The Cape Times* (15 June 1976), referred to me as a "27-year-old composer... who already has a formidable list of musical achievements behind her". In a similar pre-publicity article in the *Sunday Times* (6 June 1976), Len Ashton quoted me as saying: "CAPAB is the first performing arts council to give composers such an opportunity." I added: "I am not married, which is what has made all this possible" – famous last words! Three months later, I was married to Michael Rudolph[5].

After that beautiful evening, reviewer John Benzon (15 June 1976) wrote in the *Cape Times*: "Jeanne Zaidel is a formidable lady who writes formidable music. Her *Seven Variations on an Original Theme* played by herself, her *First Sonata* and *Three Dimensions*, played by Wessel van Wyk, all showed her to be original and tightly disciplined. However, it was the recent *Five Pieces for Woodwind Quartet and Soprano* [based on my poem *Tame Night*] that was the event of the evening. The [soprano] soloist Elizabeth Reinhardt was greatly impressive in this performance. The total

5 Michael was in the audience that evening, having followed me to Cape Town on a fortuitous whim.

impact was something that will live on in the listeners for some time to come. Miss Zaidel is clearly an important figure."

Referring to the same work, an article by Arend Koole in *Die Burger* (15 June 1976) proclaimed: "At the first hearing of her newest, already renowned work... I got the impression that a masterpiece was under discussion. The notable individualistic handling of the voice, sometimes spoken, sometimes vocal, the rich gamut of colour in the voice and winds, the strict serialism combined with the aleatoric[6] elements, formed a contemporary work that can compete on any international stage; Jeanne Zaidel undeniably delivered herewith evidence of outstanding giftedness." (15 June 1976).[7]

Antoinette Silvestri, a journalist writing in *The Cape Argus* (14 June 1976), was understandably intensely irritated that my section of the evening only began at 9.45pm and stated: "We should have been fresh to listen to this music... ears tire of the dissonances, the timeless gaps in the music, the solving of the paradox, presented in the steely, yet esoteric wondering of this inspiration." She left before my last work was performed, as it was already 10.30pm.

Journalists over the years who interviewed me seemed fixated on the conundrum of how I juggled my roles as composer, teacher, mother, and wife – an enigma I have yet to solve myself. In an article *Composer Believes Experiences Influence Work* (UNISA[8] News, November 1977), I was quoted as responding: "Marriage and my baby daughter Natalie, now nearly seven months old, have had a definite effect on my composing. My music is now much warmer and creatively enriching ... The experience of giving birth inspired me – I could hear the sound of the foetal heartbeat on the monitor and the weird, drum-like sound of the drip... I could use all these sounds in a piece of music." What a far cry from my previous philosophy that domesticity would somehow negatively impact on my creativity!

6 This applies to music that requires random note choices within basic directions by the composer. It can make use of statistical or digital techniques.
7 Translation from the Afrikaans by the author.
8 University of South Africa

I worked on an operatic adaptation of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* in the late 1970s, which was part of my doctoral portfolio submission. Sadly, all attempts at obtaining the Orwell family's permission to produce an opera based on this powerful and well-known satire met with constant refusals. Thus it has remained in manuscript all these years.

Two deeply gratifying *Tribute Concerts* featuring compositions written during my Wits tenure were presented in celebration of my many years at Wits:

The first was held in the Atrium on 16 September 2008 marking my 60th birthday; the second on 6 August 2013, my 65th year, marked an important milestone, namely my 'official' retirement, from Wits after more than 40 years of close and meaningful association with Wits Music. In addition to family and friends, both concerts were attended by very dear colleagues and students, who performed my compositions professionally and with scintillating style.

At the first glittering occasion on 16 September, I was surrounded by my entire family and closest friends, including the Glatt, Erster and Pels families plus esteemed guests like Justice Albie Sachs and the psychiatrist and sculptor-poet Dr Bernard Levinson and his artist wife Sheila. My beloved sister-in law, Pam Zaidel, travelled to South Africa for this special concert. In her completely *un-biased* quote to the journalist Rita Lewis after the concert, she stated: "Zaidel-Rudolph had passed from being 'made of gold' [my mother's maiden name] to being a (musical) gem – a diamond." Pamela is as generous with herself as she is with her affectionate praise.

It was a particular joy that two of my closest friends, Pauline Nossel and Malcolm Nay, performed my two-piano work, *The Juggler and the King*. It takes enormous dedication to learn a completely new work, but I could not have chosen a better duo to interpret my piece so magnificently. They revealed the nuances and deep symbolic meanings suggested in the title[9]. In the same concert, Malcolm and Valery Andreev gave a riveting presentation

9 The 'juggler' represented elements of shallow, flippant and pleasure-seeking attributes, while the 'king' represented ethical,

of my *Suite Afrique*[10] for viola and piano. It was a frenetic, exciting performance by exceptionally passionate and talented performers, who both appeared to be ready to lift off from the stage!

Michal George's performance of my challenging *Five African Sketches for Guitar*, was sensitively and meaningfully performed. This was my *one* (and so far, only) foray into writing for classical guitar. I learnt that, unless one plays the guitar, it is an exceptionally difficult instrument for which to compose, particularly in a virtuosic Western art mode.

My first passion will always be for composing *piano* works. It's the instrument with which I began my career, grew up with and the one that feels like an extension of my body.

What an honour it was to have pianists of the calibre of Wessel van Wyk, who has long been a brilliant exponent of my work, and Inette Swart, a talented young virtuoso (now a medical doctor) as interpreters of my piano works; Wessel in *Three Dimensions* and Inette performing *Virtuoso 1* and *Partials and Pedals*. The latter piano work was commissioned for the UNISA 11th International Piano Competition, January 2008. One of the most exciting performances of this work was at Carnegie Hall in New York in May 2008 in the expert hands of world-class pianist Evan Mack, who continued playing this particular composition at many of his concerts in the USA.

My quintet, *Margana*[11] for Flute, Violin, Cello and two Percussionists, expertly conducted by Maestra Rexleigh Bunyard, was beautifully performed by Helen Vosloo (flute), Zanta Hofmeyr (violin), Susan Mouton (cello), Magda de Vries (percussion) and Rudolf van Dyk (percussion). Worth noting is that the title, *Margana* is an *anagram* of the word '*Anagram'*, the title of a work originally composed by my erstwhile, highly respected composition teacher, Prof Arthur Wegelin. The première performance of *Anagram* took place 23 years earlier in October

majestic and serious moral values – expressed in contrasts in the music.

10 This African Suite was originally composed for cello and piano.

11 Inclusion of notes on selected compositions is to be found in the Annexure.

1985 at a concert in the Musaion (at UP) in honour of Arthur Wegelin, to whom I dedicated my piece. The seven-section work with African rhythmic elements ends with a four-note theme derived from the letters A E G E, from the name 'Arthur Wegelin'.

In a very early review of that concert, Frikkie Strydom in the *Pretoria News* (8 October 1985), referred to the piece as "a meritorious work [which] was unquestionably one of the best compositions of the evening". In a review in *Beeld* (8 October 1985), Paul Boekkooi referred to me as having developed an ear for sound texture and "the manner in which she utilises, especially the percussion instruments, ranging from a police whistle, to be blown by one of the percussionists, to a duet on the xylophone, surpasses conventional limits". I was never one to shy away from new and exciting instruments and sonorities.

Composing philosophy and process

I am often asked by students and friends how I begin to conceive a composition. I was quoted by a journalist as saying: "Ideas start to germinate, ones that don't generally exist in music. I don't know where they come from, but as soon as I start building on them consciously, they dictate their own sense and form" (Pretoria News, 22 September 1977).

I would offer a different answer today, as my thinking is no longer conceptually based, but rather immersed in diverse sound-worlds which incubate and generate a more intuitively-based music result. The process is a distillation of many years of listening, learning, respect for and passionate love of music.

I begin the process with an empty 'palette' then … gathering ideas mulling around in my head, hammering to get out, I commit myself to a few core tones in a viscerally rhythmic shape; depending for its further construction on the 'brief 'or requirements of an external commissioning body. The thrilling part being that soon, this core material dictates a momentum of its own in a sound-world that seems to use my musical brain purely as a conduit, through which aural messages are being received. It is as though I give over to a higher power which is channelled through me, reflecting the sum of my life's sonic

and visceral experiences. I definitely do not claim to be another Rosemary Brown, who was apparently 'contacted' by dead composers, like Chopin, to continue composing and notating their music on this earth!

I am aware that this is probably an obscure explanation of an experience which is at once intuitive, intellectual, emotive, learnt, instinctive and spiritual. What begins as a rhythmic contour, perhaps no more than a few shapes, takes root and begins to develop. With that, the timbre or colour of the chosen instruments comes through loudly in my inner ear: I know intuitively what colour the sound needs to be, a form of synesthesia (hearing sound in colour), then the tempo, the texture and form lead the initial voice into and out of 'sound scaffolding'.

For me composing is a journey filled with surprises, particularly when the music resists an idea and seems guided by an impetus of its own. Following an inexplicable directive, even without fully understanding where it originates or is leading can be somewhat intimidating, though profoundly rewarding and illuminating.

My journey has taken me from composing in a contemporary art music style to incorporating polyrhythms based on ethnic indigenous African music, the sacramental richness of Jewish music and accepting influences from the improvisational rapture of jazz, the exigencies of music theatre and opera and the fun and abandon of rock opera. It also opened me to teaching music in ways that were revelatory for students. My teaching experience also taught me the crucial difference between gimmickry[12] and genuine art.

12 By 'gimmickry', I am referring to the brazenness of artists like Yoko Ono, who released *Two Minutes Silence*, a completely silent track which ostensibly referenced John Cage's seminal *4:33*, and her equally outrageous *No, No, No!*, a track on her 1981 album *Season of Glass*, beginning with the sound of four gunshots (her husband John Lennon had been fatally shot four times in the back by Mark Chapman), followed by Ono screaming repeatedly. The literary counterpoint to this would be writers insisting that certain pages of their novels be printed upside down, requiring the reader to flip the book, or printed in mirror-image text, forcing readers to view the page in front of a mirror.

Outreach activities: visiting artist-composer in residence

In 2012 I was in a privileged position as Head of Department (HOD) to motivate and facilitate the hosting of visiting professors. Serendipitously and another link in the international music chain was Maestra Tania Leon, renowned Cuban-American composer-conductor and friend of Lukas Ligeti's. She had originally suggested that Lukas contact me when in South Africa. I had had the privilege of Tania conduct my *Tempus Fugit* for Orchestra at the Linder Auditorium, Johannesburg in 1986. She and I were surprised to discover that the music material we independently used as composers had very similar rhythmic and metric qualities, despite being on different continents and cultures – a fascinating musical collective unconscious! It cemented our friendship.

I invited Tania, music professor at City University of New York (CUNY), to take up residency as a Mellon Distinguished Scholar in the Wits School of Arts from 16 July - 24 August 2012. Unable to resist the alliteration, I described Tania, when introducing her to the faculty, as a 'colourful, collaborative, creative composer-conductor of colour from Cuba'!

Her six weekly seminar classes for final-year composition specialists challenged their pre-conceptions and greatly impacted them. This interaction was very valuable, as she spoke about notational and performance challenges in the *real* world, not just as a theoretical construct. Under her guidance the students produced exquisitely handwritten, rather than computer-generated scores. She had initiated several dance/composition collaborations in the USA and suggested the possibility of creating a similar choreographer-composer programme at Wits. This exciting interdisciplinary initiative came to fruition, with Tania playing several music examples from her own work, done in collaboration with the Harlem Dance Theatre of New York.

As part of her academic responsibilities, Tania gave a public lecture entitled *Polyrhythmia in Cuban Music and Cultural Influences*, which resonated strongly with lovers of African music. A fascinating panel discussion took place in the Wits School of

Arts on the topic of *Creolité*[13] with Tania as keynote speaker. Her life and experiences in Cuba framed the discussion and generated a vibrant debate on this important topic.

I was happy to share a significant event with Tania before she returned to the USA. Former President Nelson Mandela's last birthday, 18 July 2013 (he died on 5 December 2013) presented me with a musical opportunity. I organised a performance of my tribute song to Mandela called *He Walked to Freedom*, sung by the expanded Wits Choir outside the Wits Origins Centre. Tania, among many others, enjoyed this beautiful performance.

Wits Music high notes and low notes: legacy, leaders and locations

Prof Anton Hartman, a music heavyweight, renowned conductor and former Head of Music at the SABC, led Wits Music for two years starting in 1979 and was followed by acting head, Prof Henk Temmingh, a renowned Dutch-born South African composer. He was Head of Music at Potchefstroom University and later became Head of Music at UP. Henk's younger brother, Roelof, one of South Africa's leading composers, is recognised as an excellent writer of opera. Both brothers were witty, ebullient and extrovert.

Prof Walter Mony, violist and orchestral conductor, took over the music reins after Temmingh. He was a colourful character, with his inimitable Canadian *joie de vivre* and irrepressible, though *risqué*, sense of humour. Not a day passed without my being cornered by Walter, desperately wanting to share a joke, laughing raucously at his own wittiness. He was very practical-performance orientated, and we entered a phase of joyful live music-making. Walter's establishing of the Wednesday student lunch-hour concerts remains a noteworthy and rich launching pad and platform for students to perform publicly.

The Music Department was initially located on the third floor in the building then known as Senate House.[14] In the bigger

13 A word describing the diverse cultural, ethnic and linguistic differences in a country like Cuba.

14 The building is today known as the Solomon Mahlangu House.

picture of university bureaucracy, the music department was frequently treated like a stepchild and unceremoniously relocated several times to different buildings around the campus. This, we were told was due, in part, to the university's effort to contain the noise of students practising, which could 'disturb' those around. I recall a move to University Corner in the late 1970s. We were shunted to several floors on and above the 14th level in the old Lawson's Building, with its revolving restaurant on the top floor. The journey to our offices was a perilous one in rickety and aged elevators that shuddered and often got stuck between floors. For a claustrophobe like me, each day began with a nightmare!

The Music department's next move on campus was to the South West Engineering (SWE) building in July 1990, endowed with a beautiful edifice, imposing pillars and impressive steps, similar to the magnificent Wits Great Hall edifice. Here the beauty of the old, capacious offices impressed all who visited the department and the music staff revelled in its historic glory. I felt like a princess in a huge and majestic office that I had all to myself.

One of the smaller rooms housed a pioneering electronic music laboratory with an early digital synthesiser, the *Synclavier*, and the early Atari computer, equipment that (like with most technology) rapidly became outdated. The renowned trumpeter and EVI[15] performer, Bruce Cassidy (of rock group 'Blood, Sweat and Tears' fame) taught electronic/pop music-arranging in a small, innovative lab, one of few at a university in those early years. The notation software then was called C-Lab (which I used extensively to compose on the old outdated floppy disks); in fact, my early arrangements of the South African national anthem were programmed in my home studio on this software program, later upgraded to E-Magic and finally to Logic.

Our stately SWE building housed the rare and valuable collection of old music instruments and books, donated by the family of the late Hans Adler. The Adler Collection comprises harpsichords and other priceless early keyboard instruments. In those days, it was protected in a temperature-controlled environment and meticulously looked after. Sadly, like so many

15 Electronic valve instrument – a digital trumpet.

other treasures donated to Wits, I suspect that this rare collection has not been adequately overseen or cared for and is likely languishing in various venues on campus.

Organ of Change

In addition to the Wits Great Hall, the *Atrium*, in the South West Engineering building, with its high ceiling and excellent acoustics, became the performance venue of choice. Wits University, since its inception in 1922, had never acquired an organ to serve recitalists, teachers or organ students. After Hartman's arrival as HoD, there had been much negotiating and fund-raising for an instrument. A substantial grant by the National Education Department, plus a contribution by SAMRO in the 1980s, ensured sufficient funds for the building and installation of an organ.

After much research by a sub-committee to determine which kind of organ would be most appropriate for Wits, John Reid-Coulter, Carl van Wyk, Walter Mony, Robin Walton and Stephan Zondagh, decided on modelling it on the Baroque organ in the Predigerkirche in Basel, with its two manuals[16] - a beautiful mixture of French and German Baroque specifications. In 1992, a gallery (a 'Juliet' balcony) was built in the Atrium - and it was there that the beautiful instrument known as the Fehrle & Roeleveld organ was finally installed.

There was concern that the booming tones of this magnificent organ would *not* be 'music to the ears' of the staff and engineering students housed on the first floor. In conversation with Coulter (2 June 2023), I learnt of a controversial and rather comical prelude to its installation. To avoid conflict, Walter and John conspired to brick up the windows leading to the upper lecture rooms. This bold idea outraged the Wits Aesthetics Committee more especially the architect, Henry Paine, who considered it tantamount to 'sacrilege' in a building with such immense historic value.

16 A finger keyboard found on an organ, harpsichord, clavichord and other similar keyboard instruments – frequently double and sometimes triple keyboards.

Despite Paine's obvious chagrin to the idea, the plan prevailed and renovations were carried out to minimise the noise. Nevertheless, the organ was only allowed to be played after 4pm on weekdays. The inaugural recital by the talented organist, Wim Viljoen, was held on 22 February 1994.

This elegant instrument was often used in the few years following, but, since 2010, has fallen into disrepair and disuse, due to the Music Department being relocated; compounded by lack of funds for maintenance and no real interest by students who no longer regarded it as 'cool' to play the organ, especially in the Baroque or Classical style. The offices around the Atrium are currently occupied by the Humanities post-graduate administration. It is most unfortunate that an instrument of such value has been allowed to deteriorate and become defunct.

Our next (reluctant) relocation, just before the new millennium, was a controversial and largely unsuccessful one, fraught with tension among the staff. However, given that Music was not initially factored into the proposed new School of Arts on main campus, there was little choice but to relocate. This expensive and cumbersome move was to the campus of the Johannesburg College of Education in Parktown. This location, home of the Linder Auditorium, subsequently known as the Education Campus, was taken over by Wits University in the early 2000s. Despite being detached from the main campus, I recall some distinct benefits of the relocation, including the use of the beautiful Derrick Lewis Room for performance and practical exams, raked lecture theatres and a vast number of practice rooms. The previous Yale Road practice block, close to the music teaching studios, had been stuffy and claustrophobic and often inhabited by vagrants and drunks.

We were finally given space back on the main Wits campus in 2001. A decision was taken by the powers that be to form the Wits School of Arts incorporating drama, fine arts and music. This became a financial necessity. At a traumatic meeting of all the arts divisions, it was decided that a department as expensive as music could only be saved from extinction by cross-subsidisation across the disciplines. At least 20 posts were lost across the Arts

Faculty and many staff members were requested to take voluntary redundancy packages. The Dean of Humanities, Prof Gerrit Olivier, facilitated the frenetic and harrowing meeting. The news was met with horror and trepidation due to the threat that *music* might well be subsumed and/or diluted in this reorientation. In my opinion, that initial fear has been borne out on several levels!

The 'great trek' back

Music moved back, lock, stock and *pianos*, to a newly renovated former Wits Dental School on the university's main campus – the new Wits School of Arts (WSOA) was born. The office I was given was none other than the one my husband, Michael, had occupied in the Wits Dental School many years earlier! New curricula and course structures had to be reimagined and reinvented across the school, with an interdisciplinary orientation in mind. A series of WSOA heads of school were chosen, including Gerrit Olivier, David Bunn, Georges Pfreunder and Brett Pyper, among others.

Prior to the radical changeover (shrinking) from a Music Department to a music 'division' in the School of Arts, the music curriculum required students to study both a primary instrument and a second practical one. The ramifications and benefits of this were huge, in that it provided students with a much broader music education and more options for future employment in the field. The 'second instrument' study was shelved at this time as being too costly for the department, since it required one-on-one tuition. In addition, a restriction was placed on a student's choice of instrument. The hope was clearly to maximise the teaching by full-time members of staff, as opposed to paying outside sessional teachers. From then on, there was consistent talk of decreasing undergraduate numbers and radically increasing numbers of postgraduate students – as well as a focus on research, since universities earn substantial subsidies from higher degree students and successful research publications. This practice is frequently referred to as 'number-crunching'.

The new School of Arts boasted extremely talented icons, from Africanist Anitra Nettleton, theatre design specialist Sarah Roberts, printmaker and art theorist Colin Richards, his wife

Penny Siopis, well-established artist to Alan Crump, a widely celebrated water-colourist and one of the youngest heads of department in the university's history. Artist colleague, Karel Nel, a real *mensch*, spent much of his time teaching art at Berkeley UCLA. The drama department then was headed up by respected playwright and theatre director Malcolm Purkey, who subsequently went on to become Artistic Director of the Market Theatre in Johannesburg. One had hoped that being in a School of Arts would encourage a great deal of interdisciplinary cross-pollination and collaboration, but this remained fairly limited.

While Wits Music was still located on the Education campus, the decision by the WSOA hierarchy to create a Chair in music precipitated a period of much turmoil, tension and mistrust within the Music Department. WSOA's David Bunn and Gerrit Olivier chose an HOD from another university, inadvisably passing over the members of the Wits Music Department.

During a concert-tour at the proposed appointee's former university, a Wits Music colleague heard from several lecturers and students how unhappy they had been under her leadership. They disclosed disturbing information about her *modus operandi*, particularly her bullying of staff and students. On his return, my colleague shared this information with the music staff. There were alleged reports regarding her conflict with colleagues and students and causing havoc in various music departments, including Durban-Westville in KwaZulu-Natal and Rhodes University in the Eastern Cape. The proposed new occupant of the Wits Chair in Music was described by a former colleague as "brilliant and capable, but … a manipulator, an intimidator and a dominator". Nevertheless, the Wits School of Arts leadership was determined to make the appointment and ignored warnings about her, particularly as regards *ad hominem* attacks.

My colleagues were in a state of disbelief and attempts to have this decision reversed were to no avail. The new occupant resolved to phase out the study of Western art music, core to any music department globally, echoing her similar unsuccessful attempts to dismantle the Western music canon at her former university. She succeeded in removing courses in music education.

She attempted to devalue the practical performance component of the degree and to ultimately remove it. She prioritized a theoretical approach over the practical component which she viewed with disdain, even though Wits Music enjoyed a sterling reputation for piano tuition and instrumental performance. She never consulted with the lecturers, riding roughshod over staff with far more experience.

Her appointment marked the onset of an intensely divisive period. This impacted all who worked in Wits Music, as well as others in the School of Arts. Teachers found the new chair intimidating and rigid and the music department became a noxious place to work. It was amazing that the department survived this torrid time. Fortunately, sanity prevailed and after less than two years in the post she was asked to leave. The Acting Head of School decided that the destructive situation could not continue and that her presence at Wits was damaging and counterproductive.

Prof Anitra Nettleton, Acting Head of the School, called in Prof Tony Lelliott from the Education campus as an external moderator and administrative Head of Music to put out the proverbial fires. It was a turbulent period in the department's history, but thankfully – and to the palpable relief of the staff – it came to an end. A highly-placed source in Fine Arts, after the chair's departure, expressed the opinion that the dismissed HOD had caused considerable discord in the music department and that 'her demise from Music was slow and painful'.

In the years following the music chair's departure, the department appointed revolving heads, including myself twice (2009 and 2012), Mary Rörich, Grant Olwage, Marie Jorritsma, Malcolm Nay, Donato Somma and currently Carlo Mombelli.

> Looking back, I'm dismayed at how vividly this episode has remained etched into my memory all these years later, and more especially the renewed outrage I feel at what transpired. The near-disintegration of the department was a relatively brief, but traumatic passage in an otherwise extremely happy and productive period of my career at Wits. Yet I am unable to omit it or soften the impact it had

> on me, not out of a spirit of vengeance or enmity, but out of residual astonishment at how a single individual could be permitted to systematically fragment a harmonious, congenial entity and bring misery to so many individuals in it. It was an experience which shattered many of my illusions about leadership, institutional vision, (or lack thereof) making irrational appointments - and individual agency. In retrospect, I was as naïve about academic culture – and the arbitrary nature of many of their most ruinous decisions - as I was about corporate ones, where I am told such intrusions are common (and generally transitory). I hope that by recounting that unhappy time in this memoir, I will finally have exorcised it.

Acceptance into the echelons of academia

Although the title of Full Personal Professor was bestowed on me in 2003, I only gave my Inaugural Lecture in 2011. This allowed me valuable time to reflect on my years at Wits and the myriad of formative and exciting events I experienced. In attendance were the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Prof Patrick Fitzgerald, Dean of Humanities Prof Tawana Kupe, Head of the School of Arts Prof Georges Pfruender, Head of Music, Dr Grant Olwage, Nick Motsatse, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of SAMRO, many honoured guests, my own family and close friends.

My address, *"Saying it With Music: A Lecture of Note(s)"*, described my jubilant drive to compose and teach music, fuelled by the need to 'speak through music' of life's secret joys, pinnacles of ecstatic expression, occasional pain and heartache. My most profound language is music not words. Music is a profoundly powerful medium of communication and may well be the most potent cultural unifier. To quote a snippet from my talk:

> French Impressionist composer Claude Debussy commented that to seek music's most profound expression, we must search *not* in the realm of words, but in the realm of sound. The great 20th-century composer, [Igor] Stravinsky, as recorded by Robert Craft (1959 p. 17)

> observed with concern: 'How misleading are all literary descriptions of musical form'. Unlike the visual arts, music only exists in the memory of the listener as it passes in time. It is a temporal art and the human body is subject to time. Just as we breathe, music too has a natural respiration of its own – it is largely governed by a pulse, a living force that humanises it.

Creatives in WSOA produced tangible artworks, but lacked tangible recognition. Conventional research and publications in tertiary institutions historically earned scholarly recognition and monetary rewards for staff members; but it was a long time coming for the composer, performer and artist to be recognised as a creative 'researcher' and to be accredited on similar or more appropriate levels of assessment. I'm proud that I was one of the first staff members in WitsMusic to be accredited as a 'composer researcher' with a rating by the National Research Foundation (NRF); thus paving the way for arts practitioners at academic institutions to apply for recognition of their 'creative research' as a category of *research*. It is no longer a question of 'publish or perish', but 'draw or die', 'compose or decompose', 'perform or pass up' and 'act or be axed'. We became visible!

Cultivation of Xhosa Ngqoko cultural treasure: fieldwork research

My on-going interest in indigenous African music, particularly in women's music, led me to focus on the enriching area of my scholarly research at Wits, namely the 'overtone' or 'throat singing' of the *Ngqoko Women's Cultural Group* in the Eastern Cape. Inspired and excited by this fascinating topic, my investigation generated not only conventional fieldwork research, but new intercultural music works composed by myself and my students. My collaboration with the Ngqoko women dates back to 2003, when I embarked on my first field trip to the Ngqoko Village in the Eastern Cape.

My devoted husband, Michael, Professor of Community Dentistry at Wits, drove me on the precarious route down to Queenstown, near the Ngqoko Village; a route often dangerously

encountering unexpected herds of cattle crossing the road. He adopted the role of equipment-water-bearer and took valuable video footage of the area and village.

I had listened to recordings of the guttural overtone singing of Xhosa women and was to be commissioned by the International Classical Music Festival (ICMF), now known as MIAGI[17], to undertake research into this unique form of singing[18].

My brief was to compose a work in Western art music style, but blended interculturally with the music of the Ngqoko Women's Cultural Group. The singing ensemble was formed in 1983 in the Ngqoko Village in Lady Frere. My major research, however, began in 2007 after receiving a substantial three-year NRF grant, when the Ngqoko group became the subject of a collaborative Wits-UCT research project.

Prior to our field trip, I approached Andrew Tracey, respected South African ethnomusicologist, for advice on what gifts to take the women for giving of their time. He said that raw chickens and fruit would be more appropriate than money. And indeed it was. These remarkable women, assisted by their mentor and translator, Tsolwana Mpayipheli, received us graciously. They shared with us the mysteries of their musical traditions and the vocal phenomenon of their 'overtone' or 'throat-singing', a vocal practice requiring years of apprenticeship in the production of this unique technique performance. The youngest member graciously brought us cups of water as we sat down. It was most humbling to witness this courtesy amid such poverty.

When given the opportunity, this choral group performs on concert platforms locally and abroad; not least, providing the sorely-needed revenue generated by their concerts towards

17 The name of this organisation, led by Robert Brooks, is an acronym: Music Is A Great Investment.

18 A musician currently doing superb work in exposing this genre to the wider world is cellist Abel Selaocoe. He is also cross-pollinating traditional African music with *Ngqoko*, as he has done with several works, including with his band Chesaba and the Manchester Collective string players in the song *Ka Bohaleng (The Sharp Side)*, referring to the common African saying that 'a woman holds a knife on the sharp side', meaning that it is women who care for us in times of hardship.

improving their very difficult and pitiful living conditions. The group consists of 11 or 12 performers, who – apart from their overtone singing, referred to as *umngqokolo*[19] – play musical bows variously called *uhadi* (*ugubhu* in isiZulu), *umrhubhe*, *ikatari* and several different small percussion and friction drums.

We hoped that the attention our research had attracted to this unique form of throat-singing would create an important archive towards the documentation and preservation of this cultural music treasure –more so because the younger generation of Eastern Cape Xhosa women do not have the same interest in continuing this specialised and difficult traditional singing, despite it being an integral part of their cultural heritage. Sadly one of the renowned founder members, Nofinishi Dywili (1928-2002), virtuoso *uhadi* bow-player[20], sadly passed away before our first field trip in 2003.

Together with one doctoral and two Master's Wits students, I set up an intra-institutional research team with Prof Anri Herbst and her doctoral student from UCT, Ncebakazi Mnukwana. From 2003 onwards, we embarked on a series of field trips to the Ngqoko Village which became an extremely enriching 'partnership' with the Ngqoko women. I describe my unique experience of my first encounter with the women:

> The singers accompanied themselves with *uhadi*, *umhrube* bows and drums. Then the singing began – like nothing I had ever heard before or will ever likely hear again – the deep resonance of the fundamental tone sounding as though it was coming out of the depths of the earth. This generated a series of overtones (or harmonics) resonating and vibrating in a multiphonic sound-world of split-tone singing leading to a circle of gloriously hypnotic sound.

The women sang about birth, children, initiation, marriage, divination, ancestor worship, prayer, rain songs, and themes

19 Like the gruff sound of a beetle. Refer to the book *Umngqokolo* by David Dargie, 1993 (self-published).

20 The 'No-' prefix to a woman's name in this community indicates that she is married.

from daily life. The generous NRF grant enabled us to procure state-of-the-art video and audio field recording equipment. Over the various visits, we recorded and videoed about 12 hours of music, which not only captured the distinctive vocal techniques of the women, but also demonstrated the accompanying dance movements and exquisite playing on traditional Xhosa instruments.

The colourful journey of the Ngqoko women's social and religious life milestones, recorded in their music, inspired me to entitle my new work *Lifecycle* for the *Ngqoko* Ensemble and Western Chamber group, depicting these significant occasions. The work incorporates live singing by the Ngqoko women accompanying themselves on a variety of bows and drums, surrounded by an ensemble of 11 Western instruments. My approach to 'musical hybridisation' is clearly reflected in the compositional processes applied in my work. I deliberately use the term 'musical symbiosis' as it implies a conscious nurturing of dualities which embody both inheritance and variation – an imperative for cultural cross-pollination and enrichment within a framework of mutual respect.

In the music of *Lifecycle*, I attempted to create a tapestry of appropriate musical elements that resulted in a soundscape of two different cultures, in which an attempt was made to retain the integrity of both, and in which both cultures remained reasonably intact and unadulterated. My goal was to set up a meeting point (as opposed to achieving an integration) of African and Western cultures. I have neither the inclination nor the intention to patronise, simplify or dilute either of the two cultures, but rather "to let the musical languages resonate with one another" (Zaidel J and Watt M, 2005).

Lifecycle was premièred at the ZK Matthews Auditorium at UNISA on 5 November 2003. It shared the platform with Ladysmith Black Mambazo, my favourite *isicathamiya*[21] group –receiving a standing ovation. The Ngqoko women from the Eastern Cape were accompanied by an ensemble of 11 Western

21 Typically *a cappella* singing without instruments in isiZulu or English

instruments conducted by the exceptionally talented composer and conductor, Hans Huyssen.

Jean Meiring, in a review of the evening in *LitNet – OnStage*, stated that "[Jeanne] succeeded in integrating the delicate drone-songs and sounds in a captivating (gripping) modern intercultural composition". In August 2005, *Lifecycle* was again performed as part of the MIAGI[22] Music Festival for Women's Day celebrations at the Cape Town City Hall. Together with a performance by the iconic isiXhosa singer and bow-player Madosini, conducted by Hans Huyssen, it was a riveting concert.

President Thabo Mbeki presented me with the Order of *Ikhamanga* for my "excellent contribution to music nationally and internationally" in October 2004. I suspect it had, in no small part to do with that beautiful Ngqoko Pretoria performance at which Mbeki was present, not only my role in the SA National Anthem.

In February 2011, the Gordon Institute for the Performing and Creative Arts (GIPCA) at UCT assisted us with the final phase of our university research by bringing the Ngqoko Women's Ensemble up from the Eastern Cape and featuring them at a concert during the UCT-sponsored conference "Emerging Modernities". The first half presented the pure traditional music of the Ngqoko women, followed by the new original music composed by me and my two post-graduate students, inspired by the group.

The programme included a piece, *Reflections* by my Master's student Kerryn Tracey plus a revised version of my piece, *Lifecycle.* We took the opportunity to hand out questionnaires to the packed audience to elicit their reaction to 'juxtaposed' music (musical content representing more than one culture). The questionnaires used principles of 'reception theory' to establish the audience perceptions and response to this hybrid form of intercultural music, enabling us to later analyse the data. Initial feedback indicated great interest in this inter-cultural art form.

During this visit to Cape Town, the Ngqoko women participated in a study done by an ear, nose and throat specialist

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at Groote Schuur Hospital. He examined their vocal cords with a stroboscope to establish the physiological action during their specialised overtone-singing. We observed this fascinating investigation on a computer screen and then documented the visuals on a DVD for later use. The visuals of throats and vibrating epiglottises were definitely not for the squeamish or faint-hearted. In spite of the extremely gruff *umngqokolo* (*sound of the beetle*) produced by the women, there was, amazingly, no visible damage to their vocal cords, as the smaller second pair of cords was used to protect the primary ones. This phenomenon was of great research interest.

We were conscious of and sensitive to important ethical considerations when engaging in an examination with vulnerable human subjects like these women – and ethics clearance had to be obtained for all these studies. A symbiotic relationship of two or more music cultures demands strict ethical considerations, especially in music, where the appropriation of another's intellectual property can be an artistic minefield. Academics need to be extra-mindful of these implications, avoiding plagiarism and adhering to music copyright laws and accreditation laws.

Tribute Farewell Concert

2013 was a time of very mixed feelings, as it was my last year teaching at Wits – my home from home for so many years. I expressed these thoughts in an emotional speech before my tribute concert:

> The programme this evening showcases a diverse range of my works in different styles and genres composed over many years. I can think of no finer tribute that Wits could have organised for me than to present an evening of my original compositions during Women's Month – we are three days away from Women's Day. I am a 'relic' who has been at Wits since 1975 and after a career in music at Wits for nearly 40 years, I can hardly believe that this is my last official year at the university.

The highlight on the concert programme that evening was a superb performance of my newly-composed piece, *Wits Trio Tribute* for Piano, Violin and Cello; this was the world première performance of a work commissioned by SAMRO especially for this grand occasion and performed by pianist Malcolm Nay, violinist Zanta Hofmeyr and cellist Maciej Lacny. The three instrumentalists comprised the 'Wits Trio' – the representative ensemble for the university at numerous concerts of chamber music. There is something uniquely heartwarming about working with musicians who are not only superb performers and colleagues, but also dear friends. This rapport exponentially enhances the quality of the music. It is equally gratifying having a work commissioned for a chamber group who will not only première it, but put in the many hours required to interpret and master a brand-new composition. I know of nothing more edifying.

An analysis of the music for the *Wits Trio Tribute* can be found in the Appendix (9).

A personal triumph was the exceptional performance of my much-publicised work *Masada* for String Quartet and Bassoon. This piece for many reasons is very close to my heart – not least that it was inspired by my ties to the Holy Land of Israel and brought back memories of special family togetherness. I trained the ensemble in the work for this concert, and I indulged my passion for conducting by taking the podium and baton myself. How blessed I was to have performers of the calibre of bassoon soloist Paul Rodgers, Zanta Hofmeyr (1st violin), Daline Wilson (2nd violin), Lizzie Rennie (viola) and Susan Mouton (cello).

Other works on the programme included two songs from my *Youth Oratorio* (2009), performed by the Wits Choir under the experienced baton of Dalene Hoogenhout; the world première of *Hebrotica* for Solo Marimba performed by the international marimbist, Alex Jacobowitz; *Virtuoso 1* for Piano, a piece which has enjoyed many wonderful performances locally and internationally, performed by Caryn Reed; *Vocalise* for Flute and Soprano performed by Khanyisile Mthethwa (in a version for 'two flutes', hastily re-arranged due to the illness of the singer) and two earlier songs, *Boy on a Swing* (poem by Oswald

Mbuyiseni Mtshali) and *Hell Well Heaven* (poem by Mongane Wally Serote), beautifully interpreted by soprano Michèle Corbin. Both poets of the song lyrics were renowned anti-apartheid arts activists.

A review of the concert by renowned critic Paul Boekkooi (in the *SA Jewish Report* (16-23 August 2013) was titled "Tribute concert does full justice to Zaidel-Rudolph". He referred to the "originality and diversity of her work... As a whole, it is perhaps one of Zaidel-Rudolph's richest outpourings of something close to absolute music." He ended the review by warmly expressing his wish that "although she is retiring from Wits, we can hopefully expect many more masterpieces from the beloved professor". These sentiments were highly emotional for me.

Although my teaching years at Wits spanned a virtual lifetime, the bond, connections and symbiotic relationship I enjoyed with my alma mater Pretoria University, remained strong and unbreakable. I enjoyed a very close friendship over the years with the Head of Music, Prof Alexander Johnson, with whom I shared a deep love of composing and performing. This manifested in much collaborative work and new commissions requested.

In 2019 *Quin-tête-à-tête* was commissioned by the Composers National Collegium (CNC, based in Pretoria) for the University of Pretoria Music Symposium held from 12 to 16 August 2019. The work was premièred by the magnificent Odeion Quartet with wonderful percussionist Gerben Grooten, in the Musaion at the University of Pretoria on the 12th August, 2019. It was visually and aurally a great treat and honour for me to have such a stellar instrumental group playing this piece. A further performance followed on the 22nd September, 2019 in the Atrium Auditorium at Wits University.

As the *tête-à-tête* in the title suggests, an animated musical conversation takes place between two music personae; in this case between the String Quartet as a homogenous group with its own character and atmosphere and the one percussionist, rotating very actively around an array of many percussion instruments scored for in the work (often referred to as the 'kitchen section'

due to the clanging noises), creating different timbres and colours (five performers in all with the string quartet).

A more detailed analysis of *Quin-tête-à-tête* can be found in the Appendix (10).

In June 2021 I was thrilled to receive Pretoria University's commission for a piece to be written for 2 saxophones and percussion. The new work was recorded in their studio for video and audio archival purposes. I called the composition *Phonic Vibes* (a popular buzzword-type title). Saxophones are conventionally thought of as jazz instruments so it was an interesting challenge to conceive of a piece of art music piece using these sonorous jazzy devices. I had the superb percussionist David Gooding in mind when writing the percussion part – and was thrilled when he was booked to play the percussion part in the recording. This composition has yet to have a live performance.

At my Wits' End: *pandemonium*

If I imagined for a moment that I would be able to bow out gracefully from Wits after my final 'official' lecturing year, I was sadly mistaken. In March 2013, the front page of the *SA Jewish Report* screamed: "Israeli pianist: victim of thuggery" (SA Jewish Report-22 March, 2013). Wits University Palestinian Solidary Committee (PSC) members disrupted a piano recital by Berlin-based, Israeli-born, internationally celebrated performer Yossi Reshef. The disruption was aggressive and terrifying. The mob broke down the door to the Atrium. They blew *vuvuzelas*. Some of them sat on the piano. On their way in, they shoved, elbowed and terrorised patrons, including elderly women who wrote to me in utter dismay following the event.

In his editorial of the *SA Jewish Report* of that week, the then editor, Geoff Sifrin, described the event: "Hooligan students stormed the concert… like a pack of baying hyenas frantic for blood, causing the concert to be aborted and the pianist escorted out by security." He referred to the whole event as a "disgrace… antithetical to the university's proud history".

It was the first time in my entire career that I felt ashamed to be associated with Wits. By some ghastly coincidence, this scheduled recital had coincided with what is known as 'Israel Apartheid Week'[23] on campus. My friend and colleague, Prof Malcolm Nay, had been assured by the acting dean of the time that if there were protests, the mob would be kept behind a barrier away from the audience. The violent result was my worst nightmare. The concert was attended by dignitaries from the Jewish community, the diplomatic corps and the art world.

Both Wits's current and newly appointed vice-chancellors, Prof Loyiso Nongxa and Prof Adam Habib, Wits Principal, were in New York, promoting Wits and raising funds for the university from benefactors and alumni, many of whom were Jewish.

The VCs were told that the police were summoned, but instructed to leave shortly by local security after coming onto campus, as the protests didn't ostensibly 'manifest in violence'. However, audience members were indeed shoved, threatened and traumatised. While Nongxa issued a press statement to quash any association between the university's politics and the anti-Israel sentiments of the protestors, the PSC's Tasneem Essop released a statement that victoriously claimed: "The cancellation [of Reshef's concert] was celebrated by the protesting students as 'cultural boycott of Israel a success'."

Reshef wrote an opinion piece in the *Jewish Report*, recounting his own experience and feelings. He reflected on the build-up – the singing and blowing of *vuvuzelas* while he was trying to concentrate on performing Beethoven's *Tempest* Sonata. "I was already feeling quite ill from stress," he wrote. "The moment the perpetrators broke into [the hall] was something of a relief; at that moment, I could stop this fight, knowing they had beaten me. Never before as an artist had I ever felt that I needed

23 The Israel Apartheid Week has been referred to as a 'hate fest'. Established in 2008, around the time of Israel's 60th anniversary, it has become an internationally observed week in March each year on university calendars, in which various speakers present opinions to students about Zionism and Israel from biased, repugnant and anti-Semitic perspective.

to fight evil and ignorance, but here I was forced to confront a moment in my life where I had to face ugliness and chaos."

The music stopped. Bedlam prevailed.

"Interrupting with the sound of *vuvuzelas* at the very end of a Beethoven sonata, one of humanity's greatest treasures is no less than a clash of cultures," Reshef continued. "The violence and hatred seen in the perpetrators' eyes is something I will never forget." For me this was representative of 'cancel culture'.

In the same issue of the newspaper, I gave permission to reproduce the letter I had written to both Professors Habib and Nongxa:

"Is this the kind of freedom for which Wits stands? Is this the kind of message that Wits sends out to the public – that if we don't like something, we are entitled to disrupt and destroy it? Of course, the concert had to stop. This was not a political rally – it was a concert. I have *never* been as devastated as I was tonight, that the public should see the kind of hooliganism that went on, on our campus, or see such barbaric behaviour, with no control from Wits's side whatsoever".

I wrote about the damage done to Wits with respect to public donors. Indeed, I received many impassioned and furious letters from former Wits supporters from around the world who questioned the wisdom of continuing their decades-long financial and other support of a university that had sanctioned such behaviour.

Rhoda Kadalie, University of the Western Cape academic, wrote an op-ed in *The Citizen*. "It remains to be seen whether the university will have the courage to go through with [charging the 11 'community members' – nine of whom were Student Representative Council (SRC) members – who contravened the university's code of conduct …] But make no mistake, university donors will know where to divert their money. As long as the Middle East conflict becomes the political football of those looking for a new activist platform, rationality will elude us, and such barbaric behaviour becomes a natural consequence of those who instil hate for Israel."

How profoundly prophetic were her words. At Wits, senior academics are still inexcusably using the Middle East as a 'political football' aligning themselves to global campus disruptions. Israel currently finds itself in an existential war in which, following the devastating October 7 2023 attacks by Hamas, many hostages are still being held by the terrorist organisation, Hamas, in the sewers and tunnels of Gaza; simply for being Israeli and/or Jewish.

The 11 students who had staged the protest were identified, photographed - and disciplinary action was expected. By mid-April, a news brief in the *Jewish Report*, stated that the students had been charged for contravention of the university's codes of conduct. In May, the disciplinary hearing was postponed until July, as students were not able to obtain *pro bono* legal representation. By August, when a replacement concert was being planned, featuring the *Daniel Zamir Jazz Quartet*, one of the finest Israeli jazz practitioners in the world, the hearings were still taking place behind closed doors.

In January 2014, it was announced that one of the 11 students was required to perform 50 hours of community service and that he and the other 10 accused had each received two-year suspended sentences. The 10 co-accused were each required to perform 80 hours of community service. Wits was commended for dealing with this situation with dignity. However the SRC had issues with these sentences! The story never appeared in the press again, nor did evidence of any punishment!

The replacement concert, hosted in the Wits Great Hall on 28 August, was described by Habib as being "in lieu of the one that was disrupted". Daniel Zamir, a soprano saxophonist, performed together with pianist Omri Mor, bassist Gilad Abro and Amir Bresler, a South African-born drummer who settled in Israel in 1991. Jazz critic Don Albert described Zamir as having "deep roots in John Coltrane, Pat Metheny, Charlie Parker, Charles Mingus and John Zorn. He takes the influences and marries them with Jewish liturgical, Indian and Arab music." The concert was something to remember! Not only did protesters harass the audience on route to the venue, with 'Kill the Jews' on placards, but because of the sheer brilliance and vitality of the music and the electricity of

the vibe that night which was quite memorable. The concert was totally electrifying!

The Yossi Reshef concert remains a disfiguring blemish on Wits's reputation. In spite of many attempts to hush up the hostility of the incident, it unseated and destabilised the very essence of the ethical foundations upon which the university is based and embroiled me in the most unpleasant of challenges: that of putting out raging cultural, political and social fires.

My overarching memories of my time at Wits, however, are of stimulating academic interchange, warm collegiality and bright, appreciative and magnificent students. After my 'official' retirement I was asked to continue supervising my existing post-graduate students (on a sessional basis) and was invited to return in 2020 to present a full semester of lectures to senior composition students. I remain grateful for those inspiring opportunities.

The official retirement age in South Africa at government and academic institutions is 65. Although I understand that young people importantly need to be given opportunities and fill academic positions, I have to wonder why the government doesn't recognise that older academics who have acquired irreplaceable experience and a lifetime of knowledge can still contribute so much in the workplace.

The end of 2013 was the culmination of a lifetime of full-time university lecturing at Wits with its tremendous rewards, in an environment that became my second home. The collegial camaraderie, friendships, laughter, and tears sustained me throughout this enriching and glorious period of my professional life. As much as my students learnt from me, I learnt far more from them – and enjoyed tremendous loyalty, appreciation, and gratitude, as evidenced in the heartwarming letters and notes received upon my retirement.



On the '11th Floor' at Wits (where the revered academic heads reside) at a function with (left to right) George Bizos, Prof Loyiso Nongxa (Wits Vice-Chancellor), me, my husband Michael and Prof Max Price



Me with several of my favourite female Wits music composition students (from left), Angelique Mouyis, me, Constantina Caldis and Susan Mallinson



Me on a research field trip to the Ngqoko Village (2003) with a local member of the Ngqoko Women's Cultural Group – wearing one of their traditional Xhosa headdresses



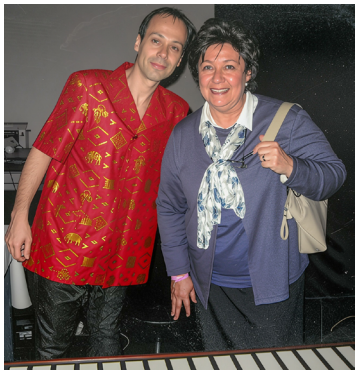
In a mud hut in the Ngqoko Village my recording of the unique overtone 'split-tone' throat singing of several Ngqoko women musicians whilst playing their 'uhadi' bows



Me in typical pose with a sheet of music and wearing pearls.



Taking a bow after a wonderful concert of my "Tempus Fugit" conducted by Tania Leon at the Linder Auditorium in 1995



Me with Lukas Ligeti: composer, drummer, performer and successful PhD student of mine (2020) pictured with the innovative instrument called the Marimba Lumina

My Role in the South African National Anthem

Ancestors and Amnesty

After a lifetime spent working conscientiously and fully engaged in composing contemporary art music that is relevant, aesthetically appealing, mostly accessible but always thought-provoking, I am, ironically, most popularly known today for my role in arranging the South African anthem, rather than for my original creative art music compositions. I find this an interesting and curious phenomenon.

In the years leading up to the demise of apartheid and the emergence of democracy in South Africa, there was a kind of frenetic urgency nationwide to give South Africa new national symbols which had meaning and value for everyone in the country.

Historical overview

In February 1995, I received a fax from Dolf Havemann, then acting Director-General of South Africa's Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, inviting me to an introductory meeting of a newly-constituted Anthem Committee to rearrange the national anthem for a democratic South Africa. The same department had provided financial assistance to me previously for attending overseas music festivals and conferences and thus I was known to them as a composer-musician. I had proved my *bona fides* with my compositions in both Western art music and African genres in local and international spheres. In Mandela's typically generous spirit, it was his wish that the new anthem be as inclusive as possible of all South African creeds and population groups, including Afrikaners. This invitation was a great honour for me and the prospect of meeting the top arts and language practitioners on this platform was truly inspiring. It was the dawn of a new era, one which was going to hopefully herald in peace and prosperity in South Africa.

Every country has its national symbols – a flag, a coat-of-arms and a motto – the purpose being to instil pride in the people of a nation. After the flag, the one which registers most in the minds of its citizens is their national anthem, a patriotic musical composition designed to promote reconciliation and nation-building. The South African national anthem after democracy in 1994 comprised a combination of two separate pieces of pre-existing vocal musics: *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* (1897), music and lyrics by Enoch Sontonga (ca. 1873–1905) and *Die Stem van Suid-Afrika* (1921), music by Marthinus Lourens de Villiers (1885–1977), lyrics by Cornelius Jacobus Langenhoven (1873–1932) (Michael Levy, 2009).[1]

Die Stem (The Voice) was originally an Afrikaans poem, written in 1918, a deeply patriotic text, extolling the beauty of the landscape and one's self-sacrifice if necessary, but from the exclusive viewpoint of the white Afrikaner. It was in 1957, nine years after the Nationalist government came to power under Prime Minister DF Malan, that it was declared the only official national anthem of South Africa. However, it was first sung in 1928 at the hoisting of the national flag on 31 May and quickly became a popular and iconic symbol of Afrikanerdom. I recall having to learn to sing this anthem in Afrikaans in our English-speaking primary school in the 1960s.

In 1993, I recall an important proclamation being issued in terms of the provisions of Section 248 and read with Section 2 of the Republic of South Africa's Constitution; it stipulated that both *Die Stem* and *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* would be the country's national anthems, to be sung consecutively. Although this was democratically appropriate, it would result in an anthem lasting over five minutes (arguably the longest anthem internationally). It was soon understood to be impractical if both anthems were to be retained in their original forms. It was President Nelson Mandela's wish that they be combined and shortened.

1 The article was commissioned from Michael Levy, retired SAMRO musicologist of 35 years, to set out SAMRO's understanding of the historical record and copyright status of our national anthem.

The words of the first stanza of *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* were originally written as a hymn in isiXhosa by Enoch Sontonga, at the tender age of 24 in 1897. The music was documented by him in tonic solfa[2] in an exercise book, but he died before it was published. Seven additional isiXhosa stanzas were added later by the poet Samuel Mqhayi in 1927. Having been composed as a hymn, it represents a fusion of African and Western cultures. It is an interesting fact that it became a pan-African liberation struggle song and was adopted as a national anthem of five countries, including Zambia (1964–1973), Tanzania (from 1961), Namibia (1990 briefly) and Zimbabwe (1980–1994) after independence, and then by South Africa after the dismantling of apartheid (from 1997). During apartheid, the song became representative of the struggle against oppression. However, while it was popular among black people, it was banned by the white apartheid authorities, who stringently monitored what was aired on radio and in public.

Michael Levy (2009), in his report on the new anthem, states:

> The SA Cabinet (1995) established an anthem committee to produce a shortened version in both choral and instrumental settings. Dr Ben Ngubane, [then] Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, invited the following people in January 1995 to form a committee to work out a choral and instrumental shortened version: The members of the committee were Professor Mzilikazi Khumalo (Chairman), Dolf Havemann (Secretary) and language experts Professor Elize Botha (Afrikaans), Professor Masizi Kunene (isiZulu), Professor John Lenake (Southern Sesotho), Fatima Meer, activist and close friend of Mandela, renowned poet Dr Mongane Wally Serote and music luminaries Prof Khabi Mngoma[3], Prof Johan

2 A method devised to mainly teach singers in a choir who do not read conventional music notation; it is a system of naming the notes of a music scale by syllables, rather than letters, and is used extensively in traditional African choirs.

3 Mngoma's daughter, the superb mezzo-soprano Sibongile Khumalo – a globally acclaimed opera, jazz and traditional music singer, as well as an accomplished violinist – would later incorporate sections of the melody of *Nkosi Sikelel i'Afrika* into her performances, dividing audiences into different voice registers and

de Villiers, Richard Cock, Anna Bender and Prof Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph".

Due to my composing experience and expertise in orchestral arranging, I had the honour of being designated to execute the new composite version by combining the two anthems artistically into one. I considered this somewhat of an irony, given that in my 1974 piano work, *Three Dimensions* (elaborated on in 'Gender Agenda' p 3), I parodied *Die Stem* musically.

Members of the our committee were asked to put forward ideas for how one could musically combine the two anthems into one composite version**,** with a stated duration of no longer than two minutes. The two existing anthems had previously been sung successively at formal gatherings, beginning with *Die Stem*. The lengthy duration was a problem. My suggestion to the committee at the follow-up meeting was to put *Nkosi* first (since musically and ideologically, it was the most appropriate of the anthems). This was accepted by the committee, as was my recommendation to cut certain repeated lyrics in order to radically shorten the music. I was tasked by the committee with creating this new composite version based on the musical blueprint that I proposed. I accomplished this digitally in 1995 on behalf of the Anthem Committee.

To cut and paste – to preserve

In order to shorten the combined version considerably, rigorous discussion ensued in the committee meeting around sections like *Woza Moya*[4]. Fatima Meer, a Muslim woman, suggested that this section – present in the previous anthem – be omitted, as it referenced the Christian Holy Trinity and was therefore not inclusive of the country's other faiths, such as Islam, Judaism and Hinduism. These words which appeared in the original isiZulu chorus ("Descend, oh spirit") were officially objected

having them sing it while she simultaneously accompanied them with improvised variations of her own compositions. Her skill at this form of vocal counterpoint was unmatched.

4 "Descend, oh spirit"- a section which appeared in *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika.*

to by the Council of Muslim Theologians, and it subsequently made a submission to the committee against their retention. The submission read: "This refrain is a reference to the Christian theological concept of the Holy Trinity. Muslims, who constitute a significant sector of our society, cannot sing this refrain without doing violence to their fundamental creed. By reading the refrain, Muslims argue that they will be defying the very essence of monotheism."

Similarly, the Afrikaans words "*Deur ons ver verlate vlaktes met die kreun van ossewa*"[5] ("*From our plains where creaking wagons cut their trail into the earth*") referenced the Great Trek of 1835, which was the experience of only one sector of the population – the Afrikaners, and thus were not inclusive and were removed. The deletion of these words was supported by members of the committee.

There had previously been no original English words in *Die Stem*. Instead, a literal English translation of the Afrikaans words existed and was frequently sung by Anglophone citizens. However, it did not form part of the official national anthem when it was sung. I personally felt that it was time to include some original English words to be part of the new version and I suggested this to the committee. There is a misconception that the current version with English words is a literal translation of *Die Stem,* but that is not the case. I wrote English words for the last four lines of the version in use today, which were accepted by the parliamentary cabinet.

The Anthem Committee made several proposals to Cabinet in May 1995. The proposal I put forward was chosen and my blueprint for the new anthem was accepted by Cabinet. This would reflect my preference for placing *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* at the beginning of the anthem followed by *Die Stem*, a suggestion that was both ideologically and demographically sound. This selected version was then also officially adopted as the national anthem of South Africa by President Mandela, by Proclamation No 68 in the

5 Ox wagons were used by the Voortrekkers, the Afrikaners who migrated inland from the Cape in order to establish their own, independent Calvinist communities, away from British rule.

Government Gazette of 10 October 1997, as printed in a Schedule to the Proclamation in both Staff Notation and Tonic Sol-fa. I was to produce the final music score of the proclaimed version for use either as a vocal version with piano accompaniment, or for purely instrumental performances for orchestra.

Sign of the times

South Africa has 11 official spoken languages; a decision that was ratified after apartheid was dismantled. A healthy nod to democratic sensitivity was the addition of a 12th non-spoken language, sign language, which was added in 2023 as a further gesture of inclusion. The most widely spoken of these languages are isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sesotho (South Sotho), Setswana, English and Afrikaans. However, languages like isiXhosa, isiZulu and isiNdebele belong to the 'language group' called the *Nguni* group. The new composite anthem comprises five of the 11 official spoken languages. The Tshivenda and Xitsonga languages are not present therein. The lyrics are as follows: isiXhosa and isiZulu in the first verse, followed by Sesotho in the second verse. Then, after the music modulation bridge on the words "South Africa", Afrikaans follows. The anthem ends with English words in the final stanza.

The whole of the first verse is in isiXhosa, with the exception of the third line, which is in isiZulu.

However the two languages above share a common vocabulary.

Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika	(God bless Africa)
Maluphakanyisw' uphondo lwayo	(May her spirit rise high up) or (Let its horn be raised)
Yizwa imithandozo yethu	(Hear our prayers)
Nkosi sikelela	(Lord bless us (in Africa))
Thina lusapho lwayo	(We, your children/family)

The second verse is in Sesotho:

Morena boloka setjhaba sa heso	(Lord, bless our nation)

Ofedise dintwa le matshwenyeho	(Banish wars and strife)
Oseboloke (x2) setjhaba sa heso	(Bless our nation)
Sechaba sa South Africa	(of South Africa)

The third verse is in Afrikaans and uses the beginning section of *Die Stem*, which expresses the beauty of the country with patriotic fervour:

Uit die blou van onse hemel	(Ringing out from our blue heavens)
Uit die diepte van ons see	(From our deep seas' breaking round)
Oor ons ewige gebergtes	(Over everlasting/eternal mountains)
Waar die kranse antwoord gee	(Where the echoing crags resound)

The final stanza in English, which uses my suggested words, was submitted to Cabinet and officially accepted. I wrote these words to inspire unity and eternal freedom.

> Sounds the call to come together,
> And united we shall stand,
> Let us live and strive for freedom,
> In South Africa, our land.

Tones and traditions

In writing a new arrangement of the two previous anthems into one composite version, I tried to remain as true as possible to the original musical concepts, with their structures, flavours, sentiments and sensitivities. After a two-bar (music measure) instrumental introduction (using the same melody that was later applied to the words '*Thina lusapho lwayo'*, I wrote the main body of the anthem. I used the melody as found in its original form, but

I enriched the harmonies and piano accompaniment to reflect the richness of South Africa's diverse peoples.

I use a typical music chord progression that is unmistakably African in nature. I applied it to the anthem in order to infuse the music by moving in parallel harmonies from the main tonal chord to its neighbouring chord (for musicians... Chord I G major, directly to Chord ii A minor), being literally 'alongside'. It is a musical metaphor that resounds with the ideals of *Ubuntu*, the African value of 'humanness' that epitomises black communities in our country. The concept can best be explained as 'I am human through your humanness' – in other words, 'my compassion and decency are contingent upon yours, and if your actions are anything less than humane and compassionate, then you betray not just yourself, but also me'. We are a country that embodies diversity, and the anthem is intended to be a blend of the best of African and Western cultures. I consulted Mzilikazi Khumalo, a professor of African languages at the University of the Witwatersrand, about the correct treatment of the languages in order to avoid any possible misrepresentation of the words due to the drastic 'shortening' of the structure.

I kept the first two verses in the music key of G major, as it is in a comfortable key range in which the average voice can sing. However, to have continued at that pitch for *Die Stem* would have rendered it impossibly high for anyone to sing, so it necessitated a change of key. The modulation (change of tonal centre) to the next part is sung on the repetition of the words, "South Africa ..." just before the section in Afrikaans, and it flows smoothly from G major into the key of D major for the last two stanzas. It appears to be the only anthem in the world that begins in one key and ends in another. This is referred to musically as being "neo-modal". This was necessary not only to accommodate the average voice range, but also to signify the transition from a state of oppression and injustice to one of liberation and hope.

In the orchestral version which the committee commissioned me to arrange, I applied a music technique called 'counterpoint', which layers two or more music melodies vertically on top of one another in a combined form. This creates

a pleasant harmony, but still reflects the importance of the two individual voices. I superimposed the two previous anthems musically and created a harmonisation near the end, where I used the *Nkosi* melody running below the *Die Stem* melody at the words "Sounds the call to come together…" In this way I effected a 'combination of cultures', figuratively and literally, working together as one.

The première performance of the new anthem under the auspices of the Caltex Massed Choir Festival was held at the Good Hope Conference Centre at the Foreshore in Cape Town on 7 May 1995. This impressive auditorium has a maximum capacity of 7000 people. I was invited to attend the premier performance, an exciting event during which a massed Cape choir (comprising 17 different choirs) sang the new anthem, accompanied by the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra under the batons of several conductors, including Richard Cock and Mzilikazi Khumalo. My family and I were given front-row seats and I felt intensely proud to have provided the orchestra with freshly printed score sheets in full orchestration for any performances going forward.

According to Levy (2009): "In normal copyright circumstances, rights-holders (composers and arrangers of music) would be entitled to a share proportionate to the creative material they put into the work, as it exists in its official version. However, it was immediately apparent that it was undesirable to have a situation in which patriotic South Africans would have to obtain a performing-right licence every time they wanted to show their love of their country by singing or playing their country's national anthem!" In this vein, it would be equally undesirable for people to have to obtain a Mechanical (Recording) Rights licence to authorise the making of sound recordings of the work, e.g. on CDs or on soundtracks of videos and films.

So naturally, when it came to my contribution, I received no royalties for the work I did, nor did any members of the Anthem Committee for their contributions. Regarding this, Levy stated: "It should be noted that any creative work was apparently done under contract to the government. One of the provisions of the

Copyright Act confers ownership of the copyright in works created by an employee in the course of his duties to the employer.

Thus, copyright in such work also belongs to the government." The National Anthem of South Africa is thus owned by the state, which has determined that the work is in the public domain. Therefore, in practice, no copyright revenue is accrued by the work, not even for arrangements or adaptations of the music and/or lyrics. I did, however, receive a cheque of R3 500 for my full orchestration of the work.

Anthem Anathema

After I had completed my work on the rearrangement of the new anthem, I was confronted by a most unpleasant situation which catapulted me into one of the most distressing periods of my career. I was in the USA in late 1995, having been invited to be composer-in-residence at the Youngstown New Music Festival, featuring music by South African composers. On my return to South Africa, my mother informed me that Mzilikazi Khumalo, who had chaired the Anthem Committee, had made a guest appearance on a popular magazine programme on TV, *The Dali Tambo Show,* once the news of the new anthem had been publicly announced.

Khumalo's appearance made him the darling of South Africa and an instant media star. However, he neither mentioned my name nor credited the work I had done in the production of the new composite version of the anthem - he appeared to relish the huge publicity as a personal triumph. A Wits University publication called *Arena* (July 1995) stated: "It took a Wits professor – Mzilikazi James Khumalo – to shorten one of the world's longest anthems... to a remarkable one minute and 35 seconds." A rash of articles lauding Khumalo as the arranger, among other things, of the anthem appeared in mainstream and academic publications nationally. The *Wits Reporter* of May 1995 hailed him as the "voice that launched the anthem".

There was no mention anywhere of my name or my valuable contribution. It is a terrifying reality to be airbrushed out of history during one's lifetime. I tried to put the record straight at

the time, but there was so much heady elation about this 'new anthem' that not a single person I approached would even listen to what I had to say about the work I had done to produce the composite version. I felt then, as I still feel today, that for the sake of historical accuracy, this should be corrected in its entirety and my valued contribution be acknowledged.

In 2015, after a personal interview with me, Alex Marshall, a cultural journalist for the *New York Times*, wrote a book on the stories behind world national anthems, describing me as "not your typical post-apartheid activist". In his book, he focused on the way I dress, describing my bouffant hairstyle, the pearls around my neck and the colour of my skin to support his rather unexpected image of me. He added: "In 1997, when her anthem was unveiled, most newspapers chose to ignore her role in creating the song and instead attributed it mainly to the Chairman of the anthem committee, a black language professor and composer, [Mzilikazi] James Khumalo" (Marshall, 2015).

Ludumo Magangane approached me to write the foreword for his book, *The National Anthem of South Africa*, (2016: p ix), explaining what distinguishes the South African anthem from those of other countries. It was an honour to do so.

This whole debacle left me emotionally and physically drained and I became very ill. I found it difficult to breathe. On Mother's Day in 1996, my family and I were having lunch in Rosebank, when I asked my husband to take me to the emergency room at the Linksfield Clinic, because I felt like I was dying, G-d forbid.

After undergoing a battery of tests, I was informed by the pathologist, Dr Gladwyn Leiman, that I had an aggressive and, indeed, fatal form of cancer – stage 4 non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. I recall seeing my husband and our family doctor, Rodney Unterslak, crying on each other's shoulders after hearing this devastating news. I believe the onset of the disease was in no small way triggered by the sense of betrayal and despair I felt regarding my role in the creation of the national anthem. I could not process the intense emotional pain I felt and the cancer had manifested in a huge malignant tumour just above my heart (in the mediastinum

to be medically accurate). The tumour had displaced the glands in my neck, which had obstructed my breathing. My family and friends went into prayer mode around the clock. In the days following this diagnosis, I feverishly wrote to the Lubavitcher Rebbe *z'l* seeking spiritual guidance and blessings; the recovery of my health being urgent and paramount.

Then a miracle occurred. The pulmonologist Dr John Blott, who took me under his care, decided I should have another biopsy on my glands. This biopsy evidenced that the initial diagnosis had inexplicably changed from the most severe form of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma to the far more treatable and less threatening Hodgkin's strain. Today, 28 years later, I still cannot account for the sudden reprieve I was granted. I can only give credit and thanks to G-d for sparing me and to the Rebbe's blessing - and to those selfless angels who supported me and helped me through the ordeal.

I endured eight months of relentless chemotherapy, during which time I turned inwards and stopped composing music, but prayed a great deal. I tried to make lifestyle changes and also followed a more natural approach to healing. However, as with many things adopted during a crisis, my adherence to a stringent diet and better lifestyle choices eventually lost some of its impetus - and I ceased prioritising my physical well-being above my work. The Chabad Jewish community, of which I am part, looked after my family like seraphs by bringing in constant meals and transporting my children to and from school. Their overwhelming kindness continued for nearly a year and I am profoundly grateful to them.

It would take many years and conversations with numerous leading people in the music and media industries to come to terms with how I, and my work, had been overlooked. During those conversations, I provided proof of all the work I had done on the anthem, in order to have the record corrected. I have not accessed many websites to check on that rectification, but the few I have seen have indeed included my name as being pivotal in producing the anthem.

In December 2017, *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrica* was rated in a poll on anthems by *The Economist* as the "best in the world". It describes the anthem as "an act of musical healing for the Rainbow Nation". A competition was held that same year to assess which had been the best rendition of the anthem. I thought that the magnificent version sung by the Ndlovu Choir was particularly beautiful and creative, though my opinion had not been sought.

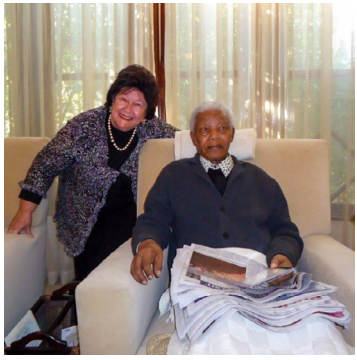
Even now, 28 years later, I feel an enormous sense of pride that I had contributed so significantly to this emblem of national heritage when I hear the anthem being sung by wonderful young singers such as the Mzansi Choir, or before a sports match by the team and spectators.



The Order of Ikhamanga *medal being bestowed on me by President Thabo Mbeki in 2004 at the Orders ceremony at the Union Buildings, Pretoria*



The scroll containing the text of the Order of Ikhamanga plus the Orders Ceremony programme and the bronze medal



My Visit to Mandela at his home in Houghton Johannesburg, a few months before he passed on in December 2013. I presented him with my CD of the song I composed for him, "He walked to Freedom"

All in my Family

Not the TV show

I was reared by a loving and devoted mother and father. Thankfully, I grew up in a stable, happy home with an older brother and parents who provided a bulwark against the real and perceived threats of the outside world. As experienced in my childhood, a parent assumes the role of protector, buffer-provider and educator.

One takes so much for granted as a child, possessing an unwavering (though sometimes tenuous) sense of safety and security, often defiantly pushing the envelope with one's perceived invincibility. However, when one grows up and adopts the responsibilities of being a mother to one's own children it is another kettle of fish altogether and demands that one walks to the beat of a totally different drum! Being a mother can be a very intimidating role and demands huge accountability. One must be ever-vigilant, ready to provide a sustainable level of protection, love, firmness and so much more for one's children. This was especially true for a woman like me, who had always lived a very independent and all-consuming professional life. As a first-time 'older'[1] mother (I was all of 28 years old when I gave birth to our first child), having enjoyed the freedom to travel and live a self-contained lifestyle, it was an often difficult and restricting – though immensely rewarding – adjustment.

My earlier medical diagnosis of probably never being able to bear children had affected me deeply psychologically – and I had made a decision to devote my time and energies tirelessly to my main passion in life – music – which dominated my entire world prior to 1976. However Michael Rudolph (figuratively) 'scrummed and tackled' his way into my life, actions he had learnt through

1 Currently, being in an observant Jewish community, in which young marriages are encouraged, the age of 28 is considered to be relatively 'old' for the birth of a first baby. However, this was my second marriage.

his memorable and successful rugby career in the King Edward VII School 1st team, Wits University and Transvaal (under 20) teams. The only game I ever watched him play was the 'seven-a side' match as an old Edwardian alongside other prominent rugby players like Hugh Bladen and Tutty Farber.

We were married in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1976. He had been accepted to study for a Master's of Public Health at Harvard University and had to be in Boston to begin the semester in September 1976 soon after our wedding. However, I was still contracted to complete my teaching year in the Music Department at Wits University, so I joined him in Boston only in early December 1976, to begin a new life together as the pregnant wife of a post-graduate student at Harvard. We were delighted to find comfortable student accommodation in Soldiers Field Park, a residence allocated to the Harvard Business School, overlooking the legendary and magnificent Charles River. We had a spectacular view of sailing boats and charming, picturesque watersports in summer – and people skating on the iced-over river in winter. We made long-standing friendships at Harvard with mostly international students, among them couples from England, Mauritius, the Netherlands and other far-flung countries.

Our student residence at Soldiers Field Park housed mostly Master of Business Administration (MBA) students. This renowned degree at Harvard became known as the 'divorce course' due to the punitive pressure it exerted on couples. Its many compulsory courses and the vigorous competitiveness among the students invariably led to domestic friction and unsustainable relationships. We were astounded to learn that if a student had been sick and missed the class notes, there was not a single person in the class who would share those notes with the student. It impacted us as we witnessed friends' marriages falling apart in this stressful environment. Thankfully, this was not the case with students in the public health degree.

I occupied myself with piano practice (acquiring a small upright piano for our living area), composing new works, doing research for my future PhD and enjoying the exhilarating student atmosphere and environment of amply stocked bookshops

and alternative eateries in Cambridge, located just across the Charles River.

Boston is a remarkable city in which to live, aesthetically, educationally and culturally; the Boston Symphony Orchestra, at that time under the direction of Maestro Seiji Ozawa (who served for 29 years and was known for his advocacy of contemporary composers), performed regularly at the beautiful downtown Symphony Hall. There were also memorable concerts at the Longy School of Music in Cambridge, as well as at the New England Conservatory of Music in the City.

We welcomed our first daughter, Natalie Claire Rudolph, on 12 May 1977 at the Beth Israel Hospital in Boston. The city had experienced unseasonable snowfalls just the week before. In fact, the snow in Boston was so heavy in winter, we learnt to our amazement and amusement, that our tiny Ford Pinto was frequently completely buried and unrecognisable under the snow. We had much searching and shovelling to do before finding our vehicle each morning.

We were very fortunate to have my mother come from South Africa for a few weeks to assist with our new baby, enabling us to attend Michael's MPH[2] graduation at Harvard in June 1977, just a few weeks after Natalie was born. What is imprinted in my memory of that day was that the keynote speaker at the ceremony delivering his speech to the graduates and families in *Latin*! Even more astounding than this unusual phenomenon was the fact that members of the (obviously erudite) audience had no difficulty understanding him and laughed raucously at his jokes at appropriate moments. Having studied Latin in high school, I found this fascinating, though the level and fluency of the language being used were completely beyond my abilities.

Towards the end of August 1977, when Natalie was just over three months old, we returned home to Johannesburg, South Africa – after repeatedly, but unsuccessfully, attempting to begin the immigration process to the USA (even resorting to consulting a rather dubious 'mafia-type' immigration lawyer) in order to

2 Master of Public Health

acquire residency status. It became clear, however, that a student visa could only be converted once the student has returned to his home country, where an application could then be made. Yet what seemed at the time to be a huge setback and disappointment, turned out to be the most profound blessing in disguise – both of us finding in South Africa the most *fertile* ground (in Michael's case, literally, considering his later involvement in food gardens) for exploring and maximising our potential in our respective fields: Michael in the domain of public health and, later, food security and nutrition – and I in my world of music. Doors opened for us both and unprecedented opportunities for my compositions presented themselves, both in the form of exciting commissions and memorable performances of my new works.

Doctorate and domesticity

Best of all was the indescribable joy of again being surrounded by family and friends and being able to rely on an infrastructure that made it possible for me to have critical help at home while I studied, researched, composed, performed and taught.

Ruth Mogorosi, our beloved and trusted domestic worker, deserves special mention. I am deeply and eternally grateful to Ruth for her unstinting loyalty, dedication and love over the past 44 years (and still counting), without which I would never have been able to devote so much of my life to music. Not only did she help rear our children, but also our grandchildren. She also tenderly cared for my beloved late mother, who lived with us for over 10 years, for which I am eternally grateful.

Back on home soil, I began intensive work towards my DMus in the Music Department at the University of Pretoria. In addition to doing some teaching, my time was spent researching my chosen topics, composing and looking after Natalie. Michael's daughter from his first marriage, Jacqui, my stepdaughter (a term I truly dislike, since I regard her as our beloved fifth daughter), was already five when Natalie was born. The timing of the birth of our second daughter, Sara, could not have been more propitious in relation to my doctoral studies.

When I was in my eighth month of pregnancy in April 1979, I had to appear, for almost an entire day, before a doctoral examination committee made up of several (very stern-faced male) examiners. I was assessed orally and aurally on my chosen modules of research – namely, "Thirty Years of Contemporary Music, With a Particular Focus on the Life and Works of Composers, György Ligeti, Peter Maxwell-Davies and Pierre Boulez" – as well as being interrogated on the broad realm of *music aesthetics*, my other chosen field of study – and mostly in Afrikaans, my second language.

The *viva*-type examination had been challenging, given the additional weight and fatigue of my pregnancy, but it was a veritable labour of love. The real labour, however, began very shortly after that. I went into labour about four weeks later, in fact *miraculously* on the day after I submitted my final portfolio of original compositions; the main requirement for the completion of my Doctorate in Composition. This was concluded in the nick of time, as Sara Yael Rudolph made her very welcome appearance on 11 May 1979, almost two years to the day after Natalie's. The relief all round was huge for me and my whole family.

My studying was over for the time being, freeing me to devote myself to caring for our 2 babies, as well as organising a strenuous move from our duplex flat in the suburb of Fairmount, Johannesburg, to a newly-bought house in Bagleyston – a home we have now occupied for almost 45 years! I sang endlessly to this new little human being and cannot help wondering whether this in a way contributed to her musicality and her love for both piano and violin.

They say that a third child is the easiest one to manage – and this has certainly been borne out by our third daughter, Tamar Esther, who was born a little over two years after Sara on 2 September 1981. When she was only a few months old, I left her in the capable hands of Michael, my parents and Ruth, in order to attend the *Donne in Musica* Festival in Rome – and thus began my return to the international circuit of music festivals, conferences and performances of my works. Tamar was indeed easy to manage and she enjoyed having her doting older sisters

and extended family around, being raised with much love and care – giving me a certain amount of freedom to pursue my music once more. Tamar remained the 'baby' in the family for nearly nine years. I had already resumed a part-time lectureship in the Music Department at Wits University, and for me, the 1980s were undoubtedly the most productive decade of my composing career.

In early February 1989, Michael was invited to do a residency in a dental clinic in the desert town of Ofakim in the south of Israel, near the capital of the Negev, Beersheba. As Professor of Community Dentistry, his training in innovative oral health skills had equipped him with the knowledge and tools to contribute immensely to the dental health of the inhabitants in a large surrounding area – and to introduce programmes to promote preventive dental care and improved oral health. We, the rest of the family, joined him in this remote geographical area for an extended period.

I recall how bitterly cold it became at night during the typical desert winter and how each of us, including our three young girls, piled mountains of blankets on top of us to avoid freezing. While these blankets were in plentiful supply in the very basic apartment allocated for visiting academics, no heating was available in sub-zero desert temperatures at night. Nevertheless, it was a remarkable experience for the girls, as Ofakim was not far from the famous Ramon Crater (*Machtesh Ramon*), a cultural heritage site of great interest and beauty. Ofakim became the base from which we could travel the length and breadth of Israel and our family loved the excursions to Jerusalem and the Dead Sea.

Soon after our Israeli experience, I discovered – with surprise and some trepidation – that I was once again pregnant, at the age of 41. Having suffered two miscarriages following Tamar's arrival, we were thrilled to know that another little Rudolph would soon make an appearance. Our older girls and Daddy Michael awaited the new arrival with much enthusiasm – so much so that my family went into top gear to spoil me in any way they could, from finding me the best watermelons to eat (one of the only foods I could stomach in the first three months) to giving me leg and back massages when I felt tired or uncomfortable.

Happily, another little princess, Devorah Nisi Rudolph[3], was born to us on 13 December 1989. This new baby had so many willing hands to pick her up, cuddle her and make a right royal fuss of her that I frequently needed to 'make an appointment' to spend time with my baby! Nisi (which means 'my little miracle' in Hebrew) was very much the centre of attraction, not only from her older sisters, but also from her doting grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends. There is something incredibly special about having a '*laatlammetjie*'[4] who not only fills an inevitably empty nest with joy, but also keeps older parents young at heart (so I am told) and very much 'on their toes'.

My beautiful stepdaughter, Jacqueline (Jacqui) Rudolph, born on 20 April 1972, was three years old when I first met Michael and has been an integral part of our family's lives since day one. As a child, Jacqui spent many of her school holidays with us and we are very proud of our 'eldest daughter'. She currently lives in Stamford, Connecticut, USA with her husband Avi and two beautiful daughters, Kayla and Simi. She obtained her MBA from Columbia University in New York and has been working successfully in the world of business and finance.

While Natalie had been an 'only child' at home until Sara made her appearance, our *laatlammetjie* Nisi also had the (dubious) privilege of being an 'only child' at home once her older sisters had left the family home to study, travel or get married. As the youngest sibling alone at home, I suspect that this was a lonely time for her. By this stage, Michael was very involved in his full-time professorship at the university and I was also in a full-time lecturing position in the Music Department at Wits. The much-debated issue of a child's place in the family and how this impacts them becomes a challenging reality; there is no doubt that family dynamics alter considerably at different periods in one's life and, of course, in different financial, professional and

3 Producing daughters only, my reproductive system seemed to know intuitively that I would make a much better mother-in-law to boys than I probably would to daughters-in-law. I think this has been borne out as I am extremely fond of my sons-in-law, but may very likely have been more possessive of sons.

4 Literally, a 'late lamb', in Afrikaans; means a child born to parents later in life.

environmental circumstances. These have completely dissimilar influences on the lives and development of children growing up in the same home, where the circumstances are never quite the same for each individual sibling. As parents, we are not given the skills to negotiate the pitfalls that inevitably come with these time-related changing realities.

I look back nostalgically at my own carefree childhood. Nothing in the world can replace a sense of safety, security and happiness in a home full of love, ever-present attention, nurturing, unlimited kindness and generosity. I've often yearned for those untroubled days – to be a child again growing up with no responsibilities, when my weightiest decision was which piano piece to practise.

The role as a mother, however, is a totally different scenario. When a baby or young child needs something, one has to drop everything and see to their immediate needs. It doesn't matter if one's creative mind is structuring the 'perfect' musical phrase or refining a new passage on the piano. We, as parents, are also not taught how to find a balance between wanting to teach our children everything we know through our own (sometimes bitter) experience to prevent them making the same mistakes – or allowing them to discover the world at their own pace and learn from their own errors. My first obvious slip-up as a mum was in insisting that our eldest, Natalie, should become proficient on a musical instrument, at all costs, as I had done as a young child.

I took Natalie, aged just three, to the renowned violin teacher Nicolette Solomon[5] for lessons. In my defence at being over-zealous in this respect, the Suzuki method, founded by Dr Shinichi Suzuki (great violinist and pedagogue), was being promoted as a revolutionary system for teaching very young children to play a string instrument, based on the philosophy of the mother-tongue method. And, indeed, it was a superb teaching modality – except for the fact that I expected too much from our little girl too soon, driving her to practise at her tender age – the

5 Nicolette Solomon, who later became Nicolette Solomon-Van Wyk after marrying the composer Carl van Wyk, is a renowned violin teacher employing the Suzuki method in her teaching. They are currently based in Texas, USA.

'tiger mom' syndrome, causing Natalie to have burnout by the age of four!

Being the daughters of hard-working (in fact, workaholic) professional parents in the education realm, it seemed inevitable that the girls would eventually end up in the field of education or education-related disciplines. What we couldn't foresee was that two of our girls, Natalie and Sara, would become principals of two prominent South African Jewish day schools, our third, Tamar, a sought-after teacher in the same school as Sara and a qualified reflexologist by profession; and our youngest, Nisi, an accomplished speech pathologist and audiologist at a prominent remedial school. All the girls attended nursery, primary and high school at the Torah Academy schools in Johannesburg.

Our daughters are our pride and joy. I never believed that I could love these precious girls with the depth of feeling and pride that surges through me. I look at them in awe and am inexpressibly grateful for these remarkable young women who are excelling in their fields, energetically raising their own families and contributing to society in so many profoundly meaningful ways. They are passing on to their children ethics, moral behaviour and values in ways that I can only behold in wonder. G-d granted me a double blessing; in addition to my God-given talent and passion for music, we were blessed with treasured offspring, a staggering token of His divine generosity.

The old adage of 'quality time' *versus* 'quantity time' was of necessity applied in our family, as I was often so busy teaching and composing that my hours with the children were limited. I acknowledge with love and gratitude the powerful and sustained input that Michael has had in co-rearing our daughters – physically, emotionally and spiritually. In fact, the girls have always been very over-protective of their adoring father – less so of me, whom they saw as a stronger personality. Their very favourite outings were with Michael, who found interesting places to take them hiking, one of their favourite *treks* being the Suikerbossie trail, an hour outside of Johannesburg.

I frequently collaborated with Michael in composing songs for his various dental and health congresses and several

health events in which he was involved. These were special together-times when he would give me the gist of the text – and I would tweak the words into sassy rhymes and rhythms, containing messages of public-health dentistry and health promotion themes.

One of the special occasions that stand out in my mind was the magnificent 6th World international Congress on Preventive Dentistry held at the Nico Malan Theatre in Cape Town on 8 October 1997. I composed a song called *WCPD '97* with lyrics relevant to the theme of this occasion and the dental health message. The choir was conducted by my friend, singer Vetta Wise. The crowd enjoyed the musical presentation so much that they insisted on an encore (a rather odd occurrence for a dental congress!) with this entertainment ending up as the highlight of the evening. I adapted the *same* music over the years, only altering the words slightly each time, adjusting them to the relevant new health theme – the most recent being the *Food Security* song presented at Michael's recently-established food systems site at UJ during a visit by the University of Johannesburg's Vice Chancellor, Prof Letlhokwa Mpedi, who also pleaded for an *encore*, during which he danced enthusiastically.

At the earlier stage of our lives, when we were starting a family, we were blessed to have our parents alive and we became what I call the 'sandwich generation' – looking after our young family, but also being responsible to a large extent for our parents, who were getting older and needing attention. This was particularly so for my widowed mother (*z"l*), who lived with us for over 10 years before she passed away in 2010. I found my children and my mother vying for my attention and it was not always easy to give sufficient consideration to all my loved ones equally at home, especially after returning home from a strenuous day of lecturing, teaching and dealing with student issues. One cannot help having regrets over difficult family choices made with limited time.

Nature or Nurture

From a very early age Natalie Claire, known as 'Nats', or 'Natsy-Pats', displayed an enthusiastic penchant for reading – and, as a result of devouring countless books, she developed a talent for writing, especially texts infused with poetic and rhythmical phrasing. As school principal, she has written, and still writes, numerous texts for school drama productions as well as poignant poetry and erudite educational booklets. In spite of her sharp intellect and reading vociferously, Natalie simply could not spell at school – exploding the myth that reading a great deal enables one to be able to spell! How fortunate that she functions now in the new digital age in which the spell-check on computers comes to the rescue.

Like all her sisters after her, Natalie spent a year at a religious seminary in Jerusalem before embarking on her university degree. She graduated from Wits University with a Bachelor of Education degree (B. Ed.) soon after marrying Rabbi Jonathan Altman on 28 July 1999 and gave birth to our first grandchild, Aharon Dovid (partly named for my father, David) in 2001. Later that year the family relocated to Cape Town and within a couple of years, Natalie had established the Phyllis Jowell Jewish day school in Camps Bay and was appointed its principal, a position she held for over 15 years, until December 2018. She increased enrolment from just a handful of students to over 200 pupils in the school's heyday.

Cape Town naturally became our holiday destination of choice during these years, where we spent many happy family holidays together.

The Altman family subsequently returned to Johannesburg in January 2019 as a result of Natalie being offered the sought-after position of principal of the Yeshiva College Girls' High (and simultaneously co-Director of Yeshiva Schools in Glenhazel). By this time, Natalie and Jonny were the proud parents of six children, all with meaningful and in some cases, multiple names: Aharon Dovid, Ashira, Menachem Yisroel, Gavriel Amichai, Sara Nechama Avigail and Oriyah Hallel. Their seventh child, Hodaya Batsheva Hadas ('Batsheva' translated as 'seventh daughter'

and 'Hadas' meaning a myrtle tree, one of the species in nature signifying the festival of Sukkoth, which was taking place at the time), was born in Johannesburg in September 2021.

Natalie's firstborn, Aharon and his wife Sophie, made Michael and me *great* grandparents with the birth of their daughter Nachala Temima on 12 April 2024. Natalie's second son Menachem ('comforter' in Hebrew), recently became engaged to Carrie Goldstein (his high school sweetheart). Their wedding will take place in early September 2025.

As if Natalie's workload as a wife, mother, daughter, sister, friend and principal were not enough, she enrolled for a Master's degree in education in 2023. Our own dynasty so far is proudly four generations strong – though our family consists of six generations since first setting foot on the shores of South Africa.

It seems that Michael and I have set a very 'bad' example for our children regarding the unusually large workload we both take on, possibly because of our desire to be over-achievers. Like many other young mothers today, Natalie juggles her roles with a cool head, though her excessive responsibilities occasionally take their toll on her health.

Our daughter Sara Yael nicknamed 'Sass', or 'Sasskedoo', who remained the 'middle pip' in the family for an extended period before Nisi was born, possesses an A-type personality with a perfectionist streak (I wonder where that came from!?). This perfectionistic, stickler mentality did not make her the easiest child growing up, as she insisted on having all her proverbial 'ducks in a row' before going to school each day – this included having temper tantrums if a single hair was out of place, or refusing to eat her boiled egg at breakfast if it was not precisely as soft or as hard as she liked. When she agreed to have piano lessons, I was so delighted, that I forgave this minor 'flaw' in her personality; though she totally refused to allow me to correct her playing, saying: "You're my mother, not my piano teacher!" Sara's competitive streak did, however, contribute to her academic prowess and she consistently achieved exceptionally high grades at school.

Both she and her younger sister Tamar became violin pupils of Nicolette Solomon. However, this time, I did not make the same mistake of starting them at the unreasonable age of three. I also recall with much exhilaration sitting at piano examinations and eisteddfodau with the girls, never sure whose palms were sweating more from nerves before a performance – theirs or mine. As an ambitious mother, I found myself perpetuating this cycle of competitiveness and urging both Sara and Tamar to succeed. Sara found great joy in her piano playing as a pupil of my dearest friend, Pauline Nossel, but the girls regrettably stopped violin lessons when Nicolette Solomon-van Wyk left South Africa.

Directly after matric, in which Sara obtained distinctions in all her subjects, she left with her two closest friends, Gila Rabin and Zeesy Goldman, to study at religious seminaries in Montreal, Canada, and later in Zefat in Israel. As an emissary of the Lubavitcher Rebbe (*z"l*), she then embarked on outreach work in the USA. She later travelled to exotic and far-flung destinations such as Russia to institutes attached to a Chabad House[6]. The travel bug had bitten her, but in spite of journeying abroad to distant destinations like Lithuania, she concurrently registered for a business degree through UNISA[7] and graduated with a BBA degree.

While working in a real estate agency in New York, she met her American husband-to-be, Chaim Bronstein from Crown Heights, Brooklyn. Their decision to get married in South Africa in August 2006 and then return to Brooklyn was beset with unforeseen pitfalls and protracted and frustrating obstacles. Both Sara and Chaim were living and working in real estate offices in Brooklyn, with their own cars, apartments, social lives, and commitments. Their intention was to stay in South Africa for about three weeks before going back to the USA. But fate decreed otherwise ...

6 The Lubavitcher Rebbe (*z"l*) sent emissaries out to centres all over the world, some very far-flung and remote, to establish hundreds of *Chabad* Houses to spread the tenets of Judaism through acts of 'goodness and kindness'.

7 Bachelor of Business Administration. Offered by UNISA, it is the undergraduate degree of the Masters of Business Administration (MBA).

After a magnificent wedding in Johannesburg on 15 August 2006, the young newly-weds presented themselves at the American Embassy in order to obtain a visa for Sara to return with her new husband to New York. For reasons unknown to the young couple, their request was denied and Chaim was told that as a US citizen, he was entitled to return home – but his new wife could not accompany him. My daughter was even accused of having planned a 'marriage of convenience' for the purposes of obtaining a green card. What followed was weeks of waiting and trauma, which turned into months – and still, Sara was denied a visa. The two of them almost camped on the pavement outside the embassy waiting for good news. It eventually became apparent that the USA officials believed (erroneously) that Sara had overstayed one of her previous visas, for which there was a penalty of 10 years' exclusion from entering the country.

Months went by with no resolution and Sara and Chaim had to very reluctantly find a way of earning a living and normalising their lives in Johannesburg. It was absolute bliss for us, as parents, to have them so close and living nearby, though I dared not express our happiness in case they suspected that we may have somehow engineered the situation for the American authorities to deny her visa! After many months, Sara finally found a person at one of the passport control exit centres in Arizona who could verify that she had in fact not contravened any immigration laws and that the error had been on the American side.

Unsurprisingly no apology was forthcoming from the embassy for the months of anxiety and misery that the young couple had been put through. By that time, they had both lost their jobs in New York, had been forced to give up their rented apartments and had suffered a great deal of material and emotional losses. Nevertheless, it was not long before they expressed how happy and settled they had felt in Johannesburg among family and friends – and, in fact, my American son-in-law told us how very contented he was living and working in South Africa. What a blessing it turned out to be for all of us! Sara and Chaim are now the very proud parents of five beautiful and bright children: Tzvi Hirsch, Devorah Leah, Menachem Mendel (Nachsi), Yitzchak and Chava Avigail.

Tamar[8] Esther, better known in the family as 'Tams' or 'Tamsy', our gentle, beautiful third daughter, was named after Queen Esther in the *Megillah (The Book of Esther)* which is read on Purim each year around March because it was at around the same time of the year that Michael and I had had an audience with the Lubavitcher Rebbe (*z"l*) in 1981, the year she was born. Tamar was, in fact, the third 'child who brought herself up' – easy-going and shy, but no pushover, with a formidable temperament if she felt that she or anyone close to her was being misjudged. Tamar is our 'healer', full of compassion and, as I always maintain, possesses a spiritual dimension that is somewhat mystical and otherworldly. When my beloved brother, Malcolm, was in a coma for many months after surgery in 2004/5, Tamar was the only person who elicited a response from him when she walked into his hospital room. That visit was the only time during his 19-month comatose state that he lifted his head and he looked directly at her. Tragically, he passed away in February 2006, having never regained consciousness.

Given her intensely spiritual, intuitive and instinctual empathy for people, Tamar did not need to formally study medicine, as she had a natural gift for healing. She did, however study medical reflexology and practised it for some time. However, when she was asked to teach in the Torah Academy Nursery School, where Sara was principal, she was persuaded that this was where she could make the greatest contribution. Her decision has been vindicated by the legion of children and parents who adore her, and based on her reputation, repeatedly request that she teach their children; she has so much love, knowledge and wisdom to give.

Tamar was told by her violin teacher, Nicolette Solomon, that, in addition to her musical talent, she possessed such beautifully long fingers that she would excel as a viola player. However, rather than pursue further string studies, she attended a seminary in Jerusalem straight after leaving school. Not long after returning from Israel, she went as a Chabad emissary to Malibu, California. She met her husband-to-be, Menachem

8 The name Tamar means 'date' (namely, the fruit of the palm tree) in Hebrew – and she is indeed sweetness itself.

('Nachi') Levin, in 2003 and they were married on 3 August 2004. He later graduated as a physician cardiologist. They are now the proud parents of an elder daughter, Netaniella (Ella) Na'ama, a son, Yehuda Dovid (named for my late father David) and a younger daughter, Naomi Avigail (named for her two great-grandmothers).

From the minute Devora Nisi[9] was born in 1989, her doting sisters and parents were besotted with her. She was immediately nicknamed BabaNisi and was treated like a little toy doll by the girls, who relished dressing her up just for fun, driving her and me rather crazy sometimes. Once again, I happily put my teaching and composing life on hold (but not for long), until Nisi was a little older. Coming into the family at a later stage, of course, resulted in a completely different upbringing – both positively and negatively. Life became very hectic, with both Michael and I establishing strong careers in our respective fields, needing to earn more to sustain a larger family and being away from home more frequently at conferences and festivals. Nisi was always a deep thinker, a sensitive soul and loved to be read to by Michael. I often found myself at rehearsals for concerts and university evening events – but, thankfully, I had a husband who was always very hands-on with the girls and filled in whenever I was not at home.

Nisi's artistic talent manifested in her dancing and she loved her dance classes, making friends and socialising with like-minded, artistic young girls. Her first birthday party stands out in my mind as she established firm, lifelong friendships at that early age, particularly with her friend Tamar Esther Flood, whose mother Fay (a close friend) and I both found ourselves pregnant in our 40s with our *laatlammetjies*. There is now a third-generation friendship (our grandchildren); both Nisi and Tamar Esther have little ones of their own, who play beautifully together. My Wits music colleague and friend, Regina Kutnovsky, a brilliant piano teacher now living and teaching in Toronto, Canada, brought her one-year-old daughter, Sara to the party – as did my lifelong friend Ilana Erster, bringing Michal.

9 Devorah (which means 'bee' in Hebrew) was a famous judge in the Bible.

Nisi had a penchant for choreography and was invited to create the dance steps for her high school production at the Torah Academy Girls' High School, which turned out to be a huge success. As our other girls did, post-matric, Nisi spent a semester at a religious seminary in Ramat Aviv near Tel Aviv in Israel. On her return, she registered at Wits University to pursue a degree in speech pathology and audiology (a double specialisation, which several universities have now abandoned in favour of either one or the other specialty). Nisi soon discovered that the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology had extremely high expectations of the students and they were cautioned right at the outset of the course that many would drop out before the end of the degree. The students were, in fact, warned that they might be 'crying in the corridors' from the workload. This soon appeared to be true and all thoughts of having a relaxed or fun student life were swiftly dismissed.

It was sad for me too, as I would have loved Nisi to come to the lunch-hour concerts in the Atrium at Wits University, where I was still on the staff of the Music Department. Unfortunately, though, Nisi had to work through all her lunch hours, as well as any other spare time she had. Nevertheless, despite her gruelling course, her hard work and determination saw her graduating in 2012. She did her community service at the Sizwe Hospital in East Johannesburg, which gave me some anxiety as it was a facility primarily for drug-resistant tuberculosis and HIV/Aids patients. Nisi was extremely happy and fulfilled in her work there, but unsure of which direction to follow afterwards.

Then Gadi Cohen, a dashing and witty accountant from Cape Town, entered her life and after a wonderful courtship, they married on 15 March 2018 in a glorious ceremony at the Suikerbossie restaurant near Cape Town, overlooking magnificent Hout Bay's azure sea on one side and the majestic mountains on the other. Nisi looked exquisite and radiant (and this was by common consensus of all the guests, not just her mother's bias!), though she has never seemed to be aware of her rare and exquisite beauty.

Although she had worked for a short time in the private audiology field, her mind was made up for her by the lack of new positions being offered in that sphere. She worked for a short time as an assistant in a private speech therapy practice and subsequently accepted a sought-after position as speech pathology therapist at Bella Vista remedial school, a post she found most rewarding. Her passionate interest in alternative health fields led her to study for a diploma from the USA in nutrition. Her intellect and creativity have found a home in her research into food-related childhood disorders, which she publishes on various platforms. She has come into her own as a leader in her field. She has had 12 years' experience as a speech language pathologist and is certified as a multisensory therapeutic environment practitioner. Nisi is registered for a Masters degree at Wits University in the area of Neuro-Science.

I am delighted and proud to announce that she has 'pipped me to the post' (in being published) with her hot-off-the-press book called *Regulate with Kate*, which serves as a valuable resource for neuro-divergent children experiencing self-regulating challenges. Nisi and Gadi's son, Asher Liad, was born on 6 April, 2021 and, like his mother, his babyhood was spent basking in the attention of an adoring throng of older cousins, friends and family.

Coma catastrophe

The death of my beloved brother, Malcolm, in February 2006, hit me very hard! After being in a coma for 19 months (due to his being allergic to a drug in an anaesthetic for minor knee surgery) he tragically passed away, just short of his 60th year. I had managed to visit him during this time in Israel, but he was not conscious, which was intensely traumatic and deeply painful for me. I found it extremely difficult to come to terms with losing my only sibling whom I loved dearly. After seeing him in that condition, I would not allow my mother to visit him from South Africa, as I wanted her to remember him as he was before the coma – with his beautiful infectious energy, vitality and *joie de vivre* – a fact, which I suspect she could not easily forgive me for.

On 14 March, 2007, a tribute concert called "Voices of Africa" was held here in Johannesburg at the Wits Great Hall. In an article titled "Celebrating the life of a great yet humble man", Robyn Sassen, in the Jewish Report wrote: "The community of Gauteng Jewry came *en masse* to celebrate the life of the late Dr Malcolm Zaidel, former choirmaster and chorister at the Sydenham-Highlands North Shul, who died last year".

My beloved sister-in-law Pamela came to South Africa for the concert and spoke most eloquently and passionately about Malcolm and how much he meant to so many people. I regard Pam as the sister I never had. We are, in fact, closer than most biological sisters. Malcolm's children, Adam, Heidi and Dalya, whom I love dearly and regard as my own, lost their father far too early. However, they are remarkably resilient and hard-working and have beautiful families of their own in Israel.

When Pamela met Tsaki Shalev – a widower with four children – it was many months after Malcolm's death and they decided to get married, Michael and I were asked to 'give Pam away' to her bridegroom. It was a great honour, yet at the same time, giving my late brother's beloved wife away to another man was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do. Rationally, I was thrilled that Pam had found a fine man whom she loved and respected, who would look after her – and be a wonderful companion with whom she could spend the rest of her life. Emotionally, however, I knew how much she and my brother had looked forward to growing old together, especially having made the difficult emigration to Israel. Tsaki is a good man and a wonderful husband and stepfather to Malcolm's children, for which I am most grateful.

My husband Michael is one of three children: David Rudolph, his older brother (who passed away in March 2023) lived in Boston, USA with his wife Renée and their two sons, while his younger sister Merle Ettin, the widow of Leon Ettin (originally from Pretoria, like me), lives in Irvine, California, near her two daughters and triplet grandchildren. I remain in touch with Merle, of whom I'm very fond.

Michael and I are currently very proud grandparents of 18 beautiful grandchildren, 14 of whom live close by in Johannesburg and great-grandparents of a baby girl in Israel. We are extremely fortunate, given that many couples our age have children and grandchildren who have immigrated to other continents. What bigger blessing can there be than having precious grandchildren living so close by?

Views and Voices

I have written at some length about my difficulty in balancing my career with my duties as a wife and mother, especially given the many occasions on which I travelled abroad, leaving Michael and our young daughters at home, and the many hours I spent engrossed in my work as a composer, lecturer, mentor and performer.

Yet memories can be treacherous, especially when presented only from one person's viewpoint, though I do not claim to be anything other than utterly subjective in this memoir. So some family members have contributed how they felt about growing up in our household with me as their mother. They were invited to confidentially comment on this aspect, though of course I was going to read their views when incorporating them in my book. I was hoping that they would be as honest as they possibly could.

Natalie recalls drawing on what she experienced in our home environment as a basis for her own future career.

> "I can't really remember my very early childhood. I can remember my mom being busy and my dad playing a huge role in compensating for her when she was absent. However, as a teenager, I always felt that my mom was the first person I could approach to talk about any complex issues, sensitive topics or anything I needed. I felt that she understood my teenage needs better than my dad did, growing up, and this gave me leeway in terms of building myself. She's always been an incredible role model of a strong, accomplished woman who really had an invaluable

influence on shaping my own life in leadership – and being able to juggle raising seven of my own children while pursuing a high-powered and demanding career.

"We didn't know any differently, although many of our friends didn't have a full-time working parent, especially not in such a high-powered career. It was what we knew, so our family was built around that," she says.

"Some of my best childhood memories are of spending Sundays with my dad and my sisters, going away on holidays and, especially, spending Shabbat and Jewish holidays together. My sisters and I loved creating and performing plays and songs for either of our parents, or for other people, like a family trio before Nisi was born.

"My mom revealed to us a world of art and culture, to which many of my friends and peers weren't exposed. I went to an extracurricular school of arts in my primary school years, which taught me invaluable lessons and helped me develop many talents. We were exposed to art galleries, symphony concerts and other cultural experiences.

"My mom was a world-class musician, but – at the same time – she was someone who'd play the piano for our school or local shul concerts and at weddings. She was always humble enough to perform simple music, as well as complex avant garde styles or African and Jewish music. There's no doubt that we felt tremendous pride knowing that she was the guest or featured composer alongside Brahms, Mendelssohn or Shostakovich on a concert programme.

"Being the oldest child, I do feel that I carried a great deal of responsibility in the house for my sisters, as well as for my parents. I took their marriage and my own – as well as my sisters' upbringing – very seriously and was always very sensitive to nuanced changes in any of those. I also sometimes felt inadequate against my mom's unbelievable and unusual talents," says Natalie.

Sara, for her part, says that sharing her mother with the demands of an international career posed challenges and recalls being the rebel of the family.

> "We grew up accepting that my mom was a working mother, in the professional world, and we knew there were limitations in terms of her time and role at home.
>
> "She spent many hours composing, lecturing or out of the house during the day and even at evening concerts or music-related events, when we had to rely on my dad, our nanny, our granny, or others to help us with lifts, homework or other needs. We grew up with this reality and mostly didn't feel deprived or frustrated.
>
> "Yet we did feel different at times from other families, whose moms didn't work and had all the time in the world to run around and see to the needs of their children.
>
> "My best childhood memories are of our great family holidays, especially at the beach.
>
> "We also had our own musical talents, so singing, dancing and performing on stage were definitely things we all enjoyed growing up, with lots of creativity and many laughs. My mom encouraged us to join in some of the music events, performances and shows that she was part of. We were invited to awards and special concerts of her compositions. We understood that she was more on the 'famous side' with her doctorate, professorship and especially her involvement with the South African national anthem. We were very proud! And it felt important for us to have a mom who was so talented and lauded for her work.
>
> "Yet, despite her demanding career, she always found time to help me with ridiculous homework requests and school projects. Even when she was newly diagnosed with cancer in the ICU, I called her to help me with my Afrikaans oral – and despite being very ill, she did. I always knew that my mom had my back.

"My mom's illness was a huge blow. I took on her illness in my matric year and, as a result, was myself diagnosed with mononucleosis. I missed my matric prelims and had to write finals quite unprepared and in a state of trauma from my mom's illness.

"I was definitely a rebel who pushed boundaries. My parents certainly found me challenging through my teens.

"My mom would threaten to drop me off at the orphanage or dump me at various places if I didn't behave. She would be at her wits end! Those times were hard on me," says Sara.

Tamar agrees with much of Sara's response, but elaborates:

"I was always very proud of the fact that my mom was so famous in her career as a composer and musician. Having a hands-on dad, as well as hands-on grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, I never felt as though I was missing out when she was away from home.

"I believe that my mom chose quality over quantity of time and even if the moments we had together were shorter, they were always very rewarding and loving. My mom was never too tired to be involved or miss an opportunity to be a mother when she had a chance to do so. I was schlepped to music lessons, music exams, etc., so we also got to share and have a taste of being involved in the music world.

"My best childhood memories have always been going to concerts, getting front-row seats or really good ones close up to the stage, and watching my mom perform so brilliantly and with such passion. I always felt so proud and honoured to know that that famous and talented woman on stage was my mother. I'd always clap with such pride!

"I've also met other famous people through my mom and very diverse ones, of different colours, races and religions, yet they all had the same love and passion for music. My parents would host many of their music and work colleagues on a Friday night at our Shabbat table and this

brought diverse cultures and knowledge to me, and opened me to learning about the world outside.

"My biggest regret is that I never got to achieve what she did by practising my piano and violin enough so that I, too, would achieve extraordinary accolades and the self-fulfilment that comes from very diligent, disciplined and hard work. My worst childhood memory was being told about my mom's illness [cancer scare]. I didn't know how I would ever survive without her."

Asked to what extent she was able to understand or participate in her mother's work in music, Tamar said:

"I felt that there were very much two sides to this. On the one hand, music has been my mom's journey and path, on which she travelled alone and could only achieve her accomplishments on her own, going to festivals, conferences and studying. Yet I've always felt very much an active participant; we would sing as a family, harmonise and play instruments together. Our home has always been filled with music, musicians, and instruments.

"I used to love going to the synagogue to attend weddings on a Sunday afternoon and watch my mom play the organ as the choir sang for the bride and groom. I was with her in Toronto, where she played in one of her big concerts. People would always look at her and her family with such awe," says Tamar.

Nisi, recalling her childhood, was more laconic.

"I always felt very proud of my mom," she says.

"I did sense her absence, but didn't consciously resent it. I was mostly raised by my father and our nanny Ruth, to whom I'm still very close. Overall, I had a happy childhood.

"I always shared in my mom's excitement when she'd composed a new work that was going to be performed, or when she herself performed or took part in an international event. I still tell everyone that my mother was on the

committee for composing a new national anthem and wrote the English words for it. I'm also very proud of the way she's represented women in a tough industry dominated by men."

Michael contributed his own reminiscences:

"Nearly five decades ago two very different souls met – one (Jeanne) an extraordinary musician and composer, and another (me, Michael) a dentist, public health practitioner and 'farmer', who became a practical hands-on academic. As two opposites, we created our lives together in a partnership built on love, mutual respect, and shared values.

Through the years, our home resonated with music, family and community gatherings and much laughter; also many tears and inevitable challenges in raising our daughters, Natalie, Sara, Tamar and Nisi. My daughter, Jacqui, despite living in the USA for most of our marriage, was warmly embraced by Jeanne as one of her own. Our lives, deeply rooted in the Jewish community and driven by demanding yet deeply fulfilling academic careers have reflected a delicate balance between professional passion, family devotion and community involvement. Even in difficult periods and when time together was limited, our bond endured; fortified by the unwavering support we gave each other and which we in turn received from our respective grandparents, parents, our children and indeed grandchildren.

Our immediate family now includes five daughters, five sons-in-law, 18 grandchildren, two granddaughters-in-law and a cherished great-grandchild; each of our family members symbolises a precious, beautiful and independent melodic line in a splendid composition – an integrated counterpoint reflecting the sounds of mutual caring, strong values and gratitude; profound blessings experienced by Jeanne and me during our shared lives so far.

Navigating Jeanne's demanding career has presented its challenges:

Her need to have uninterrupted time to work long hours, follow irregular schedules and often meet tight deadlines required me to juggle my work commitments around hers. Her composing goals also led to her occasionally missing family events and limited our time together.

The stress and pressures involved during her teaching at Wits, her composing and performing responsibilities did at times impact on our personal time together.

I took on various household responsibilities, but having our devoted and excellent domestic helper, Ruth Mogorosi, helped enormously.

Juggling parenting duties alongside Jeanne's career had its pros and cons. I often took our daughters on long outings to places like Suikerbosrand to give her the space and time she needed. These outings afforded me wonderful opportunities to bond with our daughters;

And these precious times cemented and strengthened the special relationship which we enjoyed – and remain as strong as ever to this day.

Jeanne's work resulted in some isolation for her from the community, but she understood my need to participate in many functions and events, even if I attended on my own.

We were able to balance our personal aspirations despite our respective professional career commitments and demands. Rather than resulting in divergent interests and priorities, we found much common ground, which was essential to maintaining a strong bond between us.

Although I had very little background in music when I first met and married Jeanne, I soon developed an appreciation for art music and an admiration for her ability and talent to compose in a wide range of musical genres, including classical, popular, film, and even rock music. In fact, very early on she invited me to a concert by James Galway,

the flutist, which I absolutely loved. This appreciation of music increased as Jeanne demonstrated her musical genius, her amazing adeptness and G-d-given talent. Sharing concerts in London, USA, Rome, and Israel was an exhilarating experience – and attending her lectures and presentations locally and abroad contributed to meaningful and wonderful memories.

Of course, there were special highlights such as her receiving her doctoral award at the University of Pretoria, the Ikhamanga Award at the Union Buildings in Pretoria, being in Rome with her for the prize-winning performance of her Oratorio and at the Wits Tribute Concert of her music; among many other special occasions, which made me extremely proud.

With Jeanne being immersed in different music styles and travelling quite a lot, I was exposed to hitherto unknown sound-worlds and unique experiences, such as our visits to the Ngqoko women's choir in the Eastern Cape, marimba-playing by mineworkers and sitting in on lectures at music conferences she attended.

Observing her composing with great focus and attention to detail (one of Jeanne's characteristic traits), seeing her joy after completing a composition or joyously being present at concerts of her works, were special moments indeed in my life with her.

We even collaborated on several music projects together blending our respective career directions. Jeanne integrated my texts with her music – and in so doing, wrote uplifting songs with powerful messages relating to preventive dentistry, health promotion and food security, my professional areas.

Travelling with Jeanne enabled me to meet many renowned performing artists – and, of course, to witness the magic of live performances; for example at Carnegie Hall in New York and at the Barbican in London. These special and cherished moments gave us much joy and created special memories.

However, it was not only her music which stirred up much emotion in me, but her display of courage and bravery during her severe illness, which tested her mettle.

Not only did she survive Hodgkin's Lymphoma, a life-threatening illness in 1996, but her supreme resilience was a key factor in overcoming the immense physical, emotional and psychological challenges attached to the ailment. She demonstrated unyielding mental and spiritual strength to bounce back and to continue her prolific output of new compositions, performing, teaching, supervising and mentoring students – plus her fulfilling of many family roles.

In the face of her adverse health, Jeanne's spirit emerged as a force that allowed her to eventually overcome the illness, adapt to a new reality and ultimately re-establish her life and career. She refused to let her hardship define her or her future. Her commitment to personal growth and musical output was inspiring. In fact, she revealed inner grit that neither she nor her family knew existed, namely, the ability to persevere, to find meaning in her struggle and to embrace life with a renewed sense of purpose.

Her courage was manifest in her willingness to keep moving forward even when the road ahead was painful and uncertain. After almost a year of chemotherapy, exhaustion and immobility, she saw the benefits of taking small positive steps. She showed a desire to reconnect with friends and colleagues. Our family witnessed her transformation as her perspectives shifted and her priorities becoming clearer; her gratitude to G-d, the Rebbe and her family deepened.

While we still acknowledge the challenges that remain with both visible and invisible scars, they serve as a reminder of her difficult experience. Her guts and determination spurred her on to make each day meaningful. Throughout this process she has kept her focus on what truly matters; family, relationships, and meaningful music pursuits. It has fostered compassion in her and has given her a

mission to help others going through life's difficulties. Her experiences created a new musical mirror through which her life and that of her family is viewed; one that is richer, more meaningful, and deeply personal.

My support for my wife and her career has been a fulfilling part of my life and hopefully has contributed to her huge successes."

Healthy Havens

An oasis of beauty, in an otherwise frenetic and frequently stressful life at home, was the precious, peaceful, and pleasurable time the family experienced together during memorable holidays. We were fortunate to have been given two timeshare weeks by my parents-in-law. Our time spent away from home on holiday with the children was exceedingly and indisputably important for us to relax, regroup and re-bond as a family.

However, there were also less idyllic experiences: On one particular holiday over 40 years ago in Umhlanga Rocks, when Natalie was very young, she stepped into a lift in the hotel before we could stop her. Its doors then closed and spirited her away to another floor somewhere. It took a while to locate her. Every parent will understand the level of panic one feels when a child suddenly disappears. We had our fair share of that happening over the years – particularly with Sara, who had a knack of wandering away at shopping centres or, more terrifyingly, disappearing into the sea behind formidable rocks on the beach.

On one of our Llandudno visits, a sudden wave alarmingly pulled Sara into deep water behind the rocks and it was a real battle finding and rescuing her. The relief at seeing her was immense and palpable. Sara and sea dramas became synonymous. On a visit to Boulders Beach one year, Michael put Sara on his back and began swimming out to the nearby rocks. A very sudden, strong current pulled him (with Sara still on his back) into swirling waters and he simply could not get back to shore. Luckily, help was at hand and with perseverance, pulling and prayers, the two of them eventually got back to the shore.

When the girls were very young, we often holidayed in Muizenberg, Cape Town, and I recall those times as being very precious. The family shared laughter, fun swims in the ocean – and many board (bored!?) games. My stepdaughter Jacqui often joined us on our holidays, which was not only wonderful, but I think relieved Natalie of having to be the responsible 'eldest sister'.

Other holiday destinations included The Kloof near Rustenburg, where I myself in fact became the victim of a drama. The holiday resort had a couple of water slides, which the children adored. They had begged me to try the frighteningly tall one, which I had studiously avoided up until then. Eventually, however, their nagging got the better of me and I very reluctantly ascended this death-trap! I was so petrified once I reached the top that my body went rigid – and I felt myself flying downwards into swirling waters at a dizzyingly fast rate, like a bullet shot from a rifle.

I couldn't breathe and my panic was compounded when I reached the pool at the bottom and knocked my head heavily on the bottom. This apparently created great amusement for the children, until my family realised how injured I really was. I had had a lucky escape in that I had not broken my neck, but I was traumatised by that experience. As I was wearing a black swimsuit at the time, I henceforth became known by my family (rather insensitively, I must declare) as 'the black bullet'.

Although I do not wish to dwell on negative incidents, I also recall a very distressing occurrence while on holiday about 25 years ago in Umhlanga Rocks; Natalie was pregnant with her first-born, Aharon, and Nisi was only nine years old. The three of us were returning to our unit along the beach boardwalk, when I felt myself being pushed quite vigorously by a man behind me, propelling me forward. I tried to stop, but realised that I could not and saw a group of men ahead who were obviously in cahoots with him, dressed in Muslim garb. I made a lightning decision and, grabbing both children's hands, dragged them up some stairs up the path leading into the Oyster Box Hotel. I had been correct in assuming there was something going on, as the group of men ahead started chasing us. I dragged the (now terrified) children

into the women's toilet at the hotel and locked one of the toilet doors. I had no-one to call, as Michael was at a prayer service.

We waited for what felt like hours before emerging only when their voices receded, raced up the stairs and went towards the other hotel, at which we had agreed to meet Michael. There they were again... those same men, waiting for us. We sprinted into the other hotel and shouted to the receptionist to call the police. By the time they arrived, the men had disappeared. It was a harrowing experience and to this day, I neither know, nor want to know, what their nefarious intentions were – and we have not been back to Umhlanga since.

Why is it that negative memories are so residual and vivid, whereas happy ones tend to blur in a glorious, but indistinct, haze of sun, sea, sand and laughter? Perhaps it is because trauma, by its very nature, brands every detail on the memory, to be relived and retold again and again, in slow motion, until the story inside one is spent and perspective is regained. Yet, looking back, I realise that much of the pleasure of holidays was in the anticipation of going away, the planning, the packing, the excitement of the children at seeing the ocean and the beach, the smells and sounds of a different resort and the mounting excitement of travelling there.

I also realise that for me, the longing for a break was often confounded by the very unfamiliar and uncomfortable feeling of not being near my piano, computer or manuscript paper – or being pressurised to meet deadlines. I was so accustomed to rushing, that unwinding was an exercise for the left hand. Relaxation, for me, is in fact hard work and recreation does not come naturally to me! I admit that coming home was also always something of a relief, as the welcome, beloved prospect of our house, our belongings, our own beds, our own kitchen and our own routines reappeared. Yet those holidays remain highlights – milestones in the journey of our family – and treasured breakaways of communion and delight, physically and spiritually.

The word 'retirement' is not in my vocabulary as I will always be composing music or writing about it. However, with my teaching no longer an issue, I do have so much more time to read, see friends and listen to a variety of illuminating zoom talks. I

zoom in on a delightful Yiddish class on Friday mornings, not only enriching my love of the language enormously, but also being very stimulated by the diverse talents of the people in the class.

Faithful forever friends

I have also been very fortunate in having cherished friends in music who have walked parts of my journey with me, both professionally and personally. One such is Pauline Nossel, who has been a lifelong friend since meeting her in the School of Music when I started teaching there in 1976 – a beautiful friendship of nearly 50 years. What I find remarkable is that when we are together, we very rarely speak about music. We share so many very profound ideas about life and family – and I adore being in her company due to her optimism, beautiful smile and positive attitude. I cherish the fact that she is a genuine friend who cares deeply how I am feeling, not with lip service but with selfless actions. I hope that she reciprocally feels that I am as loving and caring towards her as she is towards me.

This generous, soft-spoken, sweet and exquisitely turned out lady, is the epitome of finesse and refinement. I marvel constantly at her demeanour, which charmingly combines dignity and beauty with ebullience. Pauline's love of mischievous laughter and *joie de vivre* endear her to all who know her. It must be said, however, that when frustrated with a recalcitrant student, she is capable of displaying a formidable strength as an explosive tigress-teacher – beware the student who does not take her wise counsel!

In her early years, Pauline was a superb pianist, who loved solo performance but even more so playing chamber music with her lifelong friend Marion Lewin-Kimmel, the renowned South African cellist, with whom I also had the honour to work. Pauline's career has seen her rise to the pinnacle of pianism in South Africa.

Indeed, Pauline is widely acknowledged as the doyenne of piano tuition in this country and beyond, and has laid the solid foundation for many a piano performer who has gone on to carve a career locally and on international stages. It took some persuading on my behalf to bring her out of 'performing

retirement' to honour me by playing at my 60th Birthday Concert presented by Wits University in the Atrium in August 2008. This performance, together with Malcolm Nay (brilliant pianist and erstwhile student of Pauline's), of my *Juggler and the King* for two pianos was absolutely spectacular and a superb tribute to me and our valued friendship.

Another precious friend is Hilary Falkow-Friedland:

I first met her in 1983, when Myrna Greenberg and I approached her to assist with publicity to launch our new rock opera *Rage in a Cage.* She had been highly recommended due to her public relations prowess. Little did I know that in addition to her astonishing ability to network and write erudite texts and press releases, she was also a highly talented soprano with a glorious voice and remarkable singing history. In conversation with her recently I learnt that her voice teacher at the Royal College of Music in London had been the renowned baritone, Gordon Clinton. I composed and dedicated several songs to Hilary. What meant the most to me, was that we would embark on a beautiful friendship that time and distance would not diminish – the 'time' factor being over 40 years since we met and the 'distance' being the many kilometres between Johannesburg and Melbourne, Australia, where Hilary has lived since 2001.

When I was invited to have my work *Four Minim* for Cello and Piano performed at the ISCM Festival in Warsaw in 1992, Hilary joined me from London and we shared a remarkable tour of the city. Warsaw had been devastated first by the Nazis and then by the communists. It was austere and depressing in so many ways, yet we managed to have a great adventure together, exploring what must have once been a very imposing city. The once beautiful Opera House was grey and foreboding – and a performance we attended there of Penderecki's *Devils of Loudoun* (a story of demonic possession) sent us both into a state of utter terror. We ran away from the Opera House like 'bats out of hell' during the interval, laughing hysterically from nerves all the way back to our hotel due to the disturbing and melancholic degree of nauseating violence in the opera.

When visiting the only surviving shul in Warsaw, the Nożyk Synagogue, we found an elderly man who readily agreed to show us around places of Jewish interest. He looked half-starved and took us almost immediately to a restaurant belonging to the American businessman Ronald Lauder, Estée Lauder's son, where he ravenously devoured everything in sight, including the dish of *chrain* (horseradish relish). We also visited the bunker in which Mordechai Anielewicz – the symbol of Jewish resistance during the Holocaust in Poland – fought to his death against the Nazis during the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. While viewing the historical area, a group of Polish skinheads screamed "Ży*di!*" ("*Jews*"!), reminding us that anti-Semitism is not only the oldest and most ubiquitous form of racism in the world, but was still rampant then – and, alas, is still today.

When Hilary was invited by the *Pragokonzert* to sing in Prague in 1992, I travelled with her and accompanied her on the piano in the première performances of the two songs I had dedicated to her, which formed part of the programme in the exquisite intimate hall in the Nostitz Palace. The Nostitz family had been patrons of music – and one of the musicians they financed had been Frédéric Chopin – and, allegedly, even Mozart (reputed to have played the gorgeous white piano which I used for the concert). Hilary's masterful performance drew enthusiastic applause from the audience.

The year 1994 was a most productive one for me. It was the year during which the CD of many of my works was produced. On a more personal musical level in the same year, I composed a work called *Ukuthul*a ('*Peace*' in isiZulu) for Hilary as soprano with Hanré Lass singing the mezzo-soprano part. The grand occasion was the "Last Night of the Proms" – a gala Promenade concert held in aid of the South African Music Education Trust. SAMET was an organisation close to both our hearts that raised money for music education of previously disadvantaged black students. Hilary was on the SAMET board at the time and I too was later a director on the board.

The gala concert was a gloriously festive occasion at the Johannesburg City Hall, with the Transvaal Philharmonic

Orchestra ably conducted by Michael Hankinson. Hilary's performance that night was magnificent. It made us so proud to be able to collaborate in this way. I wrote the text for *Ukuthula*, which embodied the desire and plea for peace in South Africa after our tumultuous history. The words which epitomise this hope for peace were based on Biblical predictions (*Isaiah* chapters 10 and 11): "The wolf will dwell with the lamb; the leopard will lie down with the goat... and the spirit of wisdom and understanding will rest on the world – and when all the madness is over, peace will come – *Ukuthula*!"

How passionately I wish this prophecy would come true very soon, given the chaotic and horrific state in which the world currently finds itself. We *must* be reassured that there will be a healthy and peaceful world for our grandchildren and future descendants to inherit!



With my dear friend and renowned soprano, Hilary Falkow-Friedland, whom I accompanied on the piano during the 'PragoConsert' at the Nostitz Palace in Prague in November 1992



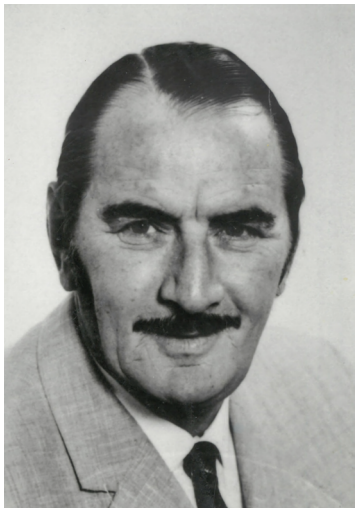
Mom and me at a local Toastmistress meeting at which I spoke as guest lecturer on "contemporary Music"



My beautiful mother, Evelyn Zaidel 'in the pink'- her wedding outfit in later years for the grandchildren



Sheer happiness and joy after my marriage to Michael Rudolph in September 1976



My beloved father, David Zaidel, in later years with the characteristic twinkle in his eyes



My brother Malcolm and sister-in-law Pammy's beautiful wedding in September 1973



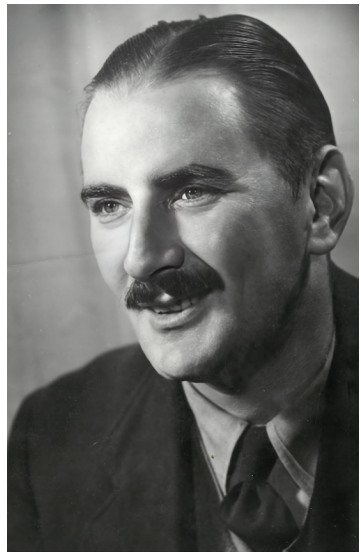
My husband Michael and I celebrating my recovery with friends and family, after my serious illness during the entire year of 1996



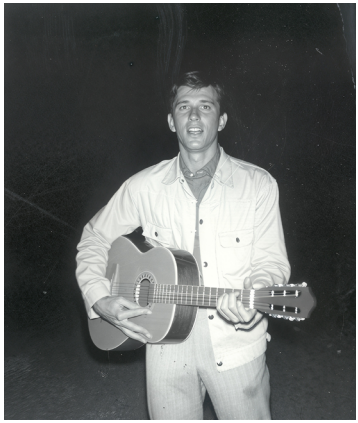
Malcolm and I in happy and healthy days at a celebratory event



My father, David Zaidel in formal attire before singing in the Opera Shulamit



My father in later years around 1958



Malcolm with guitar in his 'happy place' strumming and singing



Mom and Dad dancing the night away on a cruise



My mother Evelyn aged 21 when she won a beauty competition in Pretoria



My wedding to the man of my dreams, Dr Michael Rudolph, dentist, on 14 September 1976



Our daughter Tamar's engagement party to Nachi Levin (from left), Nisi, Tamar, Michael, Me and my Mother, Evelyn



Nisi's beautiful wedding in the Cape at Suikerbossie restaurant near Hout Bay on 15 March 2018 (from left) our daughters Tamar, Sara, Nisi, Natalie, Jacqui



At the Graduation ceremony of our daughter Nisi at Wits University in June 2013 receiving her Bachelor's degree in Speech Pathology and Audiology



Graduation time at Wits with our daughter, Natalie, capped for her Bachelor degree in Education (B. Ed) July 1999



Admiring my ring at our 'court' wedding in September preceding our religious ceremony

Pieces for the Young

Injured Innocence

A Rage in a Cage

In 1983, I made an unusual style diversion – a foray into a completely different genre by composing the music for a rock opera titled *A Rage in a Cage*, a quasi-satirical protest piece expressing the frustrations between children and their parents in a changing world. Undoubtedly, the fact that I had embarked on sessional teaching at the Performing Arts Workshop (PAW) in Observatory, Johannesburg, had a profound influence on my creative choices.

I was approached by the talented writer Myrna Greenberg to set her texts and lyrics for *Rage* to music; namely to compose the solo and choral group songs, as well as the arrangements for the backing orchestral ensemble. The King David National Youth Theatre was started by Myrna, who had a lengthy history working with youngsters and adolescents, before committing herself to writing full-time. It was that experience which prompted her to create a rock opera exploring the generation gap and lack of effective communication, a theme which was so often evident in her work. Myrna wrote the script and lyrics together with Linda Hart for the first production of the new National Youth Theatre, a multi-racial and interdenominational arts entity. There was (and still is) a wealth of creative and dramatic talent in South Africa, which needed/needs to be tapped. My role would be as composer, arranger, pianist and conductor in the performances. The work blossomed with songstress supreme, Ilana Green (now known as Lana Green), well-known choreographer Adele Blank, tap-fundi Sandra Rosenberg and a host of gifted young singers and a full band of talented local musicians.

These included pianist Michael Strauss (with whom I alternated on keyboards), guitarist and double ARTES[1]-winner Johnny Boshoff, Keith Hutchinson on synthesiser, Martin Aston on drums, Joe Willis on guitar and Dominique Mignolet on percussion. The announcement of the upcoming production generated such overwhelming excitement that 600 young performers from across the nation rushed to apply for auditions. Jeff Cory, known for his work with young people, particularly at PAW, would direct the production. Ultimately, 56 youngsters from both English and Afrikaans schools throughout the (then) Transvaal were involved in the rock opera. The work explored many issues relating to the generation gap, a very relevant topic which was often evident in Greenberg's work. We initially presented 10 stage performances with full cast and band at the King David auditorium. Later, the opera was also televised and performed in Israel in the Negev – again, to tumultuous acclaim with both Lana and I present.

The script of *A Rage in a Cage* captured not only teenage rage, but the despair of young people needing affirmation of what they – as a different generation contending with daunting influences, challenges and insights – could neither ignore, nor reconcile with the expectations and love of their elders (as expressed by four mothers). I was therefore keenly aware that my music should capture the same ambivalence, desire for authentic love – and aggression of both mothers and the children, while being accessible enough to connect emotionally and rhythmically with a live audience and reflect the hope for youth in a buoyant and inspiring mode. At the same time, I wondered whether my long immersion in the parameters and style of classical music would hinder me and, indeed, whether it was being compromised by my diversion into this completely new rock operatic experience.

My concerns on all these counts proved to be groundless. I absolutely loved every minute of composing the music, giving strong precedence to the words and moulding the music around the text and mood, even if it meant producing highly irregular measures, off-beats and jagged musical phrases. In fact, my

1 An award recognizing and celebrating excellence and artistry of stars in South Africa.

adventure into the protest rock opera genre, and the music it required – rhythmic, pulsating songs which could transition easily into either plaintive solo melodies, or combustible choruses taken up and danced to by audiences – gave me a welcome, and necessary, perspective of rock music and, with it, an equally necessary and new appreciation of the classical forms in which I had always been immersed. Today it is almost unthinkable to compose music in a void without inter-cultural conversations and cross-pollination of hybrid forms between genres, whether be jazz, rock pop or many other styles and genres.

This Northern Suburbs[2] farce deals with mothers who see their children as extensions of themselves, intended to complete their own identities and fulfil their own dreams that have eluded them, rather than as separate individuals with their own aspiration. The theme reflects the rage of some of today's youth against these parental ambitions, the emphasis being on the mother and her neurotic frustrations vented on her children. The youth feel that they are not 'heard'. To interpret this theme musically, I needed to find an appropriate sound world to express the out-rage felt by the teenagers towards their overly-ambitious moms. I produced a score of beat-filled, contemporary (accusatory) music and dramatic gestures.

These identity crises find articulation through songs such as *Mother, Mother, Mother*; *Oh Mother Weep*; *Lady*; *I'm So Tired*; and many others, all in suitably 'cool' language. Eleven heart-rending songs are interspersed with dialogue and narration. *Hey Man, This Woman's Crazy* is set to a slow bluesy rhythm with the children clicking their fingers (à la *West Side Story*). A young person's search for illusive love finds expression in *Love is everywhere*.

I thought that the reader may enjoy glimpses into some forthright lyrics from select songs:

Mother, mother, mother,
Look, look, look,

2 The Northern Suburbs in Johannesburg are known for their affluence and higher standard of living, with many wives/mothers who do not work and children who often have everything material but sometimes lacking in loving attention.

Look what you've done...
You gave us the key
To open the door,
But never told us,
(That) life is a skyscraper with more than one floor
We know what you want,
For us to finish what you couldn't do,
'Cause in your book, Mother
One and one don't make two!
One and one... makes one complete you.

'Oh mother weep',
For you are losing your sheep,
All alone they wander, all alone they roam,
All alone, all alone,
Give this poor dog a bone.

And from the song, *Lady*:

Lady, you got the wrong end,
That's your daughter, your own flesh and blood,
Not just a stranger you turned into a friend,
Keep up this behaviour and her mind is going to bend.

In the narrative, the children confide in the local Disc Jockey (played by the superb singer and actress Ilana Green), who provides refuge for them as they too often find escape into the world of alcohol and drugs. Characters include a young attractive male hitch-hiker picked up by a mother, who is desperate to find a husband for her very young daughter, much to the girl's horror and embarrassment. Another character is a young man whose mother is far more interested in her social standing at clubs and organisations than in communicating with him. It often takes a crisis before these mothers finally really 'listen' to their children.

A plaintive and pleading song is titled *Hear Us* (passionately sung by Gina Shmukler, currently a local artist *extraordinaire* of *Mamma Mia* fame) in which the children are begging to be heard and to free themselves from their restrictive umbilical cords. The final song is an optimistic one titled *A Sister and a Brother*, a plea by the youth to be heard as people, separate from their mothers, yet with abundant love flowing both ways that allows for individuality of offspring. This song became so popular in various revised forms, that Roseneath Primary School in Johannesburg, comprising mostly immigrant children, adopted it as its school anthem, after we had happily given our permission. A *Rage in a Cage* was an ambitious production with a cast of 33 and a backstage troop of 23 young enthusiasts.

The rock opera premièred in June 1983 and was performed to resounding acclaim, with critics from both the English and Afrikaans press praising its ebullience, its ability to tap into both the aspirations of parents and the frustrations of youth, and the need for agency and self-expression in teenagers. The same headline in several newspapers screamed: "Classical composer goes pop" (*The Citizen*, Jill de Villiers, 6 June 1983), which made me feel a little like a burst balloon, but I had such fun with the cast and production – and had proverbially let down my hair to such an extent – that I loved every bit of the publicity that went with it. Another headline stated: "Young ones 'rage' on stage" (Town correspondent, *Pretoria News*, June 2 1983), showing some of the characters in a 'mock-wedding scene' which always caused raucous laughter during rehearsals. Under the headline "Opera's got lots of fun and rock" (Margaret Nabarro, 9 June, 1983 in *Showbiz* section of *The Star* newspaper), it was exciting to find the production apparently compared well with a Tim Rice/ Andrew Lloyd-Webber work, which was a huge compliment and endorsement. Nabarro also affirmed that this venture was "ideal bait for this age group... the disco lights, the strobes, the [other] lights."

In a newspaper review by one of the most esteemed theatre critics in South Africa, Percy Baneshik, titled "Youth Theatre kicks off with a helping hand from top composer", he stated that I as composer had 'abandoned my usual medium of contemporary

classical music to create a score of exciting beat-filled music' (*The Star* newspaper, June 1983). I combined my love for stage musicals with the writing of lighter ballads for this delightful project for the youth. To this day, our oldest daughter, Natalie, remembers the songs from 42 years ago almost word for word, a claim that I myself cannot make!

Youth Oratorio[3] for Choir and Ensemble of Seven

I had the honour of being approached by Rita van den Heever from the University of Johannesburg[4] (UJ), who commissioned me to compose an oratorio for the renowned UJ Choir. This globally acknowledged and multiple award-winning choir, under the expert tutelage and brilliant direction of Renette Bouwer, comprises students who are auditioned and drawn from the entire university student body across campus, often consisting of as many as 60 members. As a multicultural mix, its aim is to excel in both African and Western music. The idea of a 'youth oratorio' resonated with me immediately. The idea was for the theme of the work to trace the path from the innocence and optimism of a young child with pure dreams, to a more jaded teenager, whose bravado conceals fear and insecurity.

Texts and traumas – Lyrics and labels

I approached this composition with great enthusiasm and initially turned to William Blake's poetry for inspiration, particularly *Songs of Innocence*, which epitomised the theme. I have always had a special love for Blake's poetry since studying *The Tyger* at high school. I likened Blake's passion for colourful word-imagery to Beethoven's early Romantic sonic notions of beauty and tormented love. They both lived around the same time and died in the same year (1827). Their creative works embody a persistent challenge (often a cynical one) to life, love and even G-d. Beethoven was reputed to have raged against G-d on his deathbed, shaking his fist towards the heavens.

3 An Oratorio is a large-scale music composition based on either a religious or secular subject for chorus, solo voices and orchestra.
4 Previously the 'Rand Afrikaans University (RAU)'.

I researched endlessly for suitable texts which would serve my concept and ideas – and although I found some appropriate texts for my lyrics and attractive quotes on youth, I eventually resorted to writing most of the texts myself. I was motivated to inform our own youth of the dangers, challenges and realities of being young in South Africa, so I needed to pepper the lyrics with a local flavour. The musical narrative traces the journey of a young life from the joyous welcoming of a new soul to the dependency of infancy, the beauty and innocence of childhood, the awakening and anguish of early adolescence, the rite of passage and passion of youth and the young adult, ready to conquer the world and embrace the vast treasures of life. South African youth formed the tapestry for the backdrop of local *angst.*

The musical language of my *Youth Oratorio* is very accessible and the style aligns itself to the meanings and symbolisms of the text. Since the subject matter of the work revolves around issues of youth and particularly the torment of growing up, we tried to reach young people and encouraged them to attend the performances. Although the *Oratorio* is focused on the choral element, I composed instrumental music to accompany the choir, an ensemble consisting of flute, oboe, trumpet, cello, synthesiser and two percussionists. There are eight main sections with an overture, plus four *recitativos*[5] interspersed, making 13 sections in all. Two young vocal soloists sang short connecting melodies. The producer introduced two dancers sporadically onstage, which most people felt did not add much to the production.

The Oratorio had its début performances in the huge Sanlam auditorium at the University of Johannesburg on 21 and 22 August 2009, to very positive reviews. Further performances were presented in Cape Town at the Baxter Theatre on 4 and 5 September and on 2 October as part of the *Aardklop* Festival in Potchefstroom.

After an instrumental overture, the choir immediately breaks out with their first song called *Welcome*, which does exactly that – it welcomes the "new soul on this earth" with the

5 Short 'speech-singing' mode in a rhythmic narrative as commentary on the lyrics.

archetypal birth of a baby. Although sound is my medium, I also enjoy writing meaningful lyrics and texts. I formulated a text with words meaning 'welcome' in several languages, including local African vocabulary such as "*siyakwamukela"* in isiZulu. Since I felt rather bad about the omission of the TshiVenda language from our national anthem, I asked my student, Evans Netshivhambe, for the Venda translation of the word 'welcome', which is "*O tanganedzwa".* I used this term to end the first song.

One of William Blake's poems which captures the spirit of innocence in a newborn baby, called *Infant Joy*, follows next, though the music hints at a future that is not always rosy or easy. Music can do this by introducing a sense of dissonance in places. The beginning of the poem is beautiful, but sad and poignant:

> I have no name; I am but two days old.
> What shall I call thee?
> I happy am
> Joy is my name.
> Sweet joy befall thee,
> Pretty joy
> Sweet joy but two days old.

A solo speech-sung quote in *Recitative 1* by James Russell Lowell (1819–1891) follows, stating that:

> If Youth be a defect, it is one that we outgrow only too soon.

It reminded me of Sir Winston Churchill's witty but wonderfully poignant quote:

> My education was interrupted only by my schooling.

Selected lyrics from my own text for the next song, '*Everychild*'**,** demonstrate my perspective as a mother, who wants to protect "every child":

> Every child deserves love and protection
> Not the scourge of infection, rejection, dejection.

Every child is, every child is precious,
Needing to grow, needing to be nurtured,
Loved and taught and sought for special things,
Given wings to fly, soar up to the sky
Beauty and joy, for every girl and every boy.
The young are to be cherished,
Never to perish, alone and in pain.
A child renews the world again and again.

The next song, *As You Grow*, is based on a text by Alex Townsend, adapted by me with key concepts;

These are repeated for effect. In the selected lyrics there are no complete sentences, only flow of ideas, leading to a breathless tension and anticipation:

Do Not Forget
As you grow and begin to see
As you ride the rippling tide
The rise and fall, the ebb and flow
Ebb and flow, the ebb and flow.
Do not forget the world inside
Do not forget, do not forget
Do not forget the world inside

Surging ahead or lying low
Laughing or crying
Leading or led
The rise and fall, the ebb and flow (x2)
Do not forget the world inside
Drink deep, drink deep of the world inside
Ebb and flow, rise and fall
Rise, fall, ebb, flow

Recitative 2 is a charming quotation by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882):

> How beautiful is youth! How bright it gleams with its illusions, aspirations, dreams! Book of beginnings, story without end, each maid a heroin, and each man a friend!

Innocence, as a value, is close to my heart and my lyrics for this song were designed to reflect that concept. It turned out to be the favourite song among the UJ choir members; and was selected by the Wits Choir to be sung at my farewell Tribute Concert. Its angelically high registers, soft beautiful sonorities and lulling resonances have greatly appealed to choirs:

'Eeee'..... Innocence is beauty
A gift of great joy
It lives in the young
In a girl and boy.

Innocence is simple
Not clouded by doubt
No, not clouded by doubt
It's life's early spring
To laugh and to shout.

Not a care in the world
For an innocent child,
Nothing is impossible
Imagination runs wild
Nothing is impossible
For an innocent child,

Don't take away our childhood dreams
The world isn't always what it seems
We are love, we are joy

Every girl, every boy
Youth, beauty, a joy to be won
The melody of youth – a song to be sung.

For the following song, *Childhood Past*, I wrote lyrics emphasising that the past does not have to define the future of a child:

Childhood is a time of love and praise
Rite of passage takes us to another phase
We gaze with hope at futures yet unknown
We walk a path that oft' is all alone

Omnia vincit amor
Love conquers everything and can restore
The feelings that suffer hurt and pain
And bring a healing to us once again.

Ars longa *vita brevis*
Art is long and life is short
We are young and still believe
Lessons can be taught

Boys: *Ars longa* vita brevis	*Girls: Ars longa* vita brevis
Art is long and life is short	Art is long and life is short
We are young and without love	We are young and without help
Life will come to naught	Life will come to naught

Girls:	Joining hands we face the world anew
Boys:	Face the world, the world anew
Girls:	Strong and sure of what we have to do
Boys:	Sure of what we have to do.

Girls: We can change the world and not be ruled
Boys: Change the world and not be ruled
Girls: By the cynics who would have us fooled
Boys: Cynics who would have us fooled.

One of the most poignant tragedies in South Africa as a result of the HIV/Aids pandemic was that hundreds of Aids-orphans were left in the wake of parents' deaths; especially among the underprivileged youngsters, who were effectively robbed of their youth and forced into premature responsibility. Very young children (some as young as twelve) were compelled to look after their younger siblings and to run households in order to survive. I tried to capture their heartbreak and despair in the music for this 10th section of the Oratorio by excessive wailing interspersed with the text:

Prelude to ***The Head of the Household*** (intro text by WB Yeats, extract from *Stolen Child*)

Come away, O human child
To the waters and the wild
For the world's more full of weeping
Than you can understand

The Head of the Household (text by Ingrid de Kok – adapted by Nikki Richard)

The head of the household is a girl of thirteen
Her children are many, her hopes are unseen.

Leftovers, moulting gulls, wet milky sacks,
She carries them all under arm and on back.
When not on the floor in fear and distress
Their ashen-lip smiles, no joy do express

A sickness so cruel, stealing promise and pride
It leaves in its wake a future denied.

Moon and the stars, navigational spoor
For ambulance, hearse, such pain to endure.

They fetch and dispatch the unclean and dead
Whilst a girl of thirteen bears her house on her head (repeated).

The following two charming quotes sung in a 'recitative' mode (half-spoken/ singsong) herald the 12th section:

The good thing about being young, is that you are not experienced enough to know you cannot possibly do the things you are doing. (Shilpa Lifestyle 2024)

Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw said:

It's all that the young can do for the old, to shock them and keep them up to date (2006).

The penultimate song, *Teenage Blues* (text by me and Kerryn Tracey) uses the blues music model to identify most strongly with the youth, who love to vent their problems in a contemporary style. My music is quite eclectic in this song, using formulae gained from stage musicals and music theatre. The music tempo, rhythm and style change continually with the altering word-lengths and resultant dramatically changing moods. Below are the words of this very interactive, pertinent song for youth with typical peer group commentaries and 'chirps':

(Basses): Bom bom bom bom ba bom,
(Tenors): I am a teen, invincible and mean,
My leather jacket and my bike,
Make me a cool machine.
(Sopranos/Altos): His leather jacket and his bike,
Make him a cool machine.

(Sopranos/Altos): I am a teen, I'm gorgeous and I'm lean,

Got lipstick and my fancy shoes,
And do just what I choose.
(Tenors): Got lipstick and her fancy shoes,
She does just as she chooses.

(All): My friends are very important to me,
I really don't want them; don't want them to see,
How frightened of life I really can be,
My world is a prison; I want to be free,
Want to be free, want to be me.
(Spoken): Dear G-d, give me strength to conquer my fears,
Dry up my tears, be like my peers,
(Sung): Help me to find a way I can cope,
Give me some hope, give me some hope.

My parents expect me to be good at school,
If only they realise that isn't cool,
I'll only survive if I break every rule,
How can my life be so totally cruel?
Totally cruel, totally cruel!

(Basses): Bom bom bom bom ba bom,
(Tenors): I am a teen, invincible and mean,
My leather jacket and my bike,
Make me a cool machine.
(Sopranos/Altos): I am a teen, I'm gorgeous and I'm lean,
Got lipstick and my fancy shoes,
And do just what I choose.

(All): I am a teen; I'm part of that whole scene,
It's easy for us to get confused,
There's so many things that we can choose,

Direction we can easily lose,
The teenage blues (x4)
YEAH!!

In the final song, *My Name is Youth*, my text reveals the inevitability of life's harsh knocks when the teen cycle and early adulthood begins, with painful passion – love and loss:

My name is Youth
And I have come of age.
My name is Youth
And I have reached that stage.

Boys: I have a name
Girls: I have a name
Boys: and I have come of age
Girls: and I have come of age

Happy am I
Youth is my name.
Want to aim high
Life is my game.
Passion of Youth, love that is pure
Pain is the price, there is no cure.
I am in love, pain is the price.
Where is the joy? I need advice.

Why does it hurt? Why so much pain?
If love's so hard, what is the gain?
Look at his eyes, filled with desire.
Look at her face, his heart on fire.
When will he call? What will I say?
Fear is the price I have to pay.

When will she call? What will I say?
What if my fear drives her away?

I have a name
And I have reached that stage.
My name is Youth
And I have come of age.
Sweet Youth I love thee, love thee.

A further performance of my *Youth Oratorio* was presented by Wits University, under the auspices of Wits Arts & Literature Experience on the evening of 22 April 2010 at the Linder Auditorium in Parktown. This performance was expertly conducted by Mokale Koapeng, composer and choral conductor. The pre-publicity for the concert asserted: "As a section of the Oratorio, *Head of the Household* deals specifically with HIV/Aids and the burden it bears on our youth. It is an unsurpassed opportunity for our youth to experience a world-class performance of contemporary South African art music, where current issues are interpreted and translated into an exquisite blend of text and music." There is a strong possibility that excerpts from the Oratorio may be performed in September 2025 as part of the 20th Anniversary celebration at the University of Johannesburg.

Daughter dedications

I think every composer, at one time or other, writes music for young players for various musical instruments – and if they do not, I believe that they ought to. It is an important way of teaching young performers about the existence of local composers and also being an educational vehicle. I wrote a number of piano pieces for young pianists, a select few for our daughters, for the UNISA Graded exams and also for children in general. I composed *Mixed Feelings for Sara* (while my daughter Sara was studying the piano) in 1988 as she wanted something 'different and showy' to play at eisteddfods. To be fair, I also wrote something for Tamar (who also learnt to play) which I did in 1989, called *Mosaic*.

After a glorious and exciting visit to the Kruger Park with the family in 1993, I wrote a piece for the piano called *Awaiting Game*, illustrating all the drama of a lion stalking its prey and finally going in for the kill, dedicated to Natalie. In a similar vein, when I was commissioned to compose the compulsory work for the 2017 SAMRO Overseas Scholarship for piano performance, I wrote a piece called *Catch Me if you Can*, having been powerfully influenced as a young pianist by a piece called *Le Chat et la Souris* (*The Cat and the Mouse*) by Aaron Copland, describing the furtive stalking and dramatic chase of a mouse by a cat. I tried to infuse these works for young people with as much drama, fantasy and the unlimited opportunity to use their imagination as I had to do as a young pianist.

Among the pieces commissioned by UNISA for their graded albums were: '*5 6 7 8*' (Grade 7 syllabus 2002), which is based on the idea of a typical dance routine in a modern class. It is consequently very rhythmical and much fun to interpret, with metric changes designed to teach more advanced rhythm. Dedicated to our youngest daughter, Nisi, *Times they are a-Changing* was another graded examination piece (2008 Grade 3 syllabus) in which I introduced simple metric time changes. Nisi loved rhythm and her dancing and was a talented choreographer when younger.

In a much higher category of difficulty were the pieces commissioned by UNISA from me for its renowned "International Piano Competitions" held every four years. These piano works were designed to be extremely challenging technically and also musically for young pre-professional performers, as they had to test the talent and abilities of international contestants at the highest levels. These pieces included *Virtuoso 1* (1988), which has had numerous local and international performances; *Partials and Pedals* (2008); and in 2020, two works were commissioned by SAMRO for UNISA, which I titled *AfrEtude* and *Ebb and Flow*. Competitors had a choice between the two – the former being quite African in both concept and sound-world. For further information on *Partials and Pedals* please refer to the Appendix (7).

Naturally, I attended as many recitals of my music as I could at UNISA in Pretoria. I was thrilled to have exceptional performances of these two original works by exceptional young pianists. I had my own definite ideas as to how the music should sound and who should win the competition, taking into account their skill and musicality. My opinion in these decisions did not necessarily concur with those of the adjudicators, but of course, there are always other factors to consider. It was a huge honour and privilege, though, to sit in the audience and hear numerous performances of the music I had composed by superbly talented young performers from all over the globe.

My African Music

Music of the soil

As children, my brother and I loved listening to the radio, and I was magnetically drawn to the stations that broadcasted black African choral music. Nothing captured my musical imagination, or stimulated my creative juices more than this rich, vibrant and passionate sound-world.

One would be hard-pressed to find a composition of mine that has not in some shape or form been influenced by the sounds and music of Africa, especially South Africa. My interactions with the landscapes and soundscapes of this continent are deeply intertwined with my intercultural approach to music - and have been inextricably bound up in my musical psyche since childhood. Indigenous music has dominated much of my artistic inspiration for as long as I can remember, shaping the textures, pulses, and rhythmic designs that define my musical identity.

My African-inspired compositions are replete with images and polyrhythms in which multiple layers and patterns interlock to create a dynamic and pulsing complexity which mirrors the tangled bush, rain forests, soil-eroded land, birdsong, cascading waterfalls and the rustling of trees, all with an underlying restless energy. In so doing I connect with the land its history, and its people. Blending African and Western cultures into transcultural music is my way of honouring diversity while creating a fresh sound-world.

It is incorrect to refer to 'African music' as a single generic unit, as there are hundreds of different African *musics* – some sharing similar rhythmic patterns and parametric devices, but each one synonymous with and characteristic of the region and culture within which it develops and blossoms. It was therefore not necessarily the more obvious African music elements that spoke to me, like the legendary generic rhythms and pulses of Africa, but the logical way the music becomes one with the ideas

and words of the songs and dances, following its own mood, logic and space. African music is most often in the service of its deeper meanings and lyrics, rather than the other way around.

I love the fact that, unlike much of Western music, African music and most songs demonstrate the freedom from restrictive metric units, reflecting predominantly the articulations, emphases and meaning of the words. Artificially measured bars (which conveniently only exist on paper as in Western music) do not have to be synthetically corseted into regular measures of 3, 4, 6 or whatever metric units are convenient for notating an art music score or sheet music. In fact, guided improvisation is very characteristic of African music and epitomises the beauty of natural expression and spontaneity – very much like the free jazz genre. Also, in African music there are rich traditions going back hundreds of years infusing the music with colourful symbolisms, narratives and images; story-telling at its best.

My fascination for the African aural landscape started developing as early as the mid-1960s, after finishing high school. This is somewhat akin to the thinking of the late anthropologist Johnny Clegg, a wonderful musician, who learnt the dynamic of African music on the rooftops of urban Johannesburg as a youngster because Zulu migrant men used to dance there. Sometime around 1984, Michael and I had the merit of befriending another anthropologist, the renowned Dr David Webster[1] at Wits University, who very kindly took us one Sunday morning to the Hartebeesfontein platinum mine near Rustenburg in the North West province. He introduced us to the astoundingly beautiful music of the miners.

Master Musician

The huge draw-card for me was the legendary Mozambican virtuoso *chopi*[2] player Venancio Mbanda, who created the most

1 An academic and anti-apartheid activist, who was later assassinated by apartheid security forces.

2 A Mozambican xylophone or marimba. Frequently shorter than an orchestral marimba, it is constructed with wooden slats, with resonating gourds tuned in non-Western scales. This African instrument, also known as a *timbila*, is made in southern

exhilarating and exciting music (even more so for me as a white musician) and performed it with many other musicians, mostly early Sunday mornings at the mine. There were literally thousands of mineworkers in this one space and one of their prime recreational activities and tension releases (men in hostels frequently experienced violent and fierce infighting) was joining the *chopi* orchestras on Sunday mornings. The hours they spent there also placated their intense homesickness and loneliness as migrant workers to some extent, reconnecting them – however briefly – to their real identities, beneath the overalls, boots and helmets issued to them by the mine[3].

In their downtime these men created an astonishing orchestra of xylophones and *mbiras*, with ankle beads, drums and shakers. Most of them in fact were not South African, but hailed from Mozambique and Zimbabwe – and I was transfixed. I had

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Mozambique and comes in different sizes and pitch ranges. The calabashes underneath are tightly fastened and sealed with beeswax. A chopi orchestra can comprise five to 30 players. Singers, dancers, whistles and shakers are frequently added to the group and the music reflects contemporary social issues.

3 The South African mining industry, which formed the backbone of its economy, was premised on the use of cheap labour, both local and migrant. Its main recruiting agents, 'Wenela' and TEBA, commissioned men of all ages from all parts of the subcontinent to come and enlist as miners in a sprawling network of gold, diamond, copper and platinum mines in and around greater Johannesburg. The work was backbreaking and relentless and the men – who came from a plethora of different cultures and communities – earned a pittance. To expedite the labour and enforce regimentation among these men, the mines insisted that *Fanagalo* – an artificial language – be the only medium of communication during shifts. However, while this language offered terms for implements, techniques, times and the giving and taking of instructions, it lacked any emotional vocabulary. Thus a miner had no way of telling his *induna* ('boss boy', who headed his labour shift) that he was frightened, lonely or confused. The role of *Fanagalo* as a repressive and dehumanising instrument among conscripted mineworkers has been amply documented in the three-volume *History of Black Mineworkers in South Africa* (The Moor Press, 1992), edited by the late Vic Allen. Thus the need of mineworkers to find release in these Sunday morning orchestral performances was crucial for their sanity. The late Hugh Masekela famously sang of the intense, prolonged disintegration of identity among mineworkers in his song *Stimela (Steam Train)*, while American singer Harry Belafonte also sang of their despair in his brooding, disturbing song *Dark as a Dungeon.*

to work really hard to disengage my Western ears and replace them with African ears to be able to identify the complexities of the polyrhythmic layers interacting with one another so skillfully. With their permission, I recorded many hours of music reflecting highly complex metrical patterns and intricate melodies and harmonies. The *timbila* (chopi) players were complete masters on their instruments, with highly developed stick/beater techniques.

It is, of course, unrealistic to imagine, having grown up in a Western-dominated culture and studied in Europe, that my attempt to incorporate musical elements of an indigenous culture into my music ultimately can reflect anything more than an 'outsider's' perspective of the music in an intercultural sense. I would never have the DNA of a black African musician, but I did my best to understand their music, listen to it respectfully and inset myself into the African music psyche. The debate around this is extensive, so I can only present my personal engagement with indigenous African music and how it influenced, inspired and often consumed me.

The 'call and response' technique found in indigenous African Music underpinned much of my intercultural writing over the years; this genre and style whereby a lead singer intones the musical phrase, which is then responded to by the group, was as familiar and natural to me as a Mozart minuet; the reason being that in Jewish worship, there is also a solo cantor (leader of prayer services) who sings and declaims a small section of the liturgy and the male choir responds, either with complementary texts, repetitions of what the cantor has just sung or with a simple 'amen'. Having often been in the field researching the sounds of Africa, it was the less obvious parameters, like rhythm and atmosphere that spoke the loudest to me.

Fanfare Festival Overture for Orchestra – deliciously 'out-of-tune'

After my visits to the mine and hearing the pulsating and energising music, my creative juices were vibrating with sounds of Africa. One of the first works into which I introduced the *chopi timbila* piano as an instrument was my *Fanfare Festival*

Overture, composed in 1985 on a commission by the SABC for the Johannesburg Centenary Celebrations in 1996. With its non-Western tuning, it set up a vibrating resonance that gave the music a unique colour and sound. The brief from the organisers was to create a musical retrospective of the 100 years of this incredible mining town-turned huge city; in its diversity and with its extraordinary accomplishments as the economic, educational, and social hub of Africa. The music mirrors the social, economic, and political developments over the period of a century.

The *Fanfare Festival Overture* was spectacularly premièred in 1986 at the Johannesburg City Hall (a prestigious venue of choice in that decade) during the Third Season of the National Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of the superb Japanese conductor, Yoshimi Takeda. In a review in *Beeld* (23 August 1986), Thys Odendaal refers to the work as a "dazzling composition... in which Zaidel understands the orchestra as a distinct entity". In the *Business Day* (22 August 1986), Mary Rörich refers to the *Overture* as having an "electrifying apotheosis, culminating in a riveting Chopi piano solo".

Seven years later the National Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of the brilliant conductor Omri Hadari, again performed my *Fanfare Festival Orchestra* at a celebrity concert at the City Hall, Johannesburg. Dawid Hoenigsberg in *The Star Tonight* (12 October 1992) described the Overture as "filled with all the nuances, rhythms, and colours that make New African music so unique". In *Beeld* (15 October 1992) under the headline, "This Overture was a pulsating crescendo", Etienne van Rensburg stated that:

> Hadari's handling of the work could be likened to an experience out of this world, almost extra-terrestrial. Under his direction the orchestra was like an *atomic bomb*, ready to burst at any time –almost an 'otherworldly' experience... It had the audience in ecstasies.

These reviews were greatly affirming for me as a composer attempting to blend different cultures together – but simultaneously being anxious not to offend the practitioners of that culture.

As mentioned, I am passionate about utilising the percussion section of the orchestra – one may therefore be forgiven for thinking that this work sounds like a concerto for percussion and orchestra. Van Rensburg further stated that:

> Zaidel-Rudolph's finely tuned (percussion) instructions could be felt in the smallest of details. One can only conclude that this is an outstanding work which was performed outstandingly (Van Rensburg).

I would have loved to study drums and percussion as a student, but when I attempted to do this at UP, there was no percussion teacher available at the time.

The mood of the work is of a highly festive nature and revolves around a 'centenary' theme garnered from the four-syllable rhythm of the word 'cen-te-na-ry' which follows the rhythmic articulation of the word. It explores both contemporary Western and indigenous African sounds and music techniques.

The music is loosely divided into four sections to reflect the four quarters of the 20th century up to that time. It begins (stylistically in the late 1880s) with swirls of tone colour in the music reminiscent of the colourful ornamentation of the turn of the century. The brash trumpets proudly announce the fanfare celebratory theme, which is repeated loudly in horns and trombones, your typical *brassy* 'in-your-face' instruments. The music in the second section moves closer to the 20th century with a slightly more 'modern' sound, using flowing, but changing rhythms in an impressionistic style and sound-world. The third section sees the metamorphoses of previous themes and the texture becomes transparent and luminescent as life becomes less predictable. The trumpet fanfare also sporadically returns. These sections, which reflectively cover two world wars, reveal music that is not always pleasant or beautiful and can be disturbingly dissonant, mirroring world events of the time. The fourth section brings us into the Johannesburg of 1986 with a strong indigenous African flavour.

The large percussion group (often referred to as the 'kitchen' section because of its clattering, banging and pounding

drum-like sonorities) focuses on African polyrhythmic[4] melodies which impress themselves on the texture. Some 'African' instruments used in the music include the *cabassa* (hand shaker), various ethnic drums and cowbells. The *pièce de résistance*, however, is my introduction into a Western orchestra of the very 'out of tune'[5] *timbila* or Chopi piano, which clashes with Western instrumental tuning in a deliberate and, I believe, an exciting intercultural way. This 'out-of-tune' instrument was an innovation in the conventional Western orchestral palette of tone-colour. The music culminates in a hypnotic riveting solo on this African xylophone, relentlessly repeating and beating patterns which expand and greatly increase in volume, carrying the music to a resounding climax landing on the primordial tone of C (Doh).

Tempus Fugit

It would be remiss of me not to revisit *Tempus* Fugit, my winning work in the 1986 Total Oil Composers Competition - now in the context of African music; not only because it was a triumph for me as a (female) composer, but because the material wholly reflected my love for indigenous African elements and was soaked in local sound-images and overtones.

I set out to capture the spirit of a multi-faceted South African society with its cultural diversity in the music. In order to achieve this collage in the music, *Tempus Fugit* comprises complex layerings of African music elements, together with Western timbres and orchestrations. In the work there are musical gestures symbolising sameness and contrast, unity and diversity – the clarion call for creating harmony in our nation.

The opening movement is characterised by my favourite technique of 'call and response' – the master musician leading and being answered by followers. In our 'rainbow' society, the contrasts and changes are reflected in this music by metrical time changes, change of tempo and pace and crafting colourful

4 Several layers of rhythms played simultaneously.
5 Tuned in an African scale, unfamiliar to the Western ear.

metamorphoses by alternating the various instruments. The piece is energised by driving and relentless internal rhythmic patterns.

The percussion section is again very large (as is my penchant for them) and includes many drums, shakers, bells and tuned percussion like the regular orchestral xylophone – and *especially* the marimba, an instrument that is ubiquitous in Africa and represents the local colours and contours as few other indigenous instruments do.

When first performed by the Wits Orchestra conducted by Walter Mony in the Wits Great Hall in 1986, in a heading in the *Weekly Mail* (21 November 1986), "Rudolph Rescues the Evening", Coenraad Visser refers to *Tempus Fugit* as a work that is marked by its cohesion and strong rhythmic progression. "It is easy to see why the adjudicators were unanimous in awarding this work the first prize." Other works on the programme that evening were pieces by (established male composers) Pieter de Villiers, Carl van Wyk and Stefans Grové.

In a review of the début performance in *Business Day* titled "Totally African", Mary Rörich described the music in her inimitable and erudite fashion:

> Its philosophical essence, as the title Tempus Fugit [time flies] suggests, lies in a contemplation of the various aspects of time – real time, limited time, the passing of time, musical time, and illusory time. Thus its rhythmic dimension is paramount, unfolding as a montage of diverse metres, polyrhythms and accentuations. Its harmonic and textural conceptions also reflect the multi-dimensionality of South African society, most distinctively in the clever layerings of different tonalities and instrumental ambiences, which are woven together by the foregrounded colour and idiom of the African marimba... it is a tour de force of exciting and cogent orchestral writing.

I was fortunate to have Prof Mary Rörich as a critic, whose music knowledge and poetic and literary command of the English language was virtually unmatched in the journalistic cultural world in South Africa.

In the First Symphony Season in Johannesburg of the National Symphony Orchestra in 1995, the visiting guest conductor was the brilliant Cuban woman Tania Leon, mentioned in my Wits chapter – a lady with accolades aplenty as MD of the Dance Theatre of Harlem, conductor at the Metropolitan Opera, a teacher at Brooklyn College and a revered composer. What a privilege it was to have Leon conducting my *Tempus Fugit* on both 1st and 2nd March, 1995. I was in good company on the programme with the American composer Joan Tower and the Polish composer Andrzej Panufnik in his fascinating work *Sinfonia Sacra.* Paul Boekkooi, in The Star Tonight said of Leon conducting *Tempus Fugit* that Leon could make "the most intrinsic complexities (in Zaidel-Rudolph's work) sound organised... like a Shostakovich spirit in Africa".

Aspiring to the music genius of Shostakovich remains one of my lifetime goals.

In addition to Yoshimi Takeda, Tania Leon and Omri Hadari, *Tempus Fugit* has been performed and conducted by several other world-class directors, among them Daniel Boico. Further reference to the music of *Tempus Fugit* can be found in Appendix (2) at the back of the book

Abantubomlambo – the *River People* (ballet)

The 1980s was undeniably the decade in which I was most inspired to compose music – the planets seemed to align themselves with the outpouring of my creativity and I was prolific. The 1980s also affirmed my passion for and immersion in transcultural music, imbibing African music with a creative thirst and trying to find a language that blends music from two cultures.

Abantubomlambo (the 'River People' in isiZulu) was commissioned as an African ballet by SAMRO in 1986 and was premièred by the Natal Performing Arts Council (NAPAC) Dance Company in Durban in July 1987. I had the distinct pleasure and privilege of working with the talented choreographer Tossie van Tonder. She lit up like a candle (being very tall, graceful and willowy) when designing the highly original and dramatic movements for this modern African dance spectacular (the term

'ballet' being somewhat misleading!), frequently requiring the dancers to prance backwards in a circle, as though performing a mysterious ritual.

Michael and I flew down to Durban for the rehearsals of the piece, which was to be performed at the Durban Playhouse Theatre, and I met the remarkably talented répétiteur[6], pianist, and composer *extraordinaire* Surendran Reddy, for the first time. He was a flamboyant, endearing and extremely musical and talented man. I was bowled over by his natural ability to take a complex and previously unseen music score and play it for the dancers as though he had been performing it all his life. We subsequently established a very close friendship, even travelling to conferences and performing together in the USA. Surendran sadly passed away at a very young age, but left a wonderful legacy of original music and recordings. He became well-known for his brand of music, which he referred to as '*clazz*', a lively blend of classical and jazz styles. A CD of his eclectic crossover music was launched in the 1980s called *Reddy-Steady-Go*.

Although several of my works have previously been used as music for dance by various choreographers, *Abantubomlambo* was the first work I wrote *specifically* for dance. Typical of my intercultural music direction at the time, this work reflects my love for indigenous African symbols, rhythms and melodies merged within a Western style – occasionally with added electronic sounds.

African music is expressive in a manner that creates a deeply human connection. Although the story itself is based on an indigenous African legend (adapted by Shirley Treger), it is a universal portrayal of the human condition. The twilight world that links the material with the spiritual is permeated with superstition and fear of the unknown and is reflected in other-worldly electronic vibrations and sonorities. I found the mythological story profoundly affecting in its imagery. The narrative is as follows:

6 A rehearsal pianist, accompanist or coach for opera, ballet, or for other musicians.

> The power of the ancestors is at work when a character called Zandile is 'chosen' to be called to higher things. The 'horn call' comes from the mythical River People – *Abantubomlambo* – half-woman, half-fish creatures (like the mermaid in Western mythology) who are the ethical protectors of the tribe. The 'chosen one' tries to resist the powerful forces calling her to the water, yet she knows that ultimately her separation from her people will elevate her to the level of healer and prophetess – a *sangoma*[7].

The music 'milks' the weirdly sinister and ghostly visions of terrifying apparitions.

> The 'dark shades' are omnipresent in the music, symbolised by creatures such as birds (ill-boding omen) and reptiles, primarily the python. After attempting to restrain her, the tribe is finally resigned to the coming of a new order. Rituals are now observed, including the slaughter of cattle for the feast. Seven days pass after the chosen one, Zandile, is taken by the python into the depths of the water pool. A catharsis takes place, and she returns purified and transformed. Her new wisdom and status are acknowledged by the tribe; she is now totally dependent on them for her material needs and they, in turn, are dependent on her for their spiritual needs. (Zaidel-Rudolph CD liner notes).

What was fairly unusual at the time was to incorporate a solo singer in a ballet. I needed a narrator to comment on the drama, and I composed a voice part for male bass singer to do this, both enhancing and illuminating the visual elements and the music. I found a fantastic singer in isiZulu by the name of Mayo Miza, who filled this role beautifully. This was 37 years ago and, sadly, I can no longer trace him and believe that he is no longer alive. I learnt that he studied with Sarie Lamprecht for seven years in the 1980s

7 A prophet or traditional healer, who is called by the ancestors to share their special spiritual and healing powers; also known as an *inyanga*.

and sang the bass part in a vocal group in Soweto called *Abavumi* (*Believers*). He starred as Joe in *Showboat* in 1984.

In *The Cape Argus* of December 1987, Johan Cloete (a talented composer and future PhD student of mine) announced that my ballet was available on Claremont Records, the pioneering record label initiated and driven by the ardent music-lover Donald Graham which promoted local composers' work. My African ballet was described by Cloete as "a wonderful fusion – going beyond labels... beyond being African and beyond being electronic".

Abantubomlambo was later adapted by the brilliant and talented dancer and choreographer Christopher Kindo. He loved the music for *Abantubolambo* and created a new dance with it, renaming it *Ukukhala* ('*crying*' in isiZulu), which he and his company performed magnificently. Kindo also choreographed a superb dance called *Elements* in which he used excerpts from both my *Three Dimensions* for piano and *Kaleidoscope* for wind and percussion. I later learnt that Kindo (1955-2015) had suffered greatly under the apartheid regime in South Africa, with its discriminatory race laws and he was barred from pursuing major opportunities as a dancer of colour. He did receive a scholarship later on to study in Boston, but returned to his beloved South Africa after a year. He actively tried to help dismantle the apartheid regime and sadly only came into his own artistically later in his short life and passed away far too soon, at the age of 60.

Jeanne goes to Hollywood (not quite)

I was approached by Nodi Murphy in 1987, a screenwriter and producer of the British movie *An African Dream*, directed by John Smallcombe (Hemdale film corporation), to create a soundtrack for it; one which would engage the viewers in a drama with an indigenous African film score. My equipment at home was too basic at the time to produce a professional recording, so I collaborated with my friend Adriaan Strijdom (producer of our Jewish 'Celebration' CDs), who owned a music studio with sophisticated equipment. I embarked on writing a melodious film score, with an original theme (more Hollywood than African-

sounding) running throughout, making it very accessible to most audiences. Most of the soundtrack was digitally produced in 1988, though we selectively did record live instrumentalists.

The narrative is based on the true story of an Englishwoman who comes to South Africa in 1906 to join her fiancé. She soon finds the racial discrimination by whites against the local black people unpalatable. She befriends a local Xhosa schoolteacher (played by John Kani), of whom she is very protective. This leads to hostility and prejudice by the colonial rulers, who are hell-bent on putting her in her place – back among the white aristocracy. It is a moving portrayal of love and hope.

Suite Afrique for Cello and Piano (including a transcription for Viola and Piano)

I received a SAMRO commission in 1993 to compose a work for cello and piano for the famous Russian-born cellist Mark Drobinsky[8] whom I had heard in concert in Johannesburg and who had been a student of the renowned Russian cellist Mstislav Rostropovich. It was suggested by SAMRO that I produce music immersed in an African sound-world. At the time transcultural music was what audiences wanted to hear from a composer in this part of the world.

Since the piece was to be composed for a world-class virtuoso performer, SAMRO asked me to produce two different versions: a virtuoso version for Drobinsky himself, which was technically and musically very challenging, and one for an average cellist. This I did and the latter, easier version was referred to as *facile* (the Italian term for easy/*simple*).

Unpacking the Suite-case

Suite Afrique consists of four contrasting dances inspired by the spirit and mood of Africa. The work explores and applies African

8 Drobinsky, a world-class cellist, was awarded first prize at the International Cello Competition in Munich in 1969. He left the USSR in 1974 to go to Israel, finally settling in Paris.

indigenous elements, particularly rhythmic and melodic ethnic folk elements.

Dance and movement are completely integral to African music, so it seemed logical for me to write a suite of dances, each with its own personality and character, embodying different dynamic aspects of life in Africa. These 'dances' are not abstractions, but are designed to engage with and display the practical physicality of movement and dance. The shadow of tribal life is always there. All of life's milestones and dramas are expressed in dance and song e.g. birth, death and outpouring of emotions (like Toy-toying[9]).

The première performance of *Suite Afrique* for cello and piano took place at the St Martin's Cathedral in Meise, Belgium on 21 October 1994. Drobinsky was accompanied by Daniel Blumenthal and the new work was received very warmly and to great acclaim. Sadly, I was not able to be present. The first time I had the opportunity to hear Drobinsky play my work was in South Africa on 4 May 2003 at the Linder Auditorium as part of the Johannesburg Music Society Concert Series; Drobinsky was accompanied by Marike Hofmeyr.

A more detailed analysis of the music can be found in the Appendix (6)

In 1995, after an invitation to be the visiting South African composer at the Dana State Festival in Ohio, USA, I created a viola transcription of *Suite Afrique* which I premièred with violist and academic Prof Walter Mony during the festival in Youngstown in April 1995. The sounds of Africa were brought to Ohio in a stamping, pounding overdrive of rhythm. The audience loved the dramatic performance and demanded an encore! We duly repeated parts of the *Rain Dance*.

Prior to our performances abroad in Ohio, Walter and I decided to utilise the glorious acoustics in the Atrium at Wits University to make a recording of the music, as this beautiful space provided the ideal venue for such a vigorous work, with the correct amount of natural echo. The version recorded was the one

9 A high-energy African dance with roots in protest movements.

for viola (played by Walter) and piano (played by me). This is the definitive recording of the work thus far for viola and piano.

Many performances of *Suite Afrique* followed: one of the most exciting ones being presented in my honour at a *Tribute Concert* in the Atrium in August 2013. The performers were Malcolm Nay (piano) and Valery Andreev (viola). Andreev became so excited while interpreting the *Rain Dance* and *War Dance* that he almost fell off the stage in an attempt to achieve the dramatic effect and forceful volume required. My articulations and directions for *marcato*[10] bowing marks led to this passionate interpretation – although a preconcert vodka may have contributed to his theatrical histrionics! The audience, however, loved it.

I was requested by Maestro Kutlwano Masote to produce a transcription for violin of *Afro Angst* from the *Suite* for his son, Pendo, who played it for his exam at the Royal College of Music, London. Pendo also performed it brilliantly on 10 August, 2025 in the Chris Seabrooke Hall at Wits University.

I was invited to give master classes to composition students and to present a lunch hour lecture in the College of Music at Cape Town University as guest composer in June 2017. I took Zanta Hofmeyr (violin), Malcolm Nay (pianist) and Maciej Lacny (cello) with me, the latter two performing the cello and piano version of my *Suite Afrique*. I was asked to present several of my original compositions, which were magnificently played by the Wits Trio. I received very positive feedback from UCT students and their lecturers after the vibrant and productive master classes. I was thrilled that Prof Hendrik Hofmeyr was present – and Professor Emeritus, Peter Klatzow had made the effort to attend my special day. Sadly, it was the last time I saw Peter, as he passed away in December 2021 – a great loss to music in South Africa and globally.

Five African Sketches for Guitar

I was incredibly fortunate to meet the legendary South African classical guitarist, the late David Hewitt, around 1990. There is

10 A music instruction to play very forcefully.

a vast difference in application and technique in writing for the piano and writing for the guitar, especially for someone like me, who has never played the guitar. Finger stretches that would be impossible on the piano keyboard become totally possible on the guitar, where the fingers cover four strings tuned in such a way that certain ostensibly huge leaps and wide chords for piano can be played quite easily on the guitar. I consulted a couple of local guitarists for assistance in basic technical do's and don'ts before even attempting to write for the instrument – these included Stephen Sher and Ken Hartdegen, both of whom gave generously of their time and expertise.

Five African Sketches for Guitar was commissioned by SAMRO in 1989 and published in a volume titled *Two South African Dialogues for Guitar* on 5 July 1992, together with a lovely jazzy work by Darius Brubeck, then lecturer at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

My *Sketches* was given a superb première performance by David Hewitt at the Linder Auditorium during the final round of the SAMRO Overseas Scholarship Competition in September 1992. This work integrates indigenous African elements, especially the *kwela*, within a Western soundscape. The music conceptually traces a path from *darkness* to *light*, from *despair* to *hope* and from *heaviness* to *light-heartedness* in an African setting with indigenous polyrhythms, rural melodies and colourful tonal harmonies.

In *Before Dawn* the mood is fairly sombre and dark, as it is still night-time. As in other works of mine, I use the number 9 as a magical digit which allows the music to have a certain 'offbeat' feel, as opposed to a regular four-beat unit. I frequently applied the magical number 9 (as in my Jewish music compositions) showing the commonality of diverse cultures through music.

In the second piece in the set, *Awakening*, the mistiness of the night clears and the light of the day brings a more optimistic sound-world in the melody. This sets the scene for greater activity later – but not before the community introspectively embarks on a *Meditation*, depicted musically in the third sketch that is short, but intense. It expresses a yearning for a return to greater spirituality and a departure from alienation, loneliness and isolation.

The fourth sketch, *Friendly Dance*, as the title suggests, is a light-hearted, but poignant group activity in a generic tribe whose members depend on one other for sustenance and well-being, highlighting the importance of social capital and cohesive cooperation.

For guitarists the 'fun' sketch is the last one, *Township Tonight*, which rhythmically references Leonard Bernstein's *America* (in *West Side Story*), with its pulsating, dance-inducing drive. What follows in the music is a characteristic and typically jazzy *kwela*-type groove, similar to that which is strummed on locally-made guitars in the townships. The free abandon and sheer joy of this 'dance music' are once again regimented by the opening theme, which brings this piece to a frenzied end.

Madiba Magic

A colossal event in South Africa was the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in 1991. South Africa became a democracy in 1994, with free elections for all for the very first time. In 1997, my friend Helen Heldenmuth approached me to set to music a poem that she had written called *He Walked to Freedom*, to which I added a verse and then composed the music; it is scored for either solo voice with piano – or soprano, tenor and piano (plus optional chorus).

Mandela was presented with an Honorary Doctorate by Ben-Gurion University in September 1997. The profoundly moving occasion, paying tribute to Mandela, took place at the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town and tears flowed freely from the audience when my song, *He Walked to Freedom* was very beautifully interpreted by Aviva Pelham and Marcus Desando. Madiba (as he was fondly known), clothed in colourful African dress, joined the singers in a dance that has become known as the "Madiba-Jive". I was quite emotional when he walked across the stage to hug me in appreciation for the music.

Poetry in Motion

A legion of poetry and music was written by black activist poets and musicians during the apartheid era. Unlike Western music,

much traditional African song with text is not compressed into a convenient formal framework of regular measures. Rather, it follows the importance of foregrounding the words over the music, thus altering the metric shapes to suit the lyrics, resulting in irregular metres and rhythms, but creating greater clarity in the text.

When I was (re)searching for appropriate indigenous poetry to set to music, I was particularly drawn to two powerful but contrasting anti-apartheid poems; one by poet Oswald Mtshali, called *Boy on a Swing* and the other *Hell Well Heaven* by poet Mongane Wally Serote. Both writers are renowned South African poets and cultural activists. I set the two poems to music in 1992 as a pair for soprano and piano and dedicated them to my dear friend Hilary Falkow-Friedland. These protest poems were written at the height of the apartheid era and symbolise the anguish, anger, and confusion experienced by black South Africans. Both poems reflect questions being asked by the oppressed, who cry out for answers, liberation and redemption.

In *Boy on a Swing*, a young boy "*swings up and down"*, going "*to and fro"*, but reaching nowhere. He finally cries out to his mother: *"Why was my father jailed?*" The music reflects the relentless up-and-down rocking motion of the swing – and like a pendulum, it goes to the extreme "*corners of the earth*" to find answers. The little boy's unanswered question is repeated three times, with each successive plea getting louder and higher in pitch.

In *Hell Well Heaven*, the words "*I do not know where I have been*" depict the dream-like state of the protagonist. At the words "*to have despair so deep and deep and deep",* the melody falls and falls and falls... and then rises up optimistically at the words "*but brother I know that I am coming*" – prophetically declaiming: "*Hell – Well – Heaven!"* In spite of the direct and confronting nature of the lyrics, I viewed this poem as one of hope and prophesy – that freedom will come and a free society will arise from the ashes. I reflected the strong lyrics pianistically in pounding repetitive and relentless rhythms with open harmonies.

My friend Hilary's powerful voice was ideally suited to interpret both songs. She premièred these in Prague in 1992 and later, one of her most beautiful interpretations of the songs was at a concert in the Sandton Art Gallery, Johannesburg in April 1997 and in May 1999, accompanied by me on the piano. She often included them in her concert programmes at the Rand Afrikaans University (now University of Johannesburg) and has subsequently sung them on many occasions.

I have been asked whether I have been inspired to incorporate material from Afrikaans culture and music into my *oeuvre*. In 1968, while still an undergraduate student in Pretoria, I set selected poems by W.E.G. Louw to music for voice and piano. I cannot find these early student manuscripts. Additionally, in 1976 I was asked to compose a song cycle in Afrikaans on poems by Totius (real name Jacob Daniël du Toit), commemorating the Totius centenary in 1977. I do not have these early student works from almost 50 years ago. I much admire the beautiful Afrikaans poetry of Ingrid Jonker – and hope one day soon to set her beautiful texts to music.

Pendulum for Piano and Orchestra

In 2010, while still full-time at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), I received an exciting commission from SAMRO to compose a work for piano and orchestra. This was the realisation of my dream (indeed a long-time coming) to compose a piano concerto.

I called the work *Pendulum for Piano and Orchestra.* The title has a profound life connotation for me. A pendulum is defined as a mechanical system that moves in an oscillatory motion. I myself frequently feel like a weight suspended from a pivot, being tossed sideways in the sea of life from one end to another. I only occasionally find myself at a point of equilibrium at suspended moments. More often than not, I hurtle back and forth through the lowest point of gravity, found at the centre of the motion, where the momentum is greatest. In my creative life I have been

self-motivated and ambitious – and hence have given myself the push to enforce Newton's Law of Motion.[11]

Like the pendulum, I move with gravitational potential energy which transforms into kinetic energy. At its lowest point, the pendulum experiences the greatest speed – a living metaphor for my emotional impetus and creative energy. There is no doubt that a remnant of my subconscious lies deep in the evocative memory of my time with György Ligeti and his absolute fascination with clocks, metronomes and all things mechanical.

Much has been written about *Pendulum*, in the main by several students reading for their PhD degrees at various universities who chose to write extensively on my work. This includes my friend and colleague Malcolm Nay, pianist *extraordinaire*, who became the vehicle for and the lens through which I conceptualised and composed my piano concerto. For me it was a no-brainer as to who would première the work. It was very comforting to know that throughout the process of composing the piece, I could ask Malcolm his opinion on various technical aspects and structural features, as he would be the pianist for whom I was sewing, stitching and tailoring the work.

Pendulum was scheduled to be premièred in July 2010 in a performance at the Linder Auditorium featuring Malcolm as solo piano, with the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra under the renowned Chinese conductor Xu Zhong. Unfortunately, Zhong was indisposed and was replaced, virtually at the last minute, by distinguished Italian conductor Walter Attanasi.

In my programme notes for the première of the work at the opening concert of the JPO's Third Season in Johannesburg, I wrote the following:

"I (initially) did not give *Pendulum* the title 'concerto', as the piano part frequently blends into the orchestral texture as another instrumental colour and does not necessarily demand to be perceived as a separate virtuosic entity."

11 The Pendulum Theory is based on Newton's Law of Motion, which states that a body at rest tends to stay at rest, while a body in motion tends to stay in motion.

However, the work contains some figurations that demand technical expertise by the pianist. As was the case with my mentor and teacher György Ligeti I frequently dream of ringing bells and chiming clocks and the unrelenting mechanisation of our century. Not only does the concept of the 'pendulum' embraces the visual and aural image, it also suggests balance and inevitable movement; a cycle that 'normalises' the extremes of life, but with an underlying dynamic pulse.

Pendulum is a work in three movements with three distinct moods and characters, though the 2nd movement (*misterioso*) follows segue (uninterruptedly) into the lively 3rd. The first two movements are not driven by African elements, but are rather conceived in Western art music styles. A description of the first two movements of *Pendulum* can be found in the Appendix 8.

The 3rd movement notably picks up where the 2nd leaves off, but *this* time banishing all bleakness and introspection – and morphs into a vibrant, rhythmic texture gleaned from a generic and composite African rhythm and sound-world; namely 12 pulses per measure divided into aggregates of 2s and 3s, forming a polyrhythmic 5+7 irregular cycle. This underlying cyclical pulse drives the music forward in pounding dance-like shapes taken over by the different instrumental groups, punctuated by piano dialogues. As with all my African-influenced works, the percussion section plays a pivotal role. *Pendulum* presents the intersection of different sound-worlds, but ones which are located in the context of the 21st century in South Africa." This implies a diversity of styles, though not conventionally tonal. My incorporation of African elements in the 3rd movement is typical of my writing.

I added the following sentence at the end of the official description of the work, which embodies my philosophy and governs the relationship of my music with an audience:

"Now that the programme note has been read, please ignore it and experience the music as an art that speaks for itself."

It is in the 3rd movement specifically in which I adopt elements of African music, technically, rhythmically and philosophically. As is quite common in my music, I begin a new

section of a piece or even a new movement by pulling through a thread of what has just gone before. In this case, I wanted *no* hiatus between the 2nd and 3rd movements and even used the ending tone as the same note as the beginning one. The sudden irregular rhythm 'makes for a startling transition' (Nay, PhD thesis 2003).

Nay likens the writing in this section to the music of Prokofiev. The aspect of indigenous music that is close to my heart is the *antiphonal* type of music, often referred to as 'call and response' – the idea being a musical conversation between either a master musician and his/her group or a conversation between groups of musicians, illustrating the profoundly warm community spirit that largely exists in African communities.

The music changes from percussive and strident to more gently lyrical. There is no question that my style tends towards the more angular gestures. I have written that the music has a 'rondo-like' feel, in that it seems to magnetically want to return to the main theme in episodic ways. However, I have learnt that composers are not necessarily the best people to analyse their own music – this should probably be left to researchers and music theorists, though some of the more ignorant musicologists, who have Van Gogh's ear for music, rather enjoy doing a hatchet job on a composer's work. *C'est la vie!*[12]

The première performances of *Pendulum* took place on 28 and 29 July 2010 at the Linder Auditorium in Johannesburg with Malcolm Nay as piano soloist, accompanied by the accomplished Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Maestro Walter Attanasi. This was followed by a single performance at the State Theatre in Pretoria on 1 August.

In a review of *Pendulum* performed in both Johannesburg and Pretoria, Paul Boekkooi[13] (*Pretoria News*, August, 2010) wrote, apropos the work and predominantly about the 3,rd African-influenced movement:

12 That's life!
13 Boekkooi has been a journalistic stalwart and a valued music critic on the South African music scene over many years.

> [This] Pretoria-born and raised composer's new work has a free spirit all its own, like an astronaut walking in space – daring, exploring, collecting data, but also with a feeling of overwhelming wonder.
>
> *Pendulum* is highly driven, tightly knit and therefore demanding. However, typical of Zaidel-Rudolph's exploration, it is orchestrated in both bright as well as subtle ways. Tonal images soon start appearing in the listener's imagination. Especially in the outer movements the pulse of adventure, celebration, enjoyment and a vigorous, accumulated energy is there, but also the perception that, beneath all this, it is a highly integrated composition.

Boekkooi draws attention to my life-long passion for using percussion instruments in the orchestra and states:

> Zaidel-Rudolph has made it an art in itself to incorporate percussion in a highly effective way. In the finale, the African pulse is all there. The tubular bells, xylophone and drums, especially, are key tonal references. The cadenza opened with Lisztian grandeur – a *tour de force* in itself. The opening flourish of the finale was done spectacularly, while the accents and short runs later in the movement had a spatial effect. All in all, a work deserving of repeated performances. Italian guest conductor Walter Attanasi, a late replacement for the indisposed Xu Zhong, led *Pendulum* with great attention to detail.

I was in good company, sharing this memorable symphony concert with esteemed (long-deceased) composers Maurice Ravel (whose work opened the concert) and Ludwig van Beethoven[14] (whose symphony ended it). I loved the imagery used in a further review by Boekkooi in the *SA Jewish Report* (SA Jewish Report 6 - 13 August, 2010) the headline reading: "*Zaidel-Rudolph's Pendulum a sparring feat of skill*". He noted that *Pendulum* is "the work of a red-blooded composer who has a bag full of eventful

14 Maurice Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin* and Beethoven's *Symphony No 1.*

tricks up her sleeve". It is "fuelled by an energy level which only manages to subside for parts of the nocturnal middle movement. Restless shifting of pulse, complicated metrical games... are all components of this 'eventfulness'". Boekkooi preferred the 2nd performance in Pretoria, particularly the performance of the 3rd (African) movement as it "danced along more playfully", with an edgy pulse being more noticeable (Boekkooi, 2010). I agreed with him!

But here comes the 'rueful rub'... A memorable (though terrifying) further performance of *Pendulum* took place at the Cape Town City Hall on 2 February 2012 as part of the Second Symphony Concert Series of the Cape Town International Summer Music Festival. It featured the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Japanese guest conductor Yasuo Shinozaki. However, that evening, there occurred a near-catastrophic musical mishap. Malcolm Nay, once again the piano soloist in the performance, wrote about his harrowing experience (Nay, PhD thesis 2003):

> The third movement of *Pendulum* presents considerable rhythmic challenges for the orchestra, conductor and pianist. These difficulties are largely due to the unpredictable subdivisions of the beat into smaller, irregular, typically African pulses. With limited rehearsal time, the focus of the instrumentalists is often on counting, considering the complex nature of the rhythms and frequent shifts in meter.

With that rationale as background, piano maestro Nay continued to describe the traumatic performance from his point of view at the piano on this occasion:

> For the second set of performances in Cape Town with the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra, the Japanese conductor Yasuo Shinozaki was, on the night of the concert (31 January 2012), extremely nervous about performing this movement. Before the concert began, he requested that I play through the 3rd movement with him backstage, to reassure him that he was in control of the material. He asked me whether

> these complex rhythms were in fact African in nature, to which I replied in the affirmative. The final moments before we walked on stage hardly seemed like the time to try to unpack the problematic characterisation of the existence of a unified 'African' musical language.

[And then... my pulse rate (Jeanne) was increasing with every note as I sat helplessly in the audience]. Malcolm continued...

> During the performance of the 3rd movement, the ensemble between the conductor, orchestra and pianist started to unravel. Shinozaki went his way, the orchestra theirs and I went mine! In the post-mortem later that evening nobody could accurately account for what had gone wrong (and when). While the movement is frenetic in nature, certain unison passages came across in canon with unintended cross-rhythms which, while exciting, caused panic among the performers. By a [huge] stroke of luck, we managed to *end together*, with only the composer, who was in attendance, any the wiser. Backstage, she stood with a wry smile, as she had no idea how we would find our way out of this entanglement and chaos (pers. comm., 31 January 2012).

Pianist Malcolm Nay had correctly summed up my terror at what was transpiring on stage.

Sitting in our private upper-tier balcony box at the beautiful, old Cape Town City Hall, my palms were soaking wet with perspiration as the 3rd movement hurtled forward relentlessly. With a pounding heart, I both heard and saw this seemingly 'unavoidable disaster' about to happen. I had absolutely no idea how this performance was going to end... or if it could even be rescued! By some huge miracle which to this day, I cannot comprehend, the soloist and orchestra actually ended together and the applause burst forth after the climax.

Both Malcolm and I knew that in this 3rd movement, any break in relentless counting could prove fatal – and it very nearly was. My relief was huge, though no-one other than me and the

performers realised what a potential musical crisis had been averted. Even in conversation with the renowned South African composer Hendrik Hofmeyr, it was obvious that he (Hofmeyr) had been oblivious to the problems on stage. I regard the outcome of this event as a small miracle! Pieter Kooij in *Burger* (2012, 4 February), very kindly wrote that "the bouquet [flowers that I] received after the performance of the richly-imaginative and beautiful work was most appropriate". Phew! We miraculously dodged that bullet.

AfrEtude and *Ebb and Flow* for Piano Solo

As mentioned, so much of my music has been inspired by the sounds, smells and tastes of Africa and I refer to one of the more recent and exciting commission projects; to compose two piano works in contrasting style for the 2020 UNISA International Piano Competition which was held in Pretoria. This invitation came from Prof Karendra Devroop, Director of the UNISA Music Foundation (the Music Directorate at UNISA). These two pieces would serve as South African compositions for local and overseas contestants to choose from, a requirement in the competition, in addition to the standard piano repertoire.

The works had to be of high performance level, of a virtuoso nature demanding both musical and technical prowess. Yet at the same time, the pieces had to be musically accessible for the contestants and audiences alike.

The two works I composed were called *Ebb and Flow* and *AfrEtude.* As the latter name indicates, *AfrEtude* was a tribute to my country and to a continent that has given me so much. The music reflects my innermost feelings towards and appreciation of the land that spawned me and my music career over so many years. *AfrEtude* was conceived with indigenous rhythmic and textural elements in mind – contrasted with conventional and regular metres like 6/8 and groupings. These are juxtaposed between the additive 'African traditional' rhythmic sub-divisions and groupings of aggregates of 2's and 3's.

The character of the piece is meant to imitate and reflect indigenous dance styles and the music attempts to copy the

complex dance-drum percussive accompaniment figures. The rhythmic dialogue between the two hands creates a syncopatory, offbeat effect. The superimposition of Western-based rhythmic sections interpolated with indigenous ones attempts to mirror a synergy of cultures, a phenomenon that we as South Africans experience on a daily basis. The piece ends with the central dance theme in a flourish and with forceful, loud *marcato* chords, heralding a triumphant and optimistic view of a life and future in South Africa.

Ben Schoeman, a renowned South African pianist and one of the judges in the competition, was most complimentary to me afterwards, saying that he very much enjoyed listening to *AfrEtude*, in spite of having to hear it repeatedly by different contestants. In fact he so enjoyed hearing the pieces, he brought my other commissioned work, *Ebb and Flow* into his repertoire and performed it brilliantly at a concert at Northwards in Johannesburg on 28 July, 2024.

YiYang Chen, one of the superb young pianists and award winners whom I met in Pretoria during the International Piano Competition in 2020 and whom I heard playing *AfrEtude* most brilliantly, has been performing my work in many concerts abroad, particularly in the USA. He has just recorded *AfrEtude* for an album of piano music that will soon be available.

YiYang showed great respect for me and my work by sending me excerpts of his recording for my comments – anxious to check that his interpretation was staying true to my intentions!

I try to compose optimistically and to conclude my compositions with hope for a better society and a brighter future, especially given the huge challenges and difficulties of unemployment, poverty, and violence in South Africa. We hope that the recently constituted Government of National Unity portends better things to come in this beautiful land of ours which resonates with powerful music and voices – our land South Africa.



Venancio Mbanda, Mozambican virtuoso chopi timbila *xylophone player shown here with the orchestra group at the Platinum mine near Rustenburg in Limpopo*



Together with conductor Omri Hadari after a performance of my Fanfare Festival Overture *for Orchestra at the Johannesburg City Hall in 1993*

My Jewish Music

Music of the soul – the fruits of my roots

Few things are as moving as the sound of a lullaby, a song of reassurance and love from a parent gently coaxing a child into sleep, and the ability to convey this tenderness remains a litmus test for any vocalist. One of my earliest memories is of my father singing a Yiddish lullaby to me called *Rozhinkes mit Mandlen* (*Raisins and Almonds*), composed by Abraham Goldfaden for his 1880 Yiddish operetta *Shulamis*. It was a song which earned its reputation as a Yiddish standard, and remains a great repository of nostalgia for many Jews today. This sad and poignant melody in minor key has always tugged at my heartstrings. I continued to sing this beautifully quintessential Jewish lullaby to my own children and hope that they will also sing it to their children and grandchildren in an unbroken thread of tradition. As with the other Yiddish standard, *My Yiddishe Mama*, tears easily spring to my eyes on hearing it. These popular songs are deeply imbedded in the DNA of generations of the Jewish psyche.

I was born into a culture where Yiddish was cherished – my maternal grandmother speaking mostly in the vernacular. The Yiddish operetta *Shulamis* was presented in Pretoria and other cities in the early 1950s and my father, David Zaidel, took the leading role as the hero Avsholem. Although he was not a professional singer, he was also an integral member of the Pretoria Synagogue Choir for 40 years till around 1980, just a couple of years before he passed away. Possessing a uniquely beautiful and powerful tenor voice, he was given the honour of singing prominent solos in the Shul, whether unaccompanied in liturgical services or at weddings and other religious ceremonies. He was very much in demand for live concerts and stage musicals. I credit a great deal of my music talent to my father, but also to my mother, Evelyn, who sat with me day in and day out while I practised the piano, never missing a concert. She was an avid critic of my music and had studied the piano herself as a child in

Pretoria with Miss Gooch (apparently a terrifying legend, who hit her across the fingers mercilessly with a ruler, and so many times that she gave up her piano lessons!).

Judaism has always been as much part of my identity as being a white woman in South Africa. In the early years of my life, being Jewish was reflected much more in cultural, social and communal realms than in political spheres**.** When I was growing up, our family was not religiously observant; we were completely integrated with the larger population as regards schooling, food, and activities, etc. To our neighbours, the only difference between them and us was that our Sabbath was on a Friday night and Saturday and not a Sunday. We celebrated annual Jewish festivals such as *Pesach* (Passover), *Rosh Hashanah* (the Jewish New Year) and *Yom Kippur* (the Day of Atonement), during which we mostly stayed home from school and attended synagogue services. There were also the 'lesser' Jewish Festivals, *Shavuot* and *Sukkoth* (which we erroneously reckoned required less observance) and we attended school on those days.

What this order of recurring festivals did teach me is that life is never linear, but cyclical. Each day in the Jewish calendar is characterised by a distinctly different energy that recurs every year.

Haunting Heritage

The only times I was reminded that I was Jewish at all while in Pretoria was when anti-Semitic remarks were made in my company – usually by people who did not know that I was Jewish. These comments made me distinctly uncomfortable and there were times when I called people out for their prejudice and/or ignorance – but generally I put my head down and took it on the chin.

My tall, dark and handsome older brother Malcolm possessed a strong and beautiful voice and, together with other singers, we formed various folk-singing groups around the Pretoria University campus and performed in coffee shops in Hatfield, Pretoria. While he was studying dentistry, Malcolm became the Chairperson of the Student Jewish Association (SJA)

in 1967 and I, while studying music, was an enthusiastic board member. We generated many social and educational events which went down well, since we were such a minority group on campus.

As an aside... a delightful cameo of Malcolm's love of singing was from a time when he was visiting Los Angeles and walked past a *karaoke* studio. He could not resist going in - and with a pre-recorded backing track, sang the legendary *My Way* by Frank Sinatra. Amazingly he did this in one take and it remains a magnificent testament for the family to his soulful singing and beautiful voice. Malcolm had been a young and passionate choir boy in the Pretoria synagogue and was later to become conductor and choirmaster of the famed Sydenham Highlands North Shul Choir in Johannesburg, being a member for nearly 20 years – until he immigrated in 1997 to Israel with his family. He continued in the Israeli town of Ra'anana as choirmaster and tenor soloist in the 'South African' Shul (so dubbed as it comprised predominantly South African émigrés) until his untimely death in Israel in 2006. Malcolm was beloved by the community at large as the 'singing dentist' and loyal friend, but most importantly as a true 'mensch'[1].

Growing up in this vibrant and distinguished Jewish music environment at home, I had a deep desire to contribute to my heritage.

My inspiration regarding the composing of Jewish music is drawn from the nostalgic sound of millennia, emanating from the fascinating tapestry woven with threads of mysticism, spirituality, religious liturgy, and cultural identity. At its heart lies the power of the *niggun* (song) that transcends language and connects the soul to the divine. The *niggun*, mostly a wordless melody, is seen as a form of prayer, a way to express a connection with the Almighty, deep emotions and a spiritual yearning that words cannot capture.

Several of my compositions celebrate Jewish festivals by reflecting the themes and symbolic meanings of each different occasion. Whether it's joyous songs, haunting melodies, rich harmonies or cleaving (*deveikus*) tunes and yearning chants, my

1 A person of integrity and honour – someone to admire and emulate – a person of noble character.

compositions have served as a bridge between my inner soul, the community and the sacred.

Sounds of the Synagogue

It was only later, after we returned to South Africa from Boston, as a young married couple that we together embraced the religious and spiritual richness offered by Judaism. I was amazed and thrilled to discover the values and rituals that many young Jewish people search for in Eastern religions lay in my very own heritage.. It was with the more esoteric teachings that I initially aligned myself, teachings which encompassed Kabbalistic mysticism and numerology *(gematria)*; my compositions in this genre suggest that they are not an art form alone but a spiritual practice as a way to unlock divine mysteries and elevate the soul. These elevated mystical concepts were infused and imbedded with mathematical number systems which 'spoke' to me and with which I ordered my music. Music, by its very nature, is a temporal art, imbued with measure, ratios, proportion, counting, and numbers; so I began incorporating these concepts into my music to enrich, vitalise, and energise my compositions.

One of the practical ways I initially expressed my foray into Jewish music was by accompanying many Jewish wedding services at the organ – mainly for the Sydenham Synagogue choir with Cantor Oshy Tugendhaft. Oshy played a huge role in my music life locally and internationally, providing uplifting music at literally hundreds of weddings and concerts together. My long-suffering husband uncomplainingly hefted around my portable keyboard and sound equipment for *alfresco* (outdoor) weddings for over 30 years from the early 1980s onwards. I became the official music director, composer and arranger for the choir. This was a somewhat unusual role for a woman, as females do not play a prominent role in Orthodox Jewish worship, but it was a niche role in music that I carved out for myself and I was willingly embraced (not literally of course).

This role led to a very rich realm in my music life and our very first CD titled, *Hallel*[2] – *David's Songs of Praise*, was launched. This featured Oshy, my brother Malcolm and Len Kay as soloists, the Sydenham Choir, me on keyboards plus a few live instruments and a full digital orchestral backing. The music represents a modernised upbeat arrangement of traditional Jewish songs of worship. When preparing and recording the CD, I was heavily pregnant with our daughter Nisi. As I am particularly claustrophobic in elevators, I chugged breathlessly up the eight flights of stairs to the Syntrax recording studio in downtown Johannesburg from July till October 1989 playing and producing the CD, assisted by sound engineer Adriaan Strydom, who became a good friend and something of a Jewish music connoisseur. The choir subsequently took to calling our new baby Nisi (born that December) my *Hallel* baby!

The album was first launched at the Seeff Hall, Sydenham by David Gresham, popular record producer and TV personality and also at the Wits Great Hall in November 1989 – two weeks before Nisi was born (feeling and looking like a "beached whale"). At the stage show, "Avraham Fried Live in Concert", the first half of the programme featured Oshy and the Sydenham Choir conducted by my brother, Malcolm Zaidel, in the première of the new *Hallel* release. This performance was "infectious and inspiring" according to Eileen O'Carrol (*The Citizen*, 25 November, 1989).

Sounds of *Celebration*

In the early 1990s came the creation of a brand by Oshy that was to become synonymous with the Sydenham Shul Choir, conducted by Malcolm with me as musical arranger and at the keyboard. Our collaboration gave birth to the Jewish stage musical called *Celebration*, which was first presented at the Linder Auditorium on 23 and 24 March 1993[3]. It had such rave reviews that it was restaged at the Linder in June the same year and became something of a popular trend to be seen at the show. By 1997,

2 The *Hallel* service comprises the reciting of David's Psalms 113 to118, mainly on Jewish holidays as thanksgiving and praise to G-d.

3 50th Anniversary celebration of the Sydenham Shul.

Malcolm and his wife, Pammy, and family had immigrated to Israel, so he did not join our tours abroad – his glorious tenor voice was sorely missed.

The Show had several iterations: *Celebration 1* was followed by *Celebration 2*, *3* and *4* and *Celebration 60* (in 2008) which spawned live productions locally as well as abroad; the cast, including me, embarked on overseas tours to several continents at least eight times over a period of about 12 years, starting in 2000 until 2008, being a veritable 'feast' of *Celebrations* – the highlight being a tour to Australia in 2008 with *Celebration 60*, commemorating 60 years since the establishment of the modern State of Israel. We enjoyed superb hospitality by host families and wined and dined like royalty! The show, *in all its many forms*, became an unequivocal hit for audiences in several countries, and received glowing reports and follow-up invitations.

Celebration was conceived and scripted by Oshy as a 'Jewish musical extravaganza' – depicting moments of Jewish history in music, and I joined him in this ambitious project as music director, composer, arranger and pianist. The show portrays several pertinent biblical themes in music, including ideas from Genesis, Exodus, *Shabbat*[4], the *Torah*[5], Tradition, Adversity, Destiny, and Unity. One of the musical highlights (I am told) was an arrangement I did of the music theme from the film *Schindler's List* by the eminent composer John Williams, combined in a medley with a song in the *Ladino*[6] language called *Durme mi Angelico* (*Sleep, my Little Angel*), a lullaby composed to express that pain at the level of cruelty enacted by the Nazis on the Jews, depicted later in the famous 1994 Steven Spielberg film. These poignant melodies convey extremes of sadness and the desire for safety and protection against evil.

For our musical adventures abroad with *Celebration*, I initially put together a small ensemble for the live shows (piano, saxophone, and violin) for which I wrote full arrangements. These

4 The Sabbath.
5 The Hebrew Bible, comprising of the Five Books of Moses – the 'Old Testament'.
6 Ladino is the language that the Sephardic Jews took with them, after being expelled from Spain and Portugal in 1492.

humble beginnings developed significantly, as did my hunger for exploring the unique dynamic that exists in live performances, when an audience can not only hear, but see instruments being played on stage and the exciting dialogue between them. There is a visual element of exhilaration and participation which cannot be replicated by recorded works. Nor can the ingenuity of recording studios, with their ability to amplify, subdue and fine-tune a performed work, capture the immediacy, intimacy and thrill of a live performance.

Not long afterwards, I augmented the travelling trio and we toured with a full-blown hybrid classical-jazz stage-musical band for which I wrote new arrangements – and which consisted of a rhythm section (piano, bass guitar, and drums) together with an enlarged ensemble of woodwind, strings, acoustic guitar, several saxophones (plus clarinet), horn, trumpet, and trombone; even a piano accordion was added to create an exotic and Klezmer flavour. I loved playing the conga drums placed alongside the piano, to lend an African feel to the show. Together with our charismatic cantor and lead singer, Oshy plus enlarged Sydenham Choir, initially under my brother Malcolm and subsequently Josie Stern, we produced several spectacular CD albums of the various versions of *Celebration* (1–4) in a local recording studio, adding electronic instruments to the backing track to enrich the live instruments.

However, again the *live* performances set us apart from all other synagogue choirs, locally as well as globally. We were able to embark on these musical journeys due to the generosity of one of our most avid fans, Michael Levy from Chicago, an ex-pat and lover of traditional *and* contemporary Shul music, who raised the *substantial* funds necessary for this expensive venture – international airfares, local transportation, and accommodation for nearly 30 people, though no salaries were paid except to the musicians.

I became aware that both my technical and spiritual repertoires were expanding. I was originally arranging works composed for only two or three instruments, but later for larger ensembles, while still retaining a sense of simple pathos. I was

also learning to detach long enough from the academic strictures of formal composition to enter, and delight in the comparative uncomplicatedness and uninhibited rapture of traditional Jewish music, with its repetitive rhythms and hypnotic allure. The kind of 'contemporary pop' arranging techniques I was applying to traditional music were a drastic departure in style for me, a classically-trained *avant-garde* composer.

But at the same time, I was beginning to relish the world of Modern Hebrew song, contemporised traditional liturgy, Chassidic music and the very popular Jewish stage-musical genre. I loved the excitement and electricity of pounding rhythms on percussion and large volumes of new dramatic prayer music, with audiences enraptured and rocking to the beat. After premièring *Celebration 1* at the Linder Auditorium in Johannesburg in March and June 1993, followed by performances at the Johannesburg Civic Theatre, we embarked on tours of many cities globally over the next few years, including Toronto (several years running), Miami (2002), Boston and Houston (2003), Montreal, Chicago (2007), New York and New Jersey (2007), Great Neck, Atlanta, Los Angeles, and Las Vegas in the USA.

How exhilarating it was when we drove into Las Vegas on one of our tours, to see billboards advertising the arrival of "Oshy Tugendhaft and the Sydenham Choir with Zaidel-Rudolph" alongside big names like Celine Dion, Josh Groban and others. Our tours were characterised by exceptionally warm host families in the different cities, mainly ex-pat South Africans who surpassed themselves with providing sumptuous dinners and after-concert parties – with genuine effusiveness and appreciation being matched only by their superb catering. Sightseeing in all the centres had been meticulously organised and we were truly celebrated like royalty. We became used to running from a tourist site to a sound check at the auditorium, a quick change into stage clothes and then curtain up – often for two long shows in one day!

I acquired a new respect for pop musicians on the road, who spend weeks living out of suitcases, on whistle-stop tours of cities or countries, giving their all on stage, night after night (complete

with frenzied choreography) and collapsing exhausted into hotel beds for a few precious hours' sleep.

Our concerts in London at the 3000-seater Royal Festival Hall (in March 2003) were a glorious music triumph, with standing ovations and encores – more especially remarkable since they were held in a 'classical' music venue that had celebrated the likes of Sir John Barbirolli, Sir Adrian Boult and orchestras like the London Symphony and the London Philharmonic. I was ecstatic to have several of my past students living in London come backstage to greet me.

We travelled to Australia in 2008 to Melbourne, Sydney, and Perth, and were often assailed after the concerts by past South Africans living 'down under' who expressed deep nostalgia for their African and Jewish roots. Wherever we performed, we opened the show with an introduction I had composed called *Voices of Africa*, a heavy, rousing African-drumming song. As a further nod to our African roots, we presented in concert a beautiful arrangement of the Mandela song composed by me with words by the late Helen Heldenmuth called *He Walked to Freedom*, which was greatly appreciated by the ex-pats in the audience. A rendering of *Shosholoza* as an encore was always enthusiastically received, again especially among the nostalgic South Africans.

For our show in Houston, I composed a special tribute song dedicated to the memory of Ilan Ramon, the Israeli astronaut who tragically perished with his crew in the *Columbia* space shuttle disaster only months before in February 2003. His widow, Rona, was in the audience and came backstage after the concert tearfully expressing her appreciation – a poignant moment for the cast. Our Texas hosts took us to the Houston Space Station, which was very impressive and brought home the tragedy of their deaths even more vividly.

A 'showstopper' that literally got everyone rocking in their seats and that was presented at all our concerts was a song I composed called *Together we are One* – a song of unity and redemption, with lyrics written by me and Oshy. Soon after we started performing this song, we were approached by Roseneath School in Parktown. They asked for our permission to use the

song as their school anthem, which of course we agreed to. One morning Oshy and I were treated to a most moving rendition of the song by the schoolchildren; what made this performance so very special and moving was the fact that most of the children at the school were from immigrant homes and spoke different languages. The youngsters zealously adopted the words in their desire to become united as 'one' with the other children in the school and be integrated and accepted in their new South African communities. To this day I have a box-full of letters from the children of Roseneath School to thank me for the music.

Music for the Soul

Knowledge of the existence of the Chabad[7] Chassidic movement was acquired by me as early as the 1960s in Pretoria, though it would be many years later that we forged a connection with Chabad. My beloved mother Evelyn worked as Rabbi Sydney Katz's personal assistant for over 20 years at the Weizmann Centre attached to the Pretoria Synagogue in Arcadia. She was tasked by Rabbi Katz with doing much of the admin required for applying for visas to bring the very first *shluchim*[8] out to South Africa. I recall her telling us about some of their calls to government ministers to assist – some urgent ones being at crazy times of the night because of international time zone differences. We lived right next door to the Pretoria Shul and Rabbi Katz was always extremely kind to my family – over the years he helped me with recommendation letters when I needed them as a student abroad – and he later wrote to introduce Michael and me to the Rabbi at the *Kadimas Toras Moshe Shul* in Boston, USA who 'officially' married us, even though we had 'tied the knot' in court in South Africa earlier.

My own relationship initially with Chabad – and, indeed, with *Hashem* (*G'd*) – was predominantly through music. I was always conscious of the preciousness of my G-d-given gift of

7 CHaBaD is an acronym in Kabbalistic teachings for *CHochma* (wisdom), *B*inah (understanding) and *D*a'as (knowledge) in Hebrew, the initials of these words, forming the word 'Chabad'.

8 Chabad emissaries of the Rebbe, sent to all corners of the world to spread love and authentic Judaism among Jews.

musical talent, which for me became a primary means of worship from my deepest core. I needed to express my gratitude for it by using it, giving back to my community as pianist and composer. The Chabad aphorism that defines it is; 'words are the pen of the heart and music is the pen of the soul'. I expressed all my innermost spiritual connections through music.

From the time that our first daughter Natalie started at the Chabad Nursery School in Johannesburg (then the Menorah School at the Oxford Synagogue), I was happily roped into playing the piano for countless Torah Academy School concerts and graduations; and later for the annual stage productions presented by the Girls' High School. I had the pleasure and privilege of working with local theatre legends like Helen Heldenmuth, who was a renowned drama teacher and producer, and the late Winnie Gourarie, daughter of Rabbi Aloy, regarded by most as a member of the South African Jewish elite. Rabbi Lipskar's wife, Mashi, a remarkable woman, was always present supporting in the background. There was an abundance of talent in the Chabad community and the concerts and productions were always of a very high standard. I composed several original songs for these school productions.

I was thrilled to be asked to organise a small orchestra and write music arrangements for the supporting programme of the internationally renowned USA Chassidic singing sensation Mordechai Ben David's concert called *Chassidic Soul II* at the Colosseum Theatre in Johannesburg in March 1980. I subsequently toured with the show to the Baxter Concert Hall in Cape Town and the Elangeni Hotel in Durban. This was the premier visit to South Africa by Ben-David, but not the last. I arranged several gorgeous *Nigunim*[9] for orchestra – running orchestral rehearsals and conducting for the final performances. These were extremely well attended by the Jewish community and ecstatically received by large audiences. A description of Ben-David in the concert

9 Chassidic Jewish melodies composed by the Chassidic masters – Chassidim pray in song, study in song, get married in song and sing their way through life. *Nigunim* are mystical, soul-stirring prayer songs often without words, expressing the deepest yearning to be one with the Divine. Without words, melody can soar into the infinite!

programme reads: "His charismatic stage presence grips the audience, transforming seat-clingers into toe-tappers and spectators into screamers!"

I hope I contributed somewhat to this audience jubilation. It was my first real introduction to the exquisite expressive melodies and captivating rhythms composed by Chassidic *Rebbes*[10] and Chassidic Masters. I had grown to love many of the *nigunim* often in different moods and styles, ranging from deeply meditative music to upbeat rhythmic dances. But the song that captured my very soul is called the *Mitteler Rebbe's Kapelye*[11]. I frequently played this *nigun* in concert, which I arranged for various different instrumental ensembles – including one for solo violin and piano, which I often performed with the talented violinist Jacques Fourie; most notably at the Avraham Fried concert in August 1988 together with my colleague, violinist Srjn Cuca. My orchestral arrangements of these *nigunim* travelled far and wide – and at the end of November 1989, the Michigan Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Robert Vodnoy presented my orchestral arrangement of the *Kapelye*, as well as a lengthy medley of Chabad *nigunim* during a special tribute dinner. The occasion in Detroit USA included an address by the esteemed philosopher, historian, academician and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel.

An audience with Royalty

In a visit to New York in March 1981 during the Jewish festival of Purim, Michael and I had a transformative experience; we were privileged to be granted a *yechidus* (an audience) with the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Very long lines of people from all over the world patiently awaited their turn to be called into the Rebbe's room to spend an intense few minutes receiving blessings from him. I recall being admitted in the early hours of the morning. At the time, I was pregnant with our third daughter Tamar, and when we entered the Rebbe's room, he beckoned us to sit down

10 The terms 'Rabbi' and 'Rebbe' come from the same root, meaning 'teacher of the Torah'. 'Rabbi' is used for a community leader, whereas a 'Rebbe' is a Yiddish-German word denoting a Chassidic spiritual leader of great stature.

11 A *Kapelye* is either a choral group or a band.

opposite him in front of his desk. I was already exhausted and could hardly imagine what this elderly holy man must be feeling after spending countless hours receiving people from all over the world. I recall a small room filled to capacity with holy books, but otherwise sparsely furnished.

With his intense blue eyes, the Rebbe gazed at us and asked Michael to share the question he had submitted to him prior to us going in. Michael was wrestling with a dilemma as to whether he should remain in dental private practice in Johannesburg or take up the offer by Wits University to start a brand-new department in dental public health. The Rebbe gave him a very clear blessing to go into academia, though at the same time, for Michael to remain abreast of clinical developments.

The Rebbe then turned his penetrating gaze and attention on me. Without missing a beat (pun intended), he proceeded to give me a magnificent blessing for my music – and told me that I should continue to bring a great deal of joy to people through my musical talent and commitment. He wanted to know which of the Chabad *nigunim* I liked best. I responded that the melody of the *Mitteler Rebbe's Kapelye* nourished my very soul with its depth of expression and diversity of mood. He smiled in assent. He then cautioned me against ever musically rearranging a holy melody called the *Alter Rebbe's Nigun*, but to leave it in its original pure state. I have played this latter music many times during wedding ceremonies and have unfailingly felt its extreme spiritual beauty and power.

We offered to show the Rebbe photos of our children Natalie, Sara and Jacqui, who remained at home in Johannesburg, He gazed intensely at the photos and then, with an avuncular twinkle in his eye, he eventually said: 'Since you have the 'originals' at home, I will keep these.' He followed this with a beautiful *brocha* (blessing) for our children. Whatever questions or doubts I had ever previously had about embracing religious *Torah* observance were dispelled by this profound and impactful encounter with the Rebbe.

Foray with Fried

Seven years after our audience with the Rebbe in 1988, I was thrilled and somewhat surprised to be asked by the charismatic local Chabad Rabbi Dovid Masinter to get involved musically with a concert by another American-Jewish popular singer Avraham Fried on his first of several visits to South Africa It was most unusual – indeed, unheard of – at the time to have a woman instrumentalist on stage in an orthodox all-male Chabad Jewish concert. Before Avraham Fried's first concert, in November of that year, I was asked to assemble a band of seven instrumentalists, which I did – and organised a rehearsal venue at Wits University. I had hired the best session players available and attended the rehearsal to make sure all went smoothly.

But as the first rehearsal progressed, I saw that Fried was simply not happy. He came over to me and said that the pianist didn't have the 'feel' for his music and that I should take over from him. What ensued was worthy of a Netflix drama. The rabbis were unhappy with his suggestion about my participation; the debate about my presence as a woman on stage with the men raged on, with various rabbis weighing in with their opinions about 'Jewish law' and some unreasonable (to me) suggestions being made as to how I could play invisibly as a woman. The idea that I would sit behind a veil or curtain on stage was anathema to me. In the end, it was Fried himself who made it clear that, at that point, I was his choice musically and that it had to be so for the concert to go ahead. This, then, was the glass ceiling that we broke – the precedent which resulted in my being part of Fried's – and several other all-male shows going forward – very modestly attired of course.

Thereafter, I organised the band and booked myself as pianist in Fried's shows, always with much anticipation and excitement. For me, to this day, there is no finer Jewish singer and consummate musician than he. It was an immense privilege to have worked with him – and what a superb human being he is. When I was extremely ill in 1996 with life-threatening lymphoma, so I couldn't play for him at his concert, but I found a wonderful substitute pianist, my very talented friend and

colleague Surendran Reddy. My whole family went to the show as I lay weakly in bed after a session of chemotherapy. I was overcome with emotion and gratitude when my family phoned me during the interval to tell me that Fried announced that he was dedicating his next song to me and to my speedy and complete recovery. The song was called *Refaeinu* (*Heal Us*), incorporating the words '*refuah shleimah*' (a complete recovery). This amazing and deeply personal gesture touched me profoundly.

Favour, friction, fear and the feminine

Ah, what it is to be a woman in a man's world. In 2006, the world-renowned cantor, Yitzchak Meir Helfgot, admired for his powerful voice and incredible vocal range, was invited by the Sydenham Shul to be part of a grand concert celebrating 20 years of Rabbi Yossy Goldman's superb leadership at the Shul. Helfgot had never before worked with a female musical director and pianist and initially insisted on bringing his own Musical Director plus his own musical arrangements. He was most unhappy about the suggestion of a woman accompanying him at the piano onstage throughout the concert.

There was also some tension with Helfgot's musical director at the time, Mordechai Sobel, who felt strongly that he himself should be coming to South Africa with Helfgot given that he was exclusively the arranger of Helfgot's music and therefore in possession of all the sheet music scores that would be needed.

Rabbi Goldman reassured Helfgot that I, as long-time Music Director at Sydenham Shul, would successfully handle the music arrangements for him as well as for the choir. The Rabbi stood his ground on this decision – one which was not met with joy by either Helfgot or his MD. As it turned out, the disadvantage of this arrangement for me was that Dr Sobel declined to share any of his sheet music for the concert – pieces that had been programmed to be performed with Helfgot as soloist together with the celebrated Sydenham Choir. I had to reconstruct the music from the beginning by transcribing them off the recordings.

What followed was an almost 40-hour stint undertaken by me and our choirmaster, Josie Stern; intensive listening

to Helfgot's existing soundtracks in order to transcribe these complex pieces of music from the recordings onto manuscript paper for cantor, choir, and piano. My colleague and friend Raymond Goldstein in Israel assisted me by sending one or two of the concert pieces that he himself had previously arranged. However, I had to painstakingly write out volumes of music arrangements with Stern's skilled assistance. This was a labour of love, but the end result was electrifying, as testified to by a sold-out appreciative audience at a highly successful concert at the Linder Auditorium in Johannesburg on 6 August 2006.

Biblically and Kabbalistically Inspired Music

A considerable portion of my creative work is profoundly influenced by my Jewish roots and passion for infusing my music with numerology–based number proportions (gematria) – namely, utilising numbers in music and their concealed, magical and mystical properties and relationships. *Masada* is one of several pieces in this mould, as are my works *At the End of the Rainbow, Sefirot Symphony, The Juggler and the King, Four Minim,* and others. It is a challenge to represent lofty principles through the abstraction of the musical sound-world, but I do believe that there is something transcendent guiding my hand and intellectual wiring when attempting to do so – strange and other-worldly things often occur, particularly regarding my use of numerology.

Masada, the Glory and the Presence

Inspiration can be an elusive phenomenon. But occasionally it hits one full in the face with such force that the imperative to act on it as a composer is immediate. Such an experience was my encounter with the mountain Masada, as I stood at its zenith and learned about its remarkable and riveting history. My husband Michael had been invited to be a consultant for a primary dental care project in Ofakim, a desert town near Beersheva in the south of Israel in December 1988; this invitation turned into an extended family expedition to the Holy Land. We and our three daughters learned a great deal about the 'Land of the Bible', doing day trips

over the length and breadth of this tiny country (which is neither long nor broad).

Masada, the work, grew organically into my repertoire like a beloved foetus. One momentous day during our visit, we embarked on an excursion to the ancient mountain, located on the edge of the Judean desert between Ein Gedi and Sodom (the latter of Biblical notoriety). We spent a most fascinating and informative day, viewing the ancient artefacts found by archaeologists such as Yigael Yadin, centuries after the mass suicide of Jews had taken place on the top of the mountain. The sense of three-dimensional architecture in this natural fortress of King Herod, with its archaeological ruins and magnificent colours all around, was riveting. Standing at the pinnacle of the mountain, 396 metres above the Dead Sea, and reliving the dramatic events and spectacle that must have ensued when the Romans penetrated and scaled the ramparts in 73 CE[12], I felt compelled and inspired to capture that event in a piece of music which would present the magnificence of the setting, contrasted by the tragedy which had unfolded there.

Prof Fanie Jooste, the renowned bassoonist at the University in Potchefstroom, who was foundational in creating a bassoon performance tradition, had requested that I compose a work in a particular genre, namely, the bassoon as a solo instrument, together with a string quartet. The plaintive strains of the bassoon seemed ideal to tug at the heartstrings! Shortly after our return from Israel, this commission was finalised and I composed *Masada* for string quartet and bassoon. My inspiration was the mountain's lofty location alongside that of the low-lying Dead Sea – life and death. I felt a sense of time and space eclipsing into one... the depth and height had given me the musical drive to produce contrasts of very high and very low music sonorities, replicating the geographically wide open spaces. In the music, I attempted to landscape the contours of the mountain with the sounds and sinister silence of the besieged Israelites.

Masada enjoyed a scintillating première on 16 May 1989 at the Music Conservatoire in Potchefstroom. The string quartet that

12 The Christian Era.

accompanied the bassoon in its début performance was most ably led by the renowned violinist, Piet Koornhof with Fanie Jooste as superb soloist. This was a world première, which was followed by several exceptional performances locally and internationally. Following this performance, my dear friend and colleague André Strydom was thrilled to be able to train and conduct the 'Contemporary Music Ensemble' at the Cincinnati College of Music for a performance and recording of my *Masada*. This took place on 2 May 1993 at the Patricia Corbett Theatre in Cincinnati, and remains the stellar recording on my CD *Music of the Spheres.*

The narrative behind the work is extremely dramatic, inspired by the Roman siege of, and subsequent attack on the Israelites, who had barricaded themselves into a makeshift camp on the top of the mountain – 960 Israelites had built a stronghold on what had been King David's palace. This natural geographic fortress was a logistical protection for the Jews who had fled from the marauding Roman armies and the prospect of being slaughtered or forced into slavery by a vicious, idolatrous people. In 73 BCE, after repeated unsuccessful attempts to attack the fortress from below, the exasperated Romans finally erected a ramp on which to ascend the mountain and break open the gate to the Jewish encampment with a battering ram. However, on entering the enclave, they were greeted by dead silence. Almost the entire group of zealots had viewed suicide as preferable to being captured and slaughtered by the enemy.

There is still debate many hundreds of years later about the Siege of Masada and exactly what transpired on the top of the mountain. It is related that a mere handful of individuals had chosen to remain alive to tell the Roman soldiers what had happened. The mass suicide elicited the Romans' grudging respect for the heroism of the Zealots. Accordingly, rather than pillaging the remnants of the community on top of the mountain and desecrating the corpses, Lucius Flavius Silva – the commander of the Legio X Fretensis army – is said to have ordered that the site be left intact; complete with the sticks used by the heads of the Zealot households who drew lots to determine who should be the last man standing and ensure that all the voluntary suicides were dead before taking his own life.

This profoundly dramatic event was recorded by Josephus Flavius, a Jewish historian living in Jerusalem who had been captured by the Romans and was working in their service. His account of it is the only documented source of the tragedy of Masada. Although Flavius's description of Masada was thought to be somewhat dubious, the archaeologist Yigael Yadin and his colleagues identified the mountain they thought he was referring to and chose to risk embarking on an extremely difficult, costly, and controversial dig there. Their discovery of the scene, precisely as Flavius had described it, elicited global excitement and astonishment.

The piece remains a tribute to my dedicated and beloved mother Evelyn Zaidel, without whom I would not have become the musician and composer I am today.[13]

Masada is composed in one continuous movement and comprises a solo 'narrator', a voice represented by the bassoon, which tells the story of the mountain and its intense and disturbing history. The bassoon has an expressive, declamatory and melodic function – the sound of the instrument echoes the opening moments of Stravinsky's 1913 ballet *The Rite of Spring*, with its high, reedy and eerie tone quality.

The string quartet provides the predominantly rhythmic and harmonic basis for the work and forms a homogenous support and accompaniment to the bassoon – rendering the piece almost like a concerto for bassoon and string quartet. The bassoon has the expressive, narrative, declamatory melodic and soloistic role. The music is intense and presents several different, but related thematic ideas, held together by the repeated *leitmotifs*[14] and colourful, vibrant textures, and colours.

13 My beloved mother Evelyn Zaidel *z"l*, who passed away on 7 October 2010, took upon herself the task of documenting, filing and preserving every music review, report, diploma, performance, examination result, première and music accomplishment of mine, beginning at the age of five. Without these filed documents, I would not have been able to accurately recall facts, venues and dates towards writing these memoirs.

14 A *leitmotif* is a recurrent motif, tune or theme that can be associated with an idea, a person, an object or a specific event or shape.

The style of the music is not at all *serialist*[15], and is also not *minimalist* in the accepted music sense. By the same token, it does confine itself to certain note and pitch fields with a moving tonal centre. It locates itself on one harmonic basis before moving on – the musical material is freely multi-tonal and seeks to bring out the rich tone colours experienced at the site of my initial inspiration, the mountain of Masada. The spatial dimensions, with the high mountain on the one side - and the Dead Sea, (the lowest land point on earth) on the other (1,410 feet below sea level), is evoked by wide instrumental ranges and large melodic leaps.

Given its historical and physical location and inspiration, the work features a very strong pull towards Middle Eastern sounds and scales (modes) that contain the typical augmented second melodic 'leap', either in the form of the harmonic minor scale or an exotic mode built on the rising scale: E F G# A B C D# E, containing two augmented second intervals. The *Phrygian* mode, so ubiquitous in cantorial liturgical synagogue music, is referenced. The work uses the falling harmonic minor scale as its central thematic idea throughout – so typically characteristic of Jewish music.

The music begins with a leaping four-note theme, E, B, C, F, in the solo bassoon, which sets the scene for this open, desolate and rugged terrain. The strings imitate and repeat the initial thematic material, which infuses the entire work. The theme is reiterated and developed in different shapes, tones and rhythmic manipulations throughout. There is always a degree of tension in the music due to the mood it evokes, which is achieved by the use of varied string techniques and articulations like *pizzicati* and *tremolandi*, the latter Italian term being onomatopoeic to describe actual 'trembling' or terror among the besieged Jews. This tension is occasionally somewhat relaxed by the introduction of a satirical 'dance' between the bassoon and the strings in a waltz-like rhythm. The tension builds gradually in the small ensemble,

15 Serialism, the "12-tone method" in music, is a system of composing that relies on mathematical number rows from 1-12 all the half-tones contained in the octave the composer decides on the choice of pitches, and even rhythms and dynamics. It is arithmetically based and this method began primarily with the composer Arnold Schoenberg in the early 20th century.

which then proceeds to a free and aleatoric[16] section reflecting the pandemonium and screaming chaos before the horror of the mass suicide of the zealots; and then … nothing! Absolute silence! This is the significant moment in the piece when the Romans are greeted by *mass suicide* – a 'hollow victory' indeed.

A 'Middle Eastern' dialogue ensues in the form of a responsorial style between the bassoon and the quartet in a 'question-and-answer' dialogue – a sad commentary on the devastating events just witnessed. The work is not only an outwardly programmatic narrative in order to tell a story; it also paints a vivid picture through instrumental textures and colours that reflect both the stark majestic beauty of the mountain and the historical horror of the moment.

After the South African première, one of the country's leading – and more formidable – music critics of the time, Paul Boekkooi, described the work in *Beeld* (May 1989) as 'a masterpiece'. He commented on its extreme psychological permeability and how it demanded complex 'sound-painting' from the performers. He went on to describe the agonising and declamatory meditative energy of my use of the bassoon in this work, comparing this composition with Shostakovich's Ninth Symphony.

After a further performance of *Masada* in September 1989 at the Johannesburg Art Gallery, Naomi Barker, in a review in the *Star Tonight*, described "the use of melodic motifs built on a harmonic minor scale" as having an Eastern effect, while "driving rhythms alternating with almost recitative-like passages, and subtle explorations of tone colour create a work that is intense, yet full of vitality." She added that it was "a fabulous piece of music that was done full justice by a superb performance". I have always felt that *Masada* is one of my best works.

On 8 March 2018, a reworked version of *Masada* for full String Orchestra and Bassoon enjoyed the singular honour of being chosen to be showcased by the Italian organisation *Donne in Musica* at a special concert in Padova, Italy, under the baton

16 Random music figures to be played with some guidelines – ranging from closely guided to very free.

of renowned conductor Claudio Scimone. With a focus on the work of living women composers throughout the contemporary world, *Masada* was the keynote piece performed by *I Solisti Veneti*, which was described by Patricia Adkins Chiti, President of *Donne in Musica*, as "one of the world's most prestigious chamber orchestras". She added in my selection letter: "A performance with this ensemble is a very great privilege – as many other women composers have discovered in the course of time." I could not attend this special performance as it was the week of our daughter, Nisi's marriage. I have since moved heaven and earth to try to obtain the recording, though in vain, due to some vague copyright law entrenched in Italian TV.

Two Art Music Compositions for Orchestra using Kabbalistic Symbolism and Numerology

I grew up surrounded by liturgical music from the synagogue, with its yearning and plaintive qualities – and the sound-world implanted itself in my musical DNA. I have a love and reverence for so much beautiful music attached to religious worship in the synagogue; crafted over eons it expresses my inner essence. I was to be invited to submit an abstract for possible inclusion in a most exciting première of a Jewish music conference to be held at Leeds University in the UK in June 2015. The conference was entitled *Magnified and Sanctified: An International Academic Conference on the Music of Jewish Prayer*. I had previously had online interaction with one of the organisers, Geraldine Auerbach, and I had met Stephen Muir from the Music Department at Leeds University during his research trips to South Africa in search of Jewish music, with which I helped him.

I was fascinated by the fact that research into Jewish liturgical music at Leeds University was driven mostly by non-Jewish researchers with Muir at their helm. Yet a second Muir, Simo Muir, though not related, was also a prominent researcher on the same team. I submitted two abstracts in the hope that one would be accepted. I was delighted when both papers were accepted for presentation at the conference. The one was titled *Transformed Liturgical Jewish Music in the Synagogues in*

Johannesburg, South Africa: Looking Forward through the Rear-View Mirror and the other focused on my two compositions, *At the End of the Rainbow* and the *Sefirot Symphony*.

At the End of the Rainbow – for symphony orchestra

My symphonic poem for orchestra was commissioned in 1988 by Norman Nossel, CEO of Adcock-Ingram Pharmaceuticals, for the National Youth Orchestra's celebration of their 25th anniversary celebrations. Because it was a composition for a youth orchestra, I was very aware that it had to be a work that would challenge young people, yet at the same time to be great fun to play. It was composed in such a way that the complexity of the sound would not be in the individual instrumental parts, but in the exciting virtuosic result that would occur in the combination of the different parts.

As always, I indulged myself in writing for the 'kitchen section' of the orchestra (percussion); this is because this section can make loud, clattering noises when required, like clashing cymbals or noisy pots and pans – and young musicians love playing these instruments.

The work had its première performances to great acclaim on 20 August (the Aula, Pretoria) and 21 August 1988 (Linder Auditorium, Johannesburg), performed by the South African National Youth Orchestra (SANYO) under the inspired direction of Gerard Korsten (an Adcock-Ingram/Sasol-sponsored concert). In the review of the concert in the *Pretoria News*, (August 1988) Willem Scott wrote: "Zaidel-Rudolph's work *At the end of the Rainbow* can take its place proudly" comparing my composition favourably with Benjamin Britten's 1957 opera *Noye's Fludde* and Stravinsky's *The Flood*. The visual title of my piece conjures up an almost fairy-tale-like image, with the proverbial 'pot of gold' to be found … 'at the end of the rainbow'.

The music can be heard both as the simple unfolding of the Biblical story of the Flood and on a deeper level. I interpret the Flood musically as a process of spiritual growth, moving from 'Decadence' through 'Purification' to the final 'Spiritual Redemption'. This is achieved musically through applying a

palette of tone colours and drawing on a series of numerological and symbolic devices in an abstract setting, though the biblical narrative and the story are always present in the background.

The Rainbow itself is a symbol of G-d's promise to mankind that there will never be another flood capable of extinguishing man. In fact, there is a special short blessing in Judaism to be recited upon seeing a rainbow!

A detailed music analysis and discussion of the application of symbolic numerological concepts and their meanings can be found in the Appendix (3) at the end of this book – illuminating the deeper significances of number choices in the music.

I discovered a fascinating mystical phenomenon after I had completed composing the piece. As written in selected Biblical commentaries on the Flood, it is stated that the flood lasted a full year, from the falling of the very first drops of rain until the very end of the deluge. When I counted the number of bars (measures) of music on completion of the work, the total was 365 – a coincidence or predestination? My intention is that it is perceived as a work of hope and optimism. I have in my possession a very dynamic though old video recording of the première performance of the *Rainbow* work (1988) performed by the National Youth Orchestra under the baton of Gerhard Korsten, a dynamic and talented South African conductor living and working in Europe. It remains my favourite and most cherished performance of that work.

Early in 2023, I had the honour of this piece, *At the End of the Rainbow* being selected as the key work to be performed in New York at the United Nations 'Global Women in Music' event, marking International Women's Day on 8 March. The musical celebration was hosted by 'United Voices 4 Peace' and performed by the UN Orchestra, conducted by Maestra Anoa Green from Baltimore, USA – a female conductor (a purposeful choice, given the occasion) with exclusively female composers. It was performed live to an audience of over 600 – and a considerably larger international audience who watched it through live-streaming – held at the imposing BMCC Tribeca Performing Arts Centre in Manhattan, New York. The work is replete with irregular

polyrhythms which link it to a uniquely African sound, blending threads of my Jewish sound-world within an African context.

Veronica Sabbag, who is the founder and chair of United Voices 4 Peace, is proactive and instrumental in interfacing social awareness with women in the arts on major international platforms. In 2018, my work *Oratorio for Human Rights* was performed in Rome at a gala concert in honour of the 70th anniversary of the UN's declaration of human rights. It was at that event that I met Sabbag and where she first experienced my music and her genuine interest in my compositions, led to my New York début.

I was the only composer chosen from the African continent on this UN concert programme, a forerunner to the UN's conference on the status of women in the world. At just over 16 minutes, my work was considerably longer and more substantial than the other 9 works featured in the programme. One of the central decision-makers of this high-profile concert, Sabbag, decided to place the work just after intermission. This is a special programming trick which ensures a warmed freshness on the part of audiences and performers. It is the best possible position for a concert's keynote performance, designed to make audience members sit up and remember the impact of the work. I was thrilled to be thus acknowledged.

The programme included 19th-century French female composer Louise Farrenc, early 20th-century African-American composer Florence Price, multi-media performer and composer Masha Brodskaya, who hails from the Ukraine and Sussan Deyhim from Iran, who specialises in dance, music and theatre, to name a few. Unable to be in New York at the time of this performance, I watched the concert live-stream during the early hours of 9 March. The UN Orchestra is not a professional orchestra, but one comprising musically skilled UN staffers. My score is challenging and has the energy of contemporary work of the late 1980s; it is neither easy nor straightforward to perform.

After the UN event, I received a message from Predrag Vasić, founder, President and Music Director of the UN Orchestra, who had, most enthusiastically and competently, prepared the

orchestra of 50-60 performers for Maestra Green to step in the week before the scheduled performance and conduct it. He wrote:

> Now that the dust has settled … I would like, on behalf of our ensemble, to express to you our deep gratitude for being a part of this project and sharing your creative work with us. Your piece was truly original, creative and certainly a challenge for the skill sets and experience of many of our musicians. We tried our best to do it justice, and although I'm aware that we came up a bit short, I hope that you will perhaps ignore the shortcomings in our musicianship and accept the abundant enthusiasm and zeal with which the ensemble attempted to showcase your work."

I felt that this was extremely gracious of the MD of the Orchestra. The experience of having my work performed at the UN again reminded me how uniquely special it is that music can travel over continents and still speak eloquently to foreign audiences and ensembles. That is the beauty of music as a so-called 'international language'.

Silkroad project – the collective music unconscious

In 1998, Chinese cellist Yo-Yo Ma, whom I had the privilege to hear when living in Boston in 1977, launched the wonderful Silkroad project, a not-for-profit organisation promoting collaboration among artists and institutions from every continent – particularly fugitives from war-torn regions. He selected a group of *virtuosi* (including himself), for the Silkroad Ensemble, each of whom selected a work of particular emotional significance to them, performed by them on the traditional instruments of their homelands. Various programmes were recorded and filmed by this ensemble in a series of concerts entitled *Sing Me Home: The Music of Strangers.* The project attempted to answer the most urgent question asked by these displaced artists: 'Where is home?'

The answer was: 'Our home is in performing our music – our voice. There is no such thing as north, south, east or west…' The project conveyed the power of music to transcend and transform devastation, violence and catastrophe. In 'singing

themselves home' through their chosen works, the artists and audiences shared a vital elision of pain, nostalgia, and rapture. One artist, who performed a wedding song, introduced the work by saying: "Falling in love is the only human right left in my country." I mention this initiative as an exemplar of what I stated about music being a universal language. Yet it is so much more than that. I believe it is the spiritual chromosome binding humanity to G-d. As Jews we have taken centuries to return to our home permanently, surrounded by the strains of ancient song.

Music and mathematics, sound and symbology have been intertwined since time immemorial. Music is a semiotic language, a language of meaning and communication. It is, by its very nature, imbued with measure, ratio, proportion, form, tempo, numbers, and numerology. Jewish mysticism is infused with deeply esoteric meanings; and music throughout the Torah has been drawn upon as the medium of mysticism and prophecy. For example, the prophet Elisha (in *Kings* II, 3:15), cries out: "Now bring me a musician. And it was – that when the musician played, the hand of *HaShem*[17] came upon him."

No matter how much background and textual information one gives about a piece of music, it remains in so many ways at the level of the composer's inspiration; namely, what drives the composer to translate meaningful and beautiful ideas and concepts into music notes. However, ultimately, a work needs to be listened to on its own terms as music. In the final analysis, music can only express itself as its own art-form, and while knowledge of the stimulus and the interpretation of concepts are important for the composer, it is – in my opinion – less so for the listeners, who must embark on their own journey of the imagination while responding to it.

We are taught that King David never slept a whole night through; rather he would take short naps to refresh himself. Each night he would sleep until midnight, when a north wind would blow through the harp hanging above his bed... It is significant

17 In Judaism, G-d's four-letter name is not enunciated except in formal prayer. He is informally referred to as 'The Name', or sometimes 'The Place', in order to avoid using His holy name.

that it was specifically a north wind that played on David's harp because the word 'north' - *tzafon*, in Hebrew – also means 'hidden'. This alludes to the idea that music and song ultimately come from a lofty, hidden, spiritual realm. According to Trugman (2005, p25), music in turn, awakens in a person his or her more hidden, subconscious level of soul, which is ultimately rooted in G-d.

The *Sefirot Symphony*[18] for Woodwinds, Harp and Percussion

This is one of my orchestral mystical works based on the Kabbala. The music is composed in a format that represents the Tree of Life, a Kabbalistic concept which explores and illustrates the different levels of the spiritual realm, as derived from the ancient Zohar[19]. The Tree embodies beautiful attributes of the human spirit (three intellectual and seven emotional ones). In his book *Music and Kabbalah* (1988) Rabbi Matityahu Glazerson elaborates on the intrinsic relationship between prophecy and music. I had the distinct privilege of sitting next to Rabbi Glazerson, the author of many books on the Kabbalah, on a long flight from Johannesburg to New York in 1981 and I hungrily imbibed his depth of knowledge and wisdom in interpreting mystical Kabbalistic ideas relating to music. This stimulating discussion made the journey feel so much shorter.

According to Glazerson, aside from three impenetrable spiritual levels, the more 'worldly' ones to which people can relate encapsulate the seven human and G-dly emotional attributes of Kindness, Severity, Harmony, Victory, Splendour, Foundation, and Sovereignty. He explains that, aligned with each of these attributes, is each of the seven biblical fathers – the Shepherds of Israel[20], seven planets[21] and the rising music tones from

18 Commissioned by the Foundation for the Creative Arts (1991).
19 Literally meaning 'radiance', it is the ancient Jewish foundational (but abstruse) texts in Aramaic from which the more accessible Kabbala was derived. It is attributed to Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, the 2nd-century rabbi.
20 Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph and David in the Old Testament.
21 Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, the Moon and the Earth

'Do' through to 'Ti'[22], cyclically repeated up and up through the octaves, thus completing the paradigm *(refer to diagram* in Appendix 1*)*.

The depth and rich meaning in this 'Tree of Life', which I first encountered in the early 1980s, gave me inexhaustible ideas, concepts and exciting pictorial and visual diagrams that inspired my symphonic composition. The *Sefirot Symphony* was born; composed for woodwind instruments, brass, percussion and harp. I wondered at the time if I was equal to the task of expressing such lofty mystical and esoteric concepts through music.

I agonised whether my required commission brief, which did *not* include the usual orchestral *string* section (namely violins violas, cellos and basses) – renowned for their nostalgic ability to literally 'tug at the heart-strings' – would somehow compromise a music work based on such deep Kabbalistic exegetic texts, touching on the essence of Man. The *Sefirot* (literally the '*Spheres*') are divine manifestations or attributes of the spiritual world expressed through Creation.

An excellent recording of the *Sefirot Symphony* was made in March 1993 with internationally renowned conductor Omri Hadari and the South African National Symphony Orchestra. This was the first performance of the work and recorded at Broadcast Centre in the iconic Studio M1A, under the sharp, watchful and critical ears of Daphne Kramers, musically-gifted specialist Music Producer for the SABC. In her report, she stated: "This is a superb performance. Vitality, life and sense of direction drive the performance to great heights. Ensemble and dynamics are often breath-taking. Intonation and musicality are impeccable. In this recording, we have an outstanding performance of a truly creative work of art."

Regarding the work itself, Kramers wrote: "This very evocative and pictorial work is gripping from the very first bar. The composer's use of percussion instruments to weave the very fabric from which the work is fashioned is individual, fresh and inspired. The score is very well written for all the instruments and never

22 Doh, Re, Mi, Fa, So, La, Ti.

is the orchestration overstated. The orchestration is unusual, having been scored with the *total* omission of strings – and highly successful. This work will be enjoyed by musicians because the writing is challenging, always musical, delightfully unpredictable, and always resulting in the most beautiful tone colours. The harmonic language is often extended, but is essentially tonal. Dissonances, when they appear, do so naturally. The sound fabric that has been created is new, inviting and innovative".

In addition to the excellent professional recording, I had a remarkably spiritual experience when invited to attend a performance of the *Sefirot Symphony* at the University of Stellenbosch in September 2015 as part of the WindWorx[23] Festival. While ruminating on the deeper spiritual meanings in the symphony, I had an inspired 'light bulb' moment. Given that the performance was to take place in the 10-day period between the Jewish festivals of Rosh Hashanah[24] and Yom Kippur[25], I contacted my son-in-law, Rabbi Jonathan Altman, our daughter Natalie's husband, living at the time in Cape Town – and asked him if he would be willing to blow the *shofar*[26] as a prelude to the beginning of the symphony on the night of the concert in Stellenbosch.

My strong sense was that this would be exceedingly appropriate, highly dramatic and 'set the tone' for the deeper significances in the work, since the *shofar* is blown on both

23 The WindWorx Symphonic Wind Ensemble was founded in 2005 at the University of Stellenbosch to provide a platform for wind instrumentalists.

24 The Jewish New Year.

25 The Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*) is the holiest day in the Jewish calendar.

26 Usually a ram's horn - blown on Rosh Hashanah during prayers as a 'wake-up call' to repentance and at the end of the Yom Kippur service. It is also blown every weekday morning in the Hebrew month of Elul leading to Rosh Hashanah. According to the Book of Exodus, the shofar was first heard by the Children of Israel when Moses blew it, after ascending Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments from G-d, as a sign. "And the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled... And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and G-d answered him by voice." (*Exodus* 19:16 to 20)

religious festivals. I still get 'goose-bumps' when I recall the moment ...

> The orchestra was quietly ready on the stage ... the lights went down ... Out of the darkness emerged Rabbi Jonny, who proceeded to blow 30 hauntingly chilling, but beautiful *shofar* sounds (called *teruot).* One could hear a pin drop ... dead silence in the audience. As he finished the very last haunting blow, which seemed to last a full 30 seconds, the lights gently went on, the conductor silently raised his arms – and strains of the first bars of the music could be heard emerging from the echoes of the emotively laden wailing remnants of the ram's horn. The audience seemed spellbound; it was a magical experience I shall never forget.

For a more detailed analysis of the music and explanation of the mystical, esoteric and symbolic Kabbalistic representations as they are applied in my Sefirot Symphony, please refer to Appendix (2) at the back of my Memoirs.

Four 'Minim' for cello and piano

The work, originally commissioned by the SABC in 1982, and revised in 1992. In January of that year, *Four Minim* for Cello and Piano ('minim' being a music value, but also meaning '*species*' in Hebrew) was set by UNISA as the compulsory South African cello piece, to be performed by contestants during the International String Competition in Pretoria.

Enormously exciting, soon thereafter, was the invitation I received to accompany the South African delegation to the *World Music Days* in Warsaw, Poland, as composer-in-residence from 15 May running for nine days. The Polish branch of the ISCM (International Society for Contemporary Music) was to be the host and 60 compositions were chosen from 648 received from 33 nations. This was the first time that South Africa had been re-admitted by their General Assembly, after being excluded for many years during apartheid. The composer Dawid Hoenigsberg also accompanied us, together with performers Walter Mony (viola and conductor), Peggy Haddon (piano) and Peta-Ann

Richardson (cello). Michael Levy was our spokesperson and representative from SAMRO.

A full day, called the "South African Music Day", was set aside for us. This event featured lectures, presentations and performances at the Centre for Contemporary Art in the spectacular Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw. Following my lecture to the public, in which I spoke about my recently composed piece *Four Minim*, an exciting performance took place in the castle with me at the piano and Peta-Ann playing the cello. The atmosphere was riveting and the positive response to our performances validated the fact that our talent in South Africa is comparable with that of any composers and musicians globally.

The *Four Minim* (translated into Hebrew as *Arba Minim*), relates to a joyous festival celebrated during the Jewish High Holy Days called *Sukkoth* (Festival of Booths, or the feast of *Tabernacles*). I also used the term 'minim' as a note value to bookend each of the four sections. Conceptually the work is based on the 'four species' (found in nature) intrinsic to the Festival of *Sukkoth* – these are the citron fruit (*Etrog*), palm branch with sweet dates (*Lulav*), myrtle branch (*Hadas*), and willow branch (*Aravah*). Each movement in the music is represented by one of these species and thus the number four plays a structural role in the music.

I find it to be most useful to share my inspiration and my methods or systems with the musicians who will be performing my compositions. It invigorates the music for them and brings alive the ideas in their minds, which always enhances the performance. In keeping with this philosophy, I explained the meanings and symbols to the performers who originally premièred my work, Marian Lewin (superb cellist) and Sini van den Brom (very accomplished pianist). The number relationships infused the shape of the music and became alive in their interpretation.

Four Minim was first published in New York by Seesaw Press, but is now exclusively published by me. Given that some of my compositions are based on numerology and mathematical formulas – and the results can therefore be perceived as being pre-determined in a way, I was once asked where the human element is in the creative process. I strongly believe that the task

of the creator of a musical work is to infuse whatever arithmetic formula is applied with great musical imagination, tone colour, aural and textural excitement and organic beauty, within the set numbers and sound parameters. Whether a listener is minded to pursue the intricacies of that formula, as a helpful cerebral resource in appreciating the music, or whether he or she simply receives it through whatever other channel is accessible (emotional or spiritual), the ultimate impact will be the same.

This is equally true of other art forms. Poetry, for example, can be exhaustively analysed, each metaphor, couplet, metre and syllable placed on a Petri dish. Or it can simply be read (or heard in recital) and responded to with rapture, on one's own aesthetic wavelength. However, those unfamiliar with abstruse allegories to explain a work of art are moved just as profoundly and permanently by the sheer beauty, rhythm and power of the language. In fact, in my recent programme notes accompanying a live performance of my music, I have requested the audience, once they have read the description of my piece, to ignore the written text and enjoy the music purely on its own terms *as music.*

For the mathematical application and analysis of the 'Four Minim' using the 'Magic Square of the Moon' diagram and applied numerology, please refer to Appendix (5) at the back of my Memoirs.

Virtuoso I for solo piano (1987) is a work that has enjoyed numerous performances and recordings globally. It was commissioned by UNISA for the 1988 Fourth International Piano Competition in Pretoria and was compulsory for contestants to perform during the competition as the set South African piece. The work had to be challenging and of a high standard, though I remained aware that it had to appeal to young performers and be in an accessible idiom.

The main theme is based on a commemorative Chabad song called *Didan Notzach* (*We will be Victorious*). It was composed after a successful court case in which holy books belonging to the Lubavitcher Rebbe were returned to their rightful place at the Rebbe's headquarters – books that had been lost to the future generations of Chassidim. I wove the theme of this song into a

short, but forceful piano work that rumbles with syncopations and rich chords, contrasted with atmospheric soft, shimmery sections which then explode in irregular, jazzy figures, illustrating a range of emotions.

I was treated to some exceptionally 'virtuosic' live performances of my music that year at the competition in Pretoria. How gratifying and exciting it was to hear diverse interpretations from 35 competitors from all over the globe. It was illuminating in that it demonstrated how different the approaches can be to essentially the same piece, affirming that interpretation of music is very personal. Several of the young pianists came up to me during and after the competition and shared with me how much they had enjoyed studying the work. The overall winner of the competition was Marcus Thomas (Germany), who also won the prize for the best performance of the 'South African' work (my *Virtuoso 1*). The piece has since become a prescribed work for the UNISA Piano exam Grade 8 syllabus.

Its connection to my roots is that it embodies the theme of triumph of good over evil – an ancient Biblical and ethical precept.

Another music work, *The Juggler and the King* for two pianos (1998), commissioned by the SAMRO Endowment for the National Arts, was premièred by pianists Wessel van Wyk and Jill Richards in the Musaion in Pretoria. The title of this work was inspired by a book with the same name by Aharon Feldman in 1991. In the book, the wisdom of our great sages is revealed through a language which shrouds their teachings in legends, parables, riddles, and cryptic debates – aligning itself with the theme of my esoteric music and therefore irresistible for me to translate into music. The 'Juggler' represents the aspect of Man that is constantly throwing one ball after another in the mindless pursuit of pleasure and physical gratification, seeking prestige and honour.

The 'juggling' aspect was one with which I could totally identify – constant 'balls in the air' to achieve a semblance of balance and stability in my life – between my children and domestic responsibilities and the constant demands of my music career. The figure of the 'King' manifests that which is Godly within us, striving to reach higher goals and our true spiritual and

physical potential, namely controlling the 'juggler' within oneself to rise to a nobler destiny. I have tried to portray these two forces in gentle opposition to one another in a style that is alternately stately and then frivolous through the music. Towards the end I quote the melody from our holy prayer, *Avinu Malkeinu* (*Our Father, our King*), striving for fresh renewal and for life itself. This 'return' to a more moral existence is represented in my music by a more accessible tonal language and familiar themes.

Music is undoubtedly one of the most powerful forces impacting on and influencing the human psyche, materially, spiritually and through memory. We also know only too well, how some physically overwhelming styles and genres of music can even stimulate man to commit barbarous acts – as experienced, for example, in the Nazi era. Alternatively pure and spiritual music can bring man to noble and heroic acts. Of course, there are no absolutes in these categories, but I personally attempt to infuse a certain sacredness and soulful beauty into my music, especially my Jewish music, to inspire a listener to aspire to higher levels of humanity and behaviour.



Jewish folk-singing group in Pretoria at the University: including from left: Mike Belling, Jonny Greenstone, Jossy Gershater, Glenda Stern and Leanne Kopenhager (seated) me and Cecily Klein



Looking like zebras, I am accompanied by Phil Holder on left (saxophone) and Jacques Fourie on the right (violin) and me as pianist and MD; standing in the 'green room' on one of our "Celebration" tours abroad



Jeanne with Cantor Oshy Tugendhaft in Toronto Canada, on one of the many tours abroad with the Celebration *Show*

CD Launch

From Virtuoso to Vinyl

It was, and still is, most unusual in South Africa for artists or musicians of non-commercial artistic pursuits to be supported by any of the large corporations or banks. In spite of their corporate social investment divisions, the performing arts (including music) are invariably last in line to receive sponsorships, since they yield less return on investment and tend to run a poor second to community upliftment programmes, environmentalism, education, sport, and healthcare. Those organisations which do sponsor music invariably exclude composers and for many years, it was also virtually impossible to find a publisher of sheet music who would take on the *oeuvre* of a South African living composer. Many years ago, Annette Emdon, who represented Boosey & Hawkes locally in South Africa, offered to act as 'caretaker' of my music and to sell my scores only on consignment, but I declined as I was hoping for a better opportunity for my music

I was to be interviewed about my music in early 1995 by Dr Ivan May, CEO of 1485 AM 'Radio Today', a community radio station – this with a view to 'getting my music out there'. May was a renowned creative philanthropist and a brilliant PhD graduate from the Science Faculty of Wits University. He was also a lover of music and the arts and was frequently referred to as a 'Renaissance man of the arts and environment'. At the time, he was employed by Nedbank (one of the "Big Four" banks in South Africa) as the head of its Arts and Culture Division, where he instituted several affinity products, predominantly in the arts and culture field, but also for several other philanthropic and green environmental projects. He generously suggested that Nedbank partner with me in the production of a comprehensive CD recording of my music, covering several of my works in different styles and genres, recorded over a number of years on different

occasions and at different venues. I was extremely appreciative of such an offer given the low-key cultural environment locally.

Over many years, I had been privileged to have had not only live performances of my original music, but also studio recordings made by various orchestras, smaller chamber ensembles, and exceptional solo instrumentalists. Several of my larger orchestral works were recorded by the SABC National Symphony Orchestra and later by the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra; a number of these recordings were produced in the iconic Studio M1A at the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) building in Auckland Park, Johannesburg. At the time, the SABC possessed state-of-the-art equipment, including state-of-the-art recording desks, a well-equipped soundproof booth and a studio space that was large enough to accommodate a full orchestra. It was a space designed acoustically for sophisticated sound recordings of large orchestral works.

I was also very fortunate and deeply honoured to have had a specialist music producer of the calibre of Daphne Kramers in attendance at most of my recording sessions. Her musical prowess in hearing the minutest detail and even tiniest mistake while watching the score is legendary –achieving exactly the correct balance in the orchestra and subtle nuances in the music. These recordings formed the basis of the proposed CD compilation of my art music works that was to be produced and launched. I was equally fortunate to have professionally made recordings of other smaller pieces and solo works in my possession.

As an important precursor to my deep desire to have my works put on to CD, I had been incredibly fortunate in 1987 to have had a collection of seven of my orchestral, chamber, and piano pieces released on vinyl records and cassettes by the recording company EMI (Electric Music Industries) in collaboration with the SABC. I had no funding at the time, but with some persuasion and my promoting the idea of South African art music, EMI bore the costs of this pioneering venture themselves in the realm of 'classical' art music. It was the first of its kind in South Africa in the realm of 'classical' art music. One of the works appearing was *The Fugue that Flew Away*, a fun tongue-in-cheek piece for

the piano and flute, recorded by myself and Jenni Scheffer (flute). The record cover was absolutely gorgeous – a colourful, limited print of a geometric ethnic modern painting by the talented South African artist, graphics designer and sculptor Mickey Korzennik (1978). This limited edition LP has become a collector's item.

Donald Graham – my guardian angel

Upon receiving the brief from Dr May at Nedbank in early 1995, I immediately made contact with Donald Graham in Cape Town, a man who was recognised as an ardent music-lover – a man who particularly valued music written by South African composers. His record company, GSE Claremont Records was located in Newlands, Cape Province. He had successfully produced CDs of other local composers, such as the renowned Peter Klatzow and readily agreed to take on the project of facilitating the production of CDs of my music. After sending him separate recordings of my various works, he sent off a compilation of tapes to a USA-based organisation that did "glass mastering" for the production of large numbers of CDs.

This process preceded the more sophisticated electronic digital era; back then, a process referred to as a 'stamper' used to punch all the data pits into a CD during the process of replication. It required a 'glass master' because the information was copied on to a special chemical coating on the surface of a circular block of glass. Glass is the material of choice to hold the CD master image while it is created and processed. Graham undertook to provide quotes for all these preliminary procedures, as well as for the costs of reproducing the CDs when completed. These quotes were accepted by May at Nedbank and we were given the green light to go ahead for this exciting venture.

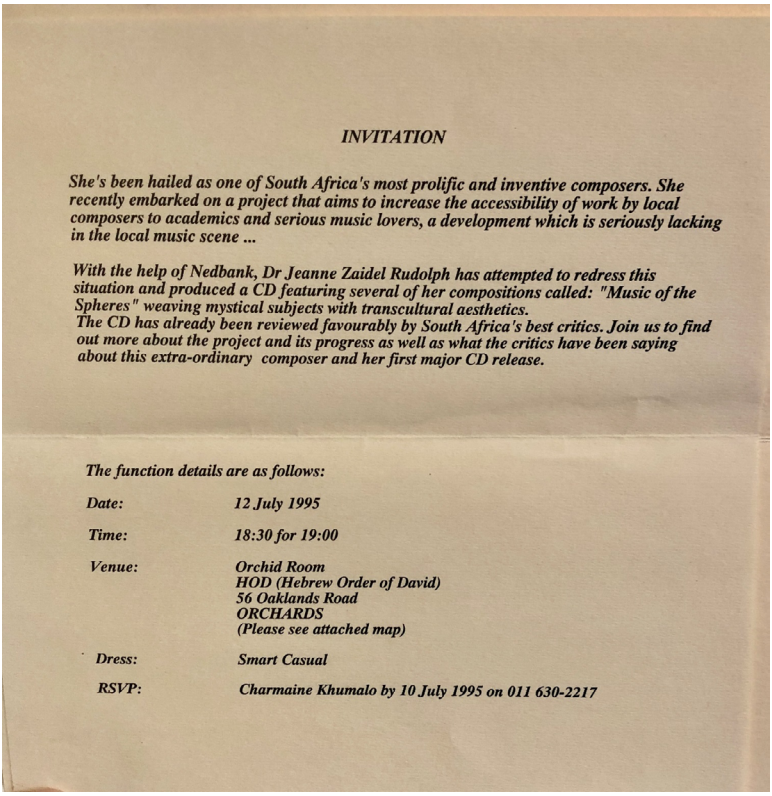
There was much correspondence between Donald Graham and me during the converting of the music into CD format, with the original sound recordings being under licence from the SABC Radio Programme sales and my works in manuscript being registered with SAMRO, an organisation that played a crucial role in my development as an active composer over many years. In South Africa the recording rights or mechanical rights of a

composer are monitored by CAPASSO (Composers, Authors and Publishers Association). However, I never relinquished personal copyright in my music as composer to any organisation, as one shouldn't!

Taking pride of place on the CD was an the exceptionally good recording of my *Sefirot* (*Spheres*) *Symphony* for wind, brass, percussion, and harp (24 minutes), performed by the National Symphony Orchestra (NSO) of the SABC under the baton of Omri Hadari (1993). The name of this piece inspired the overall title of the CD, *Music of the Spheres*.

Other works on the CD included *Fanfare Festival Overture* for orchestra (concert performance 1992, Johannesburg City Hall), performed by the NSO conducted by Hadari; *At the End of the Rainbow* for orchestra (NSO, 1992) conducted by Allan Stephenson; *Tempus Fugit* for orchestra (combined NSO and PACT[1] orchestras concert performance, 1986 Wits Great Hall), conducted by Walter Mony, *Masada* for bassoon and string quartet (concert performance USA, 1993) performed by the Contemporary Music Ensemble Cincinnati conducted by André Strydom and *Virtuoso 1* for piano (1988), played by Markus Thomas, winner of the UNISA International Piano Competition in 1988. Nedbank produced a beautiful invitation with its gilded logo for the innovative launch of my début CD on 12 July 1995:

1 Performing Arts Council Transvaal.



INVITATION

She's been hailed as one of South Africa's most prolific and inventive composers. She recently embarked on a project that aims to increase the accessibility of work by local composers to academics and serious music lovers, a development which is seriously lacking in the local music scene ...

With the help of Nedbank, Dr Jeanne Zaidel Rudolph has attempted to redress this situation and produced a CD featuring several of her compositions called: "Music of the Spheres" weaving mystical subjects with transcultural aesthetics. The CD has already been reviewed favourably by South Africa's best critics. Join us to find out more about the project and its progress as well as what the critics have been saying about this extra-ordinary composer and her first major CD release.

The function details are as follows:

Date:	***12 July 1995***
Time:	***18:30 for 19:00***
Venue:	***Orchid Room HOD (Hebrew Order of David) 56 Oaklands Road ORCHARDS (Please see attached map)***
Dress:	***Smart Casual***
RSVP:	***Charmaine Khumalo by 10 July 1995 on 011 630-2217***

A guest list was generated by Wits University, as well as by SAMRO and the response by friends in the music industry was wonderful, with over 100 people attending the gala event. In a beautiful setting in the HOD Hall (see invitation above) in Johannesburg; the mood at the gathering was very upbeat and I was surrounded by people who were genuinely happy for me and wished me and my musical future the utmost success. It was a party to remember, with exotic cocktails, delicious savoury snacks, and wonderful performances of my compositions. It was a most important milestone in my career; being surrounded by my dear friends and family completed my great joy.

The order of proceedings included a welcome address by Ivan May, speeches by Mary Rörich and by me, excerpts from my *Five African Sketches for Guitar*, played live by David Hewitt and, later,

further music 'entertainment' of recordings from my new *Music of the Spheres* CD.

My dear friend David Hewitt was a fun-loving, humorous and intensely musical person. He was a superb guitarist and colleague; he performed my *Five African Sketches for Guitar* magnificently at the CD release launch. He tragically died prematurely in 2001 in KwaZulu-Natal at the age of 54 after a devastating illness. He was an exceptionally accomplished classical guitarist, composer, arranger and teacher, who left an inspiring legacy of his own original guitar music; he was a lyrical man of music, who possessed an extraordinary creative ability. He left a void as a friend and was a great loss to the music industry.

Mary Rörich, a colleague of mine was a talented musician, musicologist, prolific writer on music and the arts and a most articulate speaker. She felt strongly about the absence of significant sponsorship in the arts. Here are pertinent extracts from her speech at the event:

> In South Africa today, composers are almost entirely dependent upon sponsorship and the concomitant advertising. And to a large extent that sponsorship has to come from the private sector. Corporations such as Nedbank are the lifeblood of a healthy cultural and artistic infrastructure. In its sponsorship of CDs of the works of a local composer – published by Claremont GSE – Nedbank is a visionary front-runner on the South African compositional scene.
>
> Creative endeavour in South Africa has traditionally fared poorly – music perhaps most of all, because its production is so complex. Once an orchestral work has been written, it requires the writing of parts, the booking of an orchestra and the allocation of rehearsal time... the scheduling of a performance and possibly broadcasting time. It involves the engagement of a conductor prepared to spend the time and effort getting to know a new work – one which he may well never conduct again – and in a society in which professional musicians are often curiously anti-new music. Once the work has been performed, it does not remain

> accessible to the interested public in the way that a book or painting does. Making a CD is yet another complex step in an already complex process. But it is a triumphant one, the ultimate one: it makes music as available as a book; it gives it an extended time-frame, a life of its own.

The response to my CD *Music of the Spheres*, from critics and the public alike, was overwhelmingly affirmative. The CD enjoyed extensive coverage in the press upon release.

I took some umbrage at a review by Julius Eichbaum, who sought to evaluate my music in terms of gender (*Music from South Africa*, which appeared in the now-defunct journal, *Scenaria*, 1995); the appraisal, however, redeemed itself, in my eyes, due to its positive acclaim:

> Dr Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph is undoubtedly the pre-eminent woman composer in South Africa today. Combining an adventurous musical spirit, covering virtually every musical form, from the large-scale symphonic to the most intimate chamber works, with the solid craftsmanship of a dedicated musician, she possesses an almost unique quality of being able to speak to an audience of widely differing musical perceptions.

Coenraad Visser in the *Weekly Mail & Guardian* under *Classical CDs* (25 November-December 1994), generously wrote: "Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph has long been one of the most prolific and inventive South African composers. So, one welcomes, with great enthusiasm, this disc containing six of her major works: four for orchestra, one for chamber ensemble and one for piano. The performances are committed and well recorded – an outstanding collection, constantly challenging and rewarding." Visser applauded the quality of the recording and in his review, even quoted my own words taken from the CD insert:

> My roots are in Africa, but the branches of my soul reach out to the spiritual world of religious mysticism, which is a powerful driving force in my work.

In a review in *Business Day* titled *Uniting SA's Spheres in Music* (27 January 1995), Mary Rörich wrote:

> In a decade in which the majority of her peers were slavishly aping the latest gimmicks of European *avant gardism* and denouncing any interest in ethnic musical materials as 'cultural banditry', Johannesburg composer, Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph began a lonely, if personally illuminating, exploration of her African roots.
>
> Her tapping of her African roots is only one aspect of her quest for identity. She is as much concerned with the implications of her deep connection to her Judaism, with its rich archaeology of narratives, sensibilities and symbols. The release provides compelling evidence not only of a composer's musical coming of age, but of the viability of a musical idiom grounded in Western syntax, yet vitally informed by the sonic concepts, materials and techniques of indigenous African music.

This review says as much about Rörich as it does about me. She had the ability to encapsulate the essence of a piece or pieces of music – and express herself with astoundingly apt and colourful terminology plus the right amount of spice and spirit. This gave her the edge among her peers as a reviewer and writer. Her scholarly texts were magnificently crafted.

In the *Pretoria News* (1 February 1995), Riek van Rensburg in his column, *Classics on CD*, wrote:

> Behind the music of Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph, one of the country's most prolific composers, especially in her most recent works, lies her fascination with mankind's religious instinct. An aura of mysticism pervades her latest works. Purely as an abstract musical experience, though, her compositions also give pleasure.

In the *Rapport* (12 February, 1995), Paul Boekkooi wrote:

> One can argue until one is blue in the face as to who the greatest South African composer is. During the time that we

> are living, there is probably not a more original voice than that of Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph." (English translation by radio broadcaster, pianist and writer Anna Bender).

When one's life's work is positively received, it is an invaluable affirmation of the dedication to one's art, in this case music. It certainly makes those many lonely hours of hard slog worthwhile! My immeasurable gratitude goes to these "appreciators".



The LP cover sleeve of my first vinyl recording in 1988 by EMI consists of 7 early compositions, precursor to my CDs. This depicts the beautiful abstract painting by South African artist, Mickey Korzennik



Cover picture of my CD "Music of the Spheres" naming the compositions on the poster



Virtuoso guitarist, David Hewitt, playing a selection of my music from my new CD called "Music of the Spheres", at the Nedbank launch in 1995 at the HOD Centre



Celebrating with my dear sister-in-law Pam Zaidel-Shalev (left) together with my niece, Dalya, me and my beloved Aunt Dobbie



My brother Malcolm and his children, Adam and Dalya at the CD launch party

Festivals, Residencies and Conferences

Abroad, but never bored

Into the *molto fuoco* melting pot: *very fiery* indeed

Darmstadt XXVII and XXVIII (1974, 1976) – *Ferienkurse*[1] and Friends

Darmstadt is much more than just a place. For us young composers in the mid-1970s and beyond, it represented the most iconic aspirational zenith of contemporary musical minds in a hyper-intellectual environment – a meeting ground for the music intelligentsia. Keith Potter, composer and music critic (*Music and Musicians* December 1974), described it as 'the shrine of the *avant garde*', although according to him, it had lost some of its lustre. The Institute of International Music in Darmstadt is, however, considered to be the most comprehensive centre of information on contemporary music, with over 25,000 documents and music volumes. To be accepted into the summer holiday course in Darmstadt was to be acknowledged as a valid new voice on the modern music landscape. It was difficult for me to compare it to previous sessions as it was my first – and I entered the hallowed halls starry-eyed.

Revisiting a time and place that were totally transformational in my life is like looking through a rear-view mirror at one of the brightest and most colourful experiences one could have as a young composer-musician in the 1970s. I was still a student of György Ligeti at the time in Hamburg in 1974 and was warmly encouraged by him to attend the 27th *Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik*[2] that year, which ran from 21 July to 8 August. The programme advisory board was led

1 Holiday courses.
2 International Holiday Course for New Music.

by Christoph Caskel (premier percussionist), Aloys Kontarsky (legendary contemporary pianist) and Siegfried Palm (renowned cellist), administered for several years by Wilhelm Schluter and co-ordinated by composer Rolf Gehlhaar. These names may not mean much to my readers, but at the time they represented the height of modern music accomplishments.

In this year, front-runners in the European and American *avant garde* were leaders of the course, names like Mauricio Kagel (Argentina), Karlheinz Stockhausen (Germany), Christian Wolff (USA), and Iannis Xenakis (Greece). These musicians were luminaries who represented the cutting edge of the music *avant garde*. I hope and trust that music students currently are taught about these legends.

Renowned performers available for selected works of these icons and those presenting lectures during the festival included musicians like Gordon Mumma, Vinko Globokar, and Zygmunt Krauze. Open concerts of the highest quality were presented by various radio orchestras like the Hessischer Rundfunk, the Westdeutscher Rundfunk and others, while many studio concerts offered works by famous composers. As a young student composer, being surrounded by these renowned figures of the *avant garde* was terribly exciting and affirming, yet quite intimidating.

In 1974 there were about 160 participants on the course (approximately 100 of them composers) and I attended every single lecture offered during its entirety. I diligently and meticulously filled an entire book with scribbled transcripts on the ideas and works of these modern masters. I relished lectures on how to approach the art of composition and improvisation. With my deep thirst for new knowledge and a wide-eyed fascination I virtually 'worshipped at the feet' of these iconic musicians.

What was new to me was the representation of musical ideas graphically, thus breaking away from conventional music notation – using visual symbols to communicate the creative impetus. It was revelatory to conceive of composition as a *pictorial* process rather than an expressive or intuitive progression using the tried-and-tested 'language' of musical notes - my

introduction to *graphic music notation*, an alternative form of representing music was an eye-opener.

I learnt a lot from Greek composer, **Iannis Xenakis**, who pioneered 'stochastic music', which is based on the laws of random probability and chance, relating to the disciplines of mathematics and architecture. I was *determined* to try to absorb these frighteningly intellectual and complicated theories as applied to music. I was young and foolish enough to think I could!

The leaders of the course were not only formidable, but diverse in pedagogical style. I recall one lecture by **Stockhausen** lasting over *four* hours. In his inimitable (and rather terrifying), Germanic and controlling manner, he informed us that if anyone left the hall during his lecture, they were not to return. Suitably cowed, we sat put. Keith Potter was less than complimentary about the music of Stockhausen, who in his words, 'did not reign supreme' for some, adding that he found the composer's recent works such as *Indianer Lieder* to be 'totally phoney' (*Music and Musicians*, 1974). Yet Stockhausen had celebrity status as a supreme guru with loyal devotees.

Some of the works by Argentinian composer Mauricio **Kagel** performed that stand out in my memory include *Mirum* for Tuba (1965) which explored every possible extended technique for the instrument – and "*1898*" (1973) for Chamber Ensemble; as well as *Evryali* for piano (1973), played by the brilliant pianist Aloys Kontarsky and *Persephassa* (1969) played by Les Percussions de Strasbourg – both by Xenakis. I was witnessing, hearing and living through an incredible era in *avant garde* music.

However, there were only two 'big-name' luminaries who were featured in concerts dedicated solely to their own works: Stockhausen and Xenakis. In my opinion, the latter was by far the more interesting lecturer, composer and performer. In fact, we struck up a close friendship and he showed a great deal of interest in me and my music. Although he invited me to accompany him to Bonn for his upcoming installation, I realised that my starry-eyed, hero-worship of him was a passing fascination and I sensibly resisted the temptation to follow him. I frequently had to exercise healthy skepticism as to whether my appeal to a male

music superstar was as an attractive young female, rather than due to his fervent admiration for my emerging and irresistible 'composing talent'!

Music works performed at concerts during the Darmstadt course representing the 1970s also included lesser-known composers such as Bruno Maderna (Italy) and Rolf Gehlaar (USA). The style was predominantly experimental or electro-acoustic, grounded in Western *avant-garde* techniques. Most composers used extended instrumental practices and pushed the envelopes of performance on all levels, but mostly in extremes of tonal range, dynamics (volumes), fractured rhythms and dramatic gestures. These maverick works were intended to shock and excite – and for less exposed young students like me, they certainly did! Many works were deliberately chaotic and anarchic. Stockhausen's pioneering electronic piece *Mikrophonie* (1964), became one of his best-known works after the performance at Darmstadt. It was wildly experimental and different, using other-worldly electronic sounds, which blew our uninitiated minds.

In one of his marathon lectures, Stockhausen analysed his 'latest' works, *Herbstmusik* and *Indianerlieder*. The shock element in them was that, in very stark contrast to his other brutally discordant and atonal works, we were suddenly exposed to an innocuously 'pretty' and minimalist sound-world; a music almost *annoyingly* simplistic, transparently tonal and repetitive of only a few tones – a 180 degree turnaround! Again, they provoked thwarted expectations. Stockhausen seemed to be ahead of the creative flock in startling his listeners with unpredictable new directions.

At the time, I do not think I fully appreciated the honour it was for me, as a fledgling composer, to have my works performed by some of the greatest instrumental exponents of contemporary music of the time. Today, 50 years later, I feel immense gratitude for that unique opportunity. Towards the end of the festival on 7 August, my work *Reaction for Piano, Cello and Percussion* received a scintillating professional performance by Herbert Henck (piano), Siegfried Palm (cello), and Christoph Caskel (percussion). In the

hands of such great interpreters, it came alive in ways even I could not have imagined.

Two years later, in July 1976, I returned to Darmstadt as a participant in the 28th *Ferienkurse* from 11 to 28 July, this time travelling to Germany from Johannesburg, where I was already ensconced as a lecturer on the music staff at Wits University. Both the university and the CSIR generously sponsored my conference attendance and airfares. It was enormously exciting and gratifying to know that my mentor and teacher, György Ligeti from the *Hochschule* in Hamburg, was to be one of the three leading composers and lecturers, alongside Christobal Halffter (Spain), and, again, Mauricio Kagel.

It was also my introduction to the live performance of music by American composer George Crumb. In fact, in the opening concert, we were treated to his work *Music for a Summer Evening* (*Makrokosmos III*), for two amplified pianos and percussion (composed in 1974). I loved the delicate and sparkling sonorities he achieved in this electro-acoustic ensemble. However, it was, unsurprisingly, the music of my erstwhile Hungarian teacher Ligeti that enthralled me beyond description.

Drei Stücke für Zwei Klaviere (*Three Pieces for Two Pianos*, 1976) by Ligeti, was a work in three movements: *Monument*, *Selbsportrait* (*self-portrait*) and *Bewegung* (movement). This work was so impressive that I was determined, after returning to South Africa, to perform this exciting duo-piano piece in concert. It is in the sub-titles of the movements that one gets a glimpse into the nature of the music.

Tagged on to the second movement *Selbsportret* is the text: "*Mit Reich und Riley* (*und Chopin ist Auch Dabei*)"[3]. This meme was to become a humorous tagline for a work that four of us student-composers were to write collaboratively during the composition course.

It was the first time that I had ever been asked to compose a shared piece of music with other young composers, which created great excitement and much hilarity. This was a compulsory

3 "Self-Portrait with Reich and Riley (and Chopin is there too)".

experimental exercise given to us as course participants. We were divided into different groups to create various new pieces of music together, but were forbidden to show each other our completed sections. In my group of four students, we discussed the basic skeleton of the form of the piece to be written, which was for a mixed ensemble: clarinet, trombone, piano, and cello, to be later combined.

Together we decided on the main elements: number of bars (measures), the different time signatures, the character of the piece and the total length. Each composer was then allocated one of the instruments in this quartet for which to compose, without sharing ideas or details about the style of the music individually intended. We duly went away and wrote our *single* prescribed instrumental line within the pre-designed structure, and with some vague parameters such as general mood and tempo. We had no idea how the completed piece would sound when combined as a quartet. What an innovative and fun idea it was!

We each went away and, in isolation, composed our own separate musical lines. We then put these melodic and rhythmic lines together vertically on top of one another – and *voila!* We had a new piece for mixed quartet! We gave the piece to the resident professional quartet to rehearse – and it was performed as a collaborative work at the *studiokonzert* VIII on 27 July 1976. We called the piece *Alle Dabei*[4], obliquely referencing Ligeti's tagline for his two-piano piece described above.

My 'co-conspirators' (student composers) were Malcolm J Singer, Algis Draugelis, and Michael Barolsky. The music that resulted from this entertaining, secret collaboration was surprisingly cohesive – and really very interesting, with some sections better than others. I believe the overall experiment worked very well indeed. We did need a conductor though, to hold it all together, a role that Algis willingly undertook. I have no doubt that, in large measure, the fact that world-renowned instrumental exponents like Aloys Kontasky (piano), Hans Deinzer (clarinet), Armin Rosin (trombone), and Ulrich Heinen

4 Everyone there – a tongue-in-cheek alluding to Ligeti's humorous reference.

(cello) performed the work contributed to its rather unexpected and unpredictable success.

My composition – titled *Five Pieces for Woodwind Quartet and Soprano* – was featured as the opening work in the same concert programme preceding the group works. I had been very impressed and influenced by the set of experimental pieces by Luciano Berio called *Sequenzas.* He had composed a set of 14 separate pieces over his lifetime – each one focusing on a different solo instrument - and the one for voice (*Sequenza No 3*) left an indelible impression on me. I loved the fact that the human voice could be viewed as a kind of wind instrument and that the flutes and clarinets covered a very similar range of tones to that of the human voice, particularly the female one.

I had written a poem in 1969, *Tame Night*, and used these words for my *Quintet* in very experimental ways for a soprano. In my middle movement, I only used syllabic and vowel sounds derived from the words, with a wide range of sonorities including humming, declaiming, and even screaming – and it was only in the last movement that the actual words became whole and audible.

Again, I was very fortunate to have professional performers interpreting my music: Agnes Mester (soprano), Carol Redman and Maren Diestel (flutes), and Stachanowski and Heribert Haase (clarinets), with my friend Malcolm Singer directing. The joy of hearing my original thoughts and ideas coming to life in performance cannot be adequately described. It was a rare and quite sacred experience.

However, one of the most valuable and lasting bonuses of my time at Darmstadt remains the wonderful friends I made there, some of whom have lasted a lifetime. We got to know one another while chatting and standing in line with our coupons for lunch.

Among these wonderful musicians is my dear friend David Arden, the brilliant American pianist, whom we later brought out to South Africa to perform contemporary music; Malcolm Singer, composer and past Director of the famous Yehudi Menuhin School of Music, who generously took the time to show me around the

school in Surrey (Stoke d'Abernon, UK) in 2015. Malcolm, in fact, generously and for my personal benefit, organised an impromptu concert of their top talent in a lunch-hour concert at which I was guest of honour (in fact, the *only* guest and audience member!). It took place in a beautiful, intimate concert hall setting. I was treated to a performance by their best young pianist, most talented guitarist and brilliant young violinist. I also befriended the talented Polish pianist-composer Marek Mietelsky and the composer Michael Barolsky, names known to the European music public while I was in Darmstadt. In addition, I met the composer Ann Silsbee (USA) and renowned music critic and, as mentioned above, Keith Potter from the UK.

I believe that my copious lecture notes from Darmstadt (which I have diligently kept) represent an important historical perspective and stand as an important document of music of the time. I hope, in time, to make a digital copy for posterity. It forms part of my legacy collection.

Phenomenal festivals - captivating conferences –

Some of the most enjoyable and memorable highlights of my music career took place at international festivals and conferences. As my music became better known outside South Africa, following on the First International Congress on Women in Music at New York University in March 1981 and the pioneering festival, *Donne in Musica*, for women in Rome in 1982, I began receiving invitations to attend various international music conferences (some even including men!); to take up short-term residencies and present my work. I felt very privileged to be travelling abroad to new and exciting destinations, staying in interesting accommodation, hearing foreign languages, and, above all, meeting and interacting with stimulating individuals, including composers, and musicians from all over the world.

It was at some of these exotic and beautiful international destinations that I had the unique opportunity of presenting, not only my own original music, but a fresh *Technicolor* window into the music of South Africa, which at that stage was still unfamiliar and uncharted territory for audiences abroad. I

frequently preceded a discussion of my own music with a series of background lectures on traditional indigenous African musics, with examples from the different genres, regions and sound-worlds. I also referred to the fascinating intercultural influences on the composition of art music in South Africa. In turn, I too acquired valuable new knowledge from presentations by foreign lecturers and other participants, meeting world-class musicians from all over the globe, often making lifelong friends. The camaraderie and shared knowledge at these special events was most enriching.

Hi-ya to OHIO

In early 1995, I was invited by South African conductor and organist André Strydom, faculty member at the Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music, Ohio USA, to be guest composer at his college on my way to a festival of music in Youngstown, Ohio. It was mind-boggling to learn, on my arrival, that there was an intake of 3000 *music* students at the University of Cincinnati. It soon became clear why this school was a desired college of choice. André showed me around the facilities and performance spaces for music.

I had never before encountered such generous and magnificent teaching and performing venues in any music department. A glorious cacophony of sound greeted me around each corner with rehearsals and lessons in full swing – how energizing and wonderful to experience. I presented a two-hour seminar and lecture-demonstration on my own compositions, which generated enormous interest in music emanating from Africa and especially from South Africa. Their well-known resident composer Prof Darrel Handel (a wonderfully apt musical surname!) expressed great interest in future collaboration between his music school and Wits University.

The Dana New Music Festival XI (1995)

My next stop was Youngstown, Ohio. A small group of representative South African performers, composers and lecturers, including me, were invited to participate in the Dana

New Music Festival XI at the Dana School of Music at Youngstown State University in Ohio, USA from 10 to 14 April 1995, the theme being "Music in South Africa". Aside from me (in the role of pianist, composer, and lecturer, from Wits University), the other South African guest artists and lecturers included Prof Walter Mony (violist, lecturer, conductor, and Music Chair at Wits), Surendran Reddy (pianist and composer from Durban) and Lily Savitz (pianist and lecturer at the University of Cape Town). Our team was sponsored by SAMRO and the South African Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology.

It was most unusual (at the time – and at any time, actually) for an international festival to be dedicated to music emanating exclusively from South Africa. Dr Robert Rollin, Head of Composition at Dana State, who had previously visited Wits University as guest lecturer, was the chief architect and organiser of this New Music Festival of South African music in Youngstown. He put together a very full programme, which included warm hospitality at dinners and social gatherings for us, their 'special' guests from South Africa. Dr Rollins himself most competently conducted several of the chamber orchestras and ensembles during the festival – and occasionally included his own original compositions.

The schedule in Youngstown was jam-packed for all of us, alternately giving lecture-recitals, delivering illustrated presentations and performing at concerts of South African music. It was exhausting, but extremely satisfying, as the response from audiences and students alike was warmly responsive showing genuine interest. The American audiences seemed quite taken aback not only at the high standard of our performances, but also at the relevance and contemporaneity of our newly composed works.

On the first evening, after a "kick-off" New Music Society Annual Dinner at the beautiful Casa Ramirez restaurant in Youngstown, I was taken to the Temple El-Emeth to present my first lecture-recital titled "Jewish Music in South Africa". It was especially rewarding sharing my knowledge with an American audience who knew very little about people generally in South

Africa – and even less about the Jewish community and our music. I played them excerpts of music from synagogue services and discussed the myriad of concert events we presented in South Africa of Jewish music featuring traditional 'old' and newly-composed Hebrew melodies, with a mix of mostly Hebrew liturgical words and English lyrics.

Concerts and lectures over the five days were presented in a variety of venues in and around their beautiful campus, including the McDonough Museum of Art, the Chestnut Room in the Kilcawley Centre, the opulently-appointed Butler Institute of American Art, and the Bliss Hall in the Music School – a must-see for any tourists from South Africa.

On the second morning, I presented a lecture-demonstration on my compositions in the Bliss Hall. There, I analysed several of my own works, illustrating my talk with video material, professional recordings, and overhead slides (a method which was soon to become a fossil of the pre-digital era). That lecture was directly followed by a faculty forum panel discussion, "Reflections on African Cultures and Music", which included Prof Mony as well as another African guest, Dr Wazadi Wa Mukuna, Director of the Kent State University African Ensemble. Emerging from this forum was a discussion on an important concept: that Africa, as a huge and diverse continent, cannot be said to be represented by one generic 'African music' label. There cannot be a single descriptor unless it is located in the specific region, context and culture within which it finds itself. There are many different and diverse African 'musics', each of them also intrinsically linked to specific ancient traditions, socio-political histories, cosmologies, mythologies and rituals. These sentiments were strongly expressed by members of the panel.

The discussion moved on to the equally exciting and continually evolving genres of urban African music, many of them drawing on and extrapolating contemporary and traditional Western ones. Township jazz, for example, which developed as a hybrid of swing and big band jazz, became a genre in its own right. *Marabi*, which evolved from the music of miners, has since come to encompass its own offshoots, such as *mbaqanga* and *kwaito*. The

latter emerged from Soweto in the 1980s as a variant of 'house', a genre of electronic disco music characterised by a repetitive four-on-the-floor beat and a typical tempo of 120 to 130 beats per minute. *Kwaito*, in turn, generated *amapiano*, a hybrid of intense house, jazz, and lounge music typified by synthesisers and wide percussive bass lines. While all of these urban, modern African genres bear the musical DNA of their American and European cousins, they are distinct (and unmistakable) and have strong socio-political connotations. What is fascinating is the ephemeral nature of these urban genres, which vanish as quickly as they arise, in bizarre syncopation with changes in the urban artistic landscape in South Africa.

Concert I, yet another tasteful (and tasty) reception was held in the beautiful University Planetarium foyer, again honouring us guest artists from South Africa. The opening concert, titled *Visions of South Africa* – took place on Tuesday 11 April in the fantastical, picturesque world of the Ward Beecher Planetarium itself. Over the course of the festival, six of my original compositions were featured – an amazing number of works for one composer at one festival (unless, of course, the festival features a single composer's works) and I felt most privileged and honoured indeed. We were very spoiled by our hosts and treated like Hollywood celebrities throughout our residency.

Concert II, a lunch-hour performance, was held on Wednesday 12 April at the opulently appointed Butler Institute of American Art. On this occasion, three of my works were performed, including my *Five African Sketches* for Guitar, *Virtuoso 1* for Piano, the American première (spectacularly played by Surendran) and excerpts from my *Suite Afrique* for viola and piano performed by Walter Mony (viola) together with me on piano. I had always been somewhat reluctant (and rather nervous) to perform my own compositions and preferred that other, more skilled instrumentalists should do so. However, I relished the opportunity to express my own brand of African pianism when it came to this particular work, by playing it myself. I was performing less and less generally and doing more composing as the century drew rapidly to an end.

Squeezed in between two concerts on the same day, I gave my third public lecture in the afternoon, titled "On Theory Pedagogy in South Africa". I had been teaching theory, harmony and counterpoint for so many years at Wits University and even before, that I felt very confident sharing my experiences and knowledge with an audience made up largely of university teaching faculty, interested musicians and students.

In **Concert III** (the 'official opening concert') that night, my complete *Suite Afrique* for Viola and Piano enjoyed its world première at the McDonough Museum of Art, featuring Walter Mony on viola and me on the piano.

During the same programme, Surendran Reddy performed his own work, *Suite Freedom* – his musical response to the injustices perpetrated by apartheid and its adherents in South Africa. As a composer, one exposes one's essencein every note and phrase of one's work. Thankfully, both Surendran's and my works elicited great interest and many questions from curious students and faculty members alike. It is truly like 'baring one's soul'.

I had met Surendran in Durban in 1986 when I attended rehearsals and performances of my African ballet *Abantubomlambo (The River People).* He was the *répétiteur* (coach) for the Natal Performing Arts Company (NAPAC) at the time. As an Indian person living during the apartheid era in South Africa, he had suffered humiliating discrimination, but had succeeded in transcending the pain of those experiences by finding catharsis through his performances and compositions. He married a dancer, Linda and they had a little girl, Leila. We became very good friends and confidants.

Prior to the evening concert on 13 April, I gave my fourth public lecture in the Bliss Hall on "New Music in South Africa". I had brought with me many scores and loads of sheet music. In fact, I was armed to the hilt with information to deliver informed and colourful lecturers on many of the composers active in South Africa, who could not be with us in the USA. These included the likes of the Arnold van Wyk, Carl van Wyk, Paul Loeb van Zuilenburg, Roelof Temmingh, Stefans Grové, David Hönigsberg, Hans Roosenschoon, Jaco van der Merwe, Christopher James,

Johan Cloete, and others. Walter Mony and I shared some of these lectures, during which we analysed and discussed the works of these composers. Walter also played the role of conductor for some of the ensembles in concert and gave very entertaining master classes for strings – as only Walter could do in his inimitable way – constantly peppered by jokes and humour!

Concert IV, that evening**,** was held in the Kilcawley Chestnut Room, featuring a chamber work of mine called *Margana* for Flute, Violin, Cello and two percussionists, very competently conducted by Robert Rollin. The title of the work is an anagram of the actual word 'anagram', so it is not only a mirror image of the title, but is also represented in the musical tones. This mirror technique was used by many composers in the 20th century and is still referenced today. *Margana* was composed as a tribute to my past composition professor, Dutch composer and lecturer, Arthur Wegelin, whose own composition was titled *Anagram*. In Sesotho, the word *margana* means 'many words'. I feel that many words cannot express what one can express in a brief excerpt of music. Although I chose the main four tones of the theme for the work from his name: Arthur Wegelin, which became the notes AEGE in the music, forming the entire melodic and harmonic basis of the composition.

Surendran was also featured in the Concert IV programme, performing his own piano sonata. He was one of the most brilliant South African pianists and talented composers of his generation. I greatly admired not only his positive energy, but his ability to read my brand-new scores with great ease, as though he had been familiar with them over many years. He had a remarkable technique and interpretive powers – and, as a composer, was exceptionally inventive with a fertile imagination over many styles. In fact, towards the end of his too-short life, he named his own style of composition 'clazz' – a genre that was the perfect blend of classics and jazz. His CD, titled *Reddy, Steady, Go*, featuring his music, was extremely popular and was snapped up by music-lovers across the board. After he passed away, SAMRO created an overseas scholarship in his honour in a 'clazz' category.

Concert V did not include African music, so not in my present ambit (a touch of patriotic snobbery perhaps?).

Concert VI, held at the Bliss Hall of the Dana Music School, featured my work called *Masada* for String Quartet and Bassoon. In the years to follow, the piece became renowned (somewhat notorious) and much talked-about. Much would be written about this work and the controversy surrounding it. Also on this exciting programme were performances of my *Three Dimensions* for Piano, as well as excerpts from my *Suite Afrique* for Viola and Piano (again with good old Prof Mony and me).

With six concerts over only a few days, our hosts at Dana State definitely got their 'money's worth' from us, as our entire contingent worked extremely hard that week, giving lectures and performing extensively. An enormous amount of organisation and careful planning had gone into making the festival an artistic success. The organisers also presented an exhibition of 50 of SAMRO composers' scores, photos and CDs in the main library, in order to inform and educate the American public about unfamiliar and unknown art music from the African continent.

After attending events throughout the festival, it became obvious to us as South African performers and composers, that our music could rightfully take its place among the best of contemporary music locally and internationally.

Residencies

Made in the USA

Composer-In-Residence – 22nd annual Heidelberg New Music University Festival: Ohio, March 2010

An invitation in February 2010 from Dr Brian Bevelander, Director of the Heidelberg New Music Festival in Tiffin, Ohio, USA, set in motion a series of exciting music events for me as 'featured composer' and guest lecturer in Heidelberg. The organisers planned a full programme in which I would present a series of lectures to the entire faculty, plus lectures for a general audience. However, the *pièce de résistance* for me was the offer of an

evening concert devoted exclusively to my original compositions. In addition, I committed to holding master classes for their composition students. They had a very intense schedule organised for me over three full days, from 19-21 March 2010.

I had informed my friend and colleague, the well-known Cuban conductor and composer Tania Leon that I would be travelling to the USA in early 2010 to take up my residency at Heidelberg University. She speedily grabbed the opportunity to 'piggy-back' on the Ohio invitation and organised for me to be a guest lecturer at the Conservatory of Music Brooklyn College in New York (referred to as CUNY), as part of its "Spring 2010 Guest Seminar" series. Thus, at Tania's invitation, I enjoyed a full day at the Brooklyn Conservatory, lecturing to faculty members and students – prior to my heading off to Tiffin, Ohio. Tania was a most gracious host, and I spoke about transcultural music in South Africa and how African music has impacted on the intercultural blending of indigenous and Western art musics. As I often do, I took students through a series of rhythmic exercises of clapping and singing in different voice parts to demonstrate the vast differences in approach between Western and African musics – focusing on the unfamiliar and complex polyrhythms of Africa, and as always, with the musical phrases being subservient to the emphasis on words.

Reaching out

Interestingly, when the word 'outreach' is used at home in South Africa, it usually refers to individuals or groups (e.g. artists, musicians, counsellors, medical practitioners of some sort, religious or secular personnel) who reach out, both figuratively and literally to previously disadvantaged and under-served communities, to offer financial or subsistence assistance and/or cultural enrichment. In the USA, however, in this context it meant rather to reach out to young kids at public schools who had not been exposed to 'classical' music tuition. I was asked to give 'outreach' workshops to junior high school students in Tiffin on African music and to present to them my own original music, as well as create an activity for the scholars with the material. This was to take place in selected public schools (community-type

schools with less affluent children; not 'private' schools, as the term is understood in the UK or SA). I had with me an assortment of small, hand-held African percussion instruments for this purpose, and I gave workshops in various schools around Tiffin, including the Tiffin Middle School.

I was bowled over by the enthusiastic response of the children, who were clamoring to try out the percussion instruments by playing unfamiliar indigenous rhythms on a variety of drums, wooden claves, pod-shakers and other 'noise-makers'! We had such a fun-filled time together.

The university administrative assistant, Patricia Page, who handled all my travel arrangements, booked me into the Hampton Inn for three nights in a very comfortable room. Little did I know that a drama would unfold prior to my beginning my music activities. Tired from travelling, I went to bed early in the hotel in anticipation of a very busy schedule over the next three days. At around 4am, I was woken up by a fire alarm, the likes of which I had never before experienced – the decibel level (volume) was 'through the roof', literally and figuratively. People were screaming and banging on guests' doors to evacuate. In my sleepy stupor, I grabbed only my lecture notes and ran down the several flights of stairs out of the front door, as smoke was beginning to fill the foyer.

I had forgotten that it was still very cold in the USA in March and didn't think to put on my shoes. Everyone gathered outside on the stone entrance of the hotel to await the outcome. This was no false alarm – there was a fire raging in the hotel lift-shaft, and it would be hours before we would be allowed back into the hotel. I never thought I would stop shivering from this unexpected disruption and from spending hours barefoot in the freezing cold.

My welcome and reception by the Heidelberg University Faculty and students the next day, however, could not have been warmer! The 'Westhuizen Piano Duo' (Pierre van der Westhuizen and his wife Sophié Grobler-Van der Westhuizen) had commissioned a two-piano work from me (*The Juggler and the King*) to be premièred at this festival in a prestigious concert in Ohio, dedicated to my works. This highly talented and wonderful

duo-couple were instrumental (pun intended) in bringing me to Tiffin for this celebratory 'new music' event. We cemented a very close friendship, which has continued over the years. The master classes that I gave to students were received with great enthusiasm and produced some superb new compositions by them. I personally learnt a great deal about the American teaching environment and current stylistic preferences and expectations. Composition student Samuel Ferris-Morris (a name that we will certainly hear about, going forward) was announced as the winner of the annual Ars Nova composition competition for 2010.

I was honoured to have the programme of my works presented on the Saturday evening at the beautiful Ohl Concert Hall. Aside from the première of my duo-piano work, *Juggler and the King*, I had exceptional performances of my other pieces, including *Five African Sketches for Guitar* (performed by Joshua McGuire), *Ukuthula* for Mezzo-Soprano and Piano, featuring Renée Clair (mezzo-soprano) and Pieter Grobler (piano), *Virtuoso 1* for Piano (Pieter Grobler), *Vocalise* for Soprano and Flute (Carol Dusdieker, soprano and Yeji Kim, flute) and *Partials and Pedals* for Solo Piano, brilliantly performed by Evan Mack. I was extremely moved by the fact that these performers had invested much time, expertise and effort to study new and unfamiliar works by me and, indeed, to give such spectacular performances – yet another reminder of how universal music can be and how it can travel and unite creative musical minds.

I became firm friends with the performers and some of us are still in contact. Not only is Evan Mack a brilliant pianist, but also a composer of note in his own right, composing riveting operas and very challenging instrumental works. The 'Westhuizen Duo' (Pierre and Sophié), expat South Africans, have gone on to curate some of the most important international music festivals in the USA. Pierre occupied the coveted position of President and CEO of the Cleveland International Piano Competition – and, more recently, became the Director of the Gilmore International Keyboard Festival and Awards in Michigan, USA. He has received accolades and recognition for his work as arts administrator and was named as one of the top 30 Industry Influencers by Musical America Worldwide. The very accomplished pianist Pieter Grobler,

who had studied at UP, was an expert exponent of contemporary music performance and performed my compositions in Ohio most brilliantly. He subsequently accepted the offer of a post in piano at the University of Stellenbosch. He has acquitted himself admirably there and has made his mark as head of department and as an inspiring senior piano lecturer.

In a letter dated 30 March 2010, Pierre wrote the following note to me:

> Thank you for bringing your music and vast knowledge to our campus and thank you for enriching our music department and community with your lectures. The students are still raving about them, and I know that the composition students absolutely loved your master classes. You have been one of the most engaging and thought-provoking composers we've had the fortune of hosting! It was such a pleasure to work on your Juggler and the King, and an honor to perform it with you in the audience! A treat for any musician, to be sure! Please know that we would be thrilled to play anything else you write for the duo-piano medium in the future.

A residency at a vibrant music department such as the one at Heidelberg University was undoubtedly one of the highlights of my professional career, both as composer and as teacher.

Gopher it!

Composer in Residence 2012 – Israel

The seeds of my whirlwind visit to Israel in 2012 as composer-lecturer-concert presenter were sown during the controversial International Conference of Art Musics of Israel (*Identities, Ideologies, Influences*) in March 2011 in London. This was the first-ever UK-based international conference on 'Art Musics of Israel'. The ground-breaking conference was presented by the Jewish Music Institute (JMI), in partnership with the Institute of Musical Research (IMR) and SOAS, University of London. When Annemie Stimie from Stellenbosch presented her ill-researched and

disingenuous paper on my work, *Masada* (recounted later in this autobiography), one of the audience members at the conference was an Israeli musician, Daniel Galay. He was so outraged by her assertions aligning me and my work with apartheid philosophies, that he contacted me shortly afterwards to discuss it, commiserate and express his support for me and my work. We struck up a wonderful friendship.

Daniel and with his cellist daughter Racheli, known together as the Duo Galay, have lectured and concertised around the world and produced many CDs of performances of Daniel's original compositions, standard repertoire works and Yiddish presentations. When he approached me to assist in organising a South African tour of his duo, I went into action and secured concert bookings for them at Wits University (where Daniel would also give a workshop on improvisation), Pretoria University (for a performance of works from the standard classical repertoire) and presentation dates at both the Theatre on the Square and the Great Park Theatre.

Their theatrical presentation for Narrator, Cello, and Piano was called *An Open Door – Stories and Sounds* (based on Yiddish texts with English translation). After I sent a letter of invitation to Daniel, he was fully supported by cultural organisations in Israel. The duo was very warmly received at their various local performance venues from 22 to 29 April 2012.

When I subsequently told Daniel that I would love to visit Israel in 2012 to present my work at various universities, as well as in concert, he enthusiastically set in motion the mechanisms for this to take place. Daniel and I share a love of intercultural music and I wanted to introduce Israeli audiences to my own music, which is infused with both African and Jewish Cabbalistic influences. Daniel and Racheli approached Adv Marcelle Judith Saul-Sheiman, Chairperson of the Israel-SA Chamber of Commerce, and together they set up an exciting and busy schedule for me to lecture at various university music departments. They also organised a concert of my original compositions at the Ra'anana Music Centre.

Michael and I arrived in Israel on 2 December 2012 and were met at the airport by my beloved sister-in-law Pam Zaidel-Shalev, who took us to her home in *Beit Gamliel*, a beautiful village near Rehovot (of Weizmann Institute fame). Pam took us for lunch to a typical scenic farm frequented by the locals, where they served a delicious goat's-milk cheese meal. Our next stop was at a village called *Mevo Choron* to visit my late brother's daughter Dalya Sack and her family. Michael left for Jerusalem to register for a conference on 'food security' that he would be attending and I went through to Ra'anana to spend the night with another ex-pat family, Terri and Nathan Mowskowski, who were exceptionally hospitable. Terri took me the next morning to the grave of my beloved brother Malcolm at the Ra'anana cemetery, an intensely emotional visit.

Magnanimous mentor

A veritable angel appeared on the scene to assist in taking this proposed visit forward, musically speaking – with remarkable results. I received an email from a Mr Barry Swersky towards the end of October 2012. As background to Barry's brilliant business acumen and career, he had been hired in 1974 by Jeanette Ordman, right hand to the Baroness Batsheva de Rothschild, patron and financier of two Israeli modern dance companies. He was approached to be General Manager of the new Bat-Dor Dance Company, sister to the Batsheva Dance Company – their aesthetic approach very much based on the Martha Graham School of Dance. Barry was described in an article in the *New York Times* (15 September 1974, Clive Barnes) as 'a man of incisive ability' and part of 'a powerful triumvirate' (together with the baroness and Ordman). His ability to strategise and network quickly became patently clear. He informed me that he had met and chatted with Daniel and Racheli Galay, the introduction having been made through Marcelle Saul-Sheiman of the Israel-South Africa Chamber of Commerce (ISACC) - a small arts world.

Barry was keen for me to meet my anthem 'counterpart', Astrith Baltsan, while in Israel; two women musicians who have had a powerful influence in the history, promotion and analysis of our respective national anthems, in my case the creation of the

new South African anthem. Astrith, a pianist and musicologist of note, was invited to attend my seminar at Tel Aviv University so that we could meet afterwards. We had a delightful and interesting exchange, sharing anecdotes and ideas. I had previously viewed her very interesting performance-analysis at the piano of the origins of *Hatikvah*, the Israeli national anthem and her other superb piano performances online.

I also had the privilege of attending a performance at the Jerusalem Conservatoire of Music of their youth orchestra, trained and conducted by Prof Michael Klinghoffer. This was absolutely charming and of a very high standard. I discovered in conversation with him that virtually every *kibbutz* in Israel possesses an orchestra, which was quite startling, given that we in South Africa battle to maintain a couple of orchestras nationwide. In addition, the *kibbutzim* maintain several hundred voluntary orchestral ensembles, with the emphasis on keeping culture alive.

Barry launched me into a series of communications with and introductions to key people in the music world on a scale and with a level of energy I had rarely seen before. I have yet to meet a person as well-connected musically and politically as he was. He emailed me a seven-page list of important people to liaise with, ranging from artistic consultants to music agencies and managers, through a range of academic university music departments and conservatoires, to orchestras and prominent Israeli composers, conductors and performers. He made particular mention of the General Manager of the Israel Contemporary Players, Dan Yuhas, who was also Chairperson of the Israel Composers' League. He had also contacted Brian Bortz of the ISACC and had (within days!) exchanged ideas and strategies for my concert-lecture tour with Daniel and Racheli Galay.

In addition to the primary organisational and supportive role played by the ISACC, the South African Zionist Federation (Telfed) and the Ra'anana Music Centre were both actively part of this phenomenal concert-lecture tour set up for December 2012. Barry introduced me to Guy Porat, faculty member of the *Konservatorium Wien Privatuniversität* as well as a senior teacher at the Ra'anana Music Centre. Although he claimed not to want

to be operationally involved, these were famous last words, as Barry was the fulcrum around which my entire tour revolved. He organised for me to meet Yair Stern, Chairperson of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra – a most gregarious and delightful man, who gave generously of his valuable time in showing me around the magnificent Jerusalem Theatre and Concert Hall. Stern also introduced me to the renowned resident conductor Maestro Frederic Chaslin to whom I gave selected scores and recordings of my orchestral works. I particularly wanted him to hear my piano concerto, *Pendulum*, a recording made in the Linder Auditorium in Johannesburg at the première of the work in 2010.

Yair gave us complimentary tickets for the symphony concert taking place that evening in the Jerusalem Theatre. I was deeply moved and inspired when, prior to the Jerusalem Orchestra striking up the first notes of the overture, being cognisant of the Festival of Chanukah, they celebrated by first lighting the candles onstage; the blessings were sung by one of the cellists and the conductor then flamboyantly directed the traditional Chanukah song, *Maoz Tsur*, with the entire audience singing along loudly.

Impressive emphasis on arts education for youth

The Israeli preoccupation with instilling a love of the performing arts for youth was repeatedly illustrated to me, most notably at a concert at the Jerusalem Music Centre soon after I arrived at the *Mishkenot Sha-ananim*; located near the historic Montefiore windmill in a magnificently beautiful lush area. It was an eye-opener for me and an example of the kind of standards expected *and reached* by young instrumental performers. I was treated to performances of several young string quartet ensembles, featuring performers who were barely into their teens.

What was particularly heart-warming was hearing a string quartet comprising young Ethiopian immigrants, children of Ethiopian Jews who had been air-lifted from Ethiopia in a daring rescue operation called Operation Solomon in 1991. Fourteen thousand souls were rescued from persecution, civil war and starvation in 36 hours by the Israeli special units. It had been difficult for many Ethiopian families to adjust to a new life and

Israeli culture, yet here was an example of refugee children achieving acceptance, recognition and opportunity in an effort to create smooth social and artistic integration.

I had the honour of being invited by Dan Yuhas, multi-award-winning composer and teacher *extraordinaire*, to deliver a two-hour seminar (lecture-presentation) for students and faculty at the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music at Tel Aviv University, named for Jewish philanthropist Josef Buchmann and Indian-born maestro/conductor Zubin Mehta (lifelong Director of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, pre-1948 known as the Palestine Symphony Orchestra). Mehta is just one in a long list of stellar alumni of the calibre of world-renowned musical artists, such as violinists Itzhak Perlman and Pinchas Zukerman, pianist Menachem Pressler and Lahav Shani, superb pianist and current conductor of the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra (IPO).

The composers Ödön Pártos, Ami Maayani and Noam Sheriff were already well-known to me. One cannot get more esteemed honorary presidents than Arnold Schoenberg and Leonard Bernstein. Closer to home, one of the current faculty members at the school is Sharon Rostorf-Zamir, famous singer and a former (theory and composition) student of mine at Wits University. My hosts had also organised an interview for me with Barry Davies from the *Jerusalem Post*, whose insightful article duly appeared in the newspaper with beautiful photos from home of my receiving The Order of Ikhamanga from President Mbeki.

Introducing African Music in the Middle East

My lectures on African and cross-cultural music with audio examples, played either by me on the piano, or off CDs, were always followed by eager discussions – particularly at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance (JAMD), located on the Givat Ram campus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. This high-profile part of my music lecture-tour was hosted by Prof Michael Wolpe, composer and multi-disciplinary teacher, who assembled a lively and talented group of music students for my presentation. This lasted well over the allotted time, due to the enthusiasm and deeply probing questions from students and staff

about both my original intercultural music and indigenous African music. Professor Avner Biron, Artistic Director of the Jerusalem Camerata, expressed enthusiasm about performing some of my works. I felt like a celebrity.

One of the highlights of our visit was a trip to the Israel Museum, where, amongst many other fascinating displays, we viewed an exhibition of reconstructed synagogues (to an exact scale) from early Italy, India, Germany, and Morocco. Artefacts in silver of the Judaica, which were on show, took our collective breath away.

Highlight and delight in sound

Musically and professionally, the central focus of my visit was the concert of my original compositions held at the Ra'anana Music Centre renowned as a hub of the most inspiring teachers for music students aged between 3 and 19. At the time of my visit, over 1000 students were studying, listening, playing and developing creativity and performance capabilities in a most stimulating artistic environment. Under the leadership of Guy Porat, renowned conductor and oboist, master classes and competitions are routinely held there. How enlightened to be promoting music and the arts to young developing minds and talents! Porat, as Artistic Director, organised an exciting evening concert at the Centre, showcasing my music. What a huge highlight this turned out to be!

On that special evening prior to the concert, I finally met all the people who were instrumental in bringing me to Israel for this magnificent tour. These included Marcelle Judith Saul-Sheiman and Brian Bortz. I was also honoured to have top-quality performers play my music. My *Suite Afrique* was performed by Rachel Galay (cello) and Ofra Yitzhaki (piano), followed by a video presentation in which I detailed my field research in the Eastern Cape into the overtone singing of the Ngqoko Women's Cultural Group. Yuval Chen played my *Virtuoso 1* for Piano and Maria Yoffe and Tomer Amrani performed my *Vocalise* for Soprano and Flute. I was asked (as I often am) to talk about my role in arranging the South African national anthem and I shared the history of my

contribution to the current composite version in detail. I believe that this presentation appealed largely to the many South African ex-pats in the audience, who expressed a level of nostalgia after the concert. The concert ended with a performance by the Raanan Youth Ensemble, exquisitely led by Porat.

During the interval, I was very pleasantly surprised to be assailed by family and friends who had left South Africa many years previously to make Israel their home – and whom I had not seen for a long time. Some had travelled a considerable distance across the country to attend my concert. I was on a personal and professional high that entire night. Considering that there were some tricky video, audio and multi-media presentations of my music, the evening went without a hitch, both technologically and musically.

While in Israel, I had the privilege of meeting people of the calibre of Professor Michael Klinghoffer (double bass player and President of the Music Academy) and Prof Taiseer Elias, a renowned Christian Arab-Israeli musician at the Jerusalem Conservatoire who is an expert in the performance and teaching of the *oud* instrument and Arabic music. I spent a wonderfully instructive session with him. The oud (literally 'from wood') is similar to a lute in appearance, but is an 11- or 13-stringed, pear-shaped wooden instrument. However, unlike a guitar, it is fretless (namely, without demarcated divisions on the neck), which makes it extremely difficult to play. It was enlightening to hear from him in addition to the Jewish students, how many Arab students were attending the Jerusalem Academy and studying the instrument with him, among other subjects.

Prof Elias gave me an inordinate amount of his time and we discussed our various approaches to inter-cultural music. He gave me an excellent private demonstration lesson on how the instrument is played with its micro-tonal non-Western tuning, using a system of melodic patterns or intervals called *maqams* (literally 'places' or 'positions' on the instrument – creating different scales or modes, not unlike Indian *ragas*). This system is primarily used in Arabic and Middle Eastern music and can express different emotions and moods. Each *maqam* is made up

of two four-note tetrachords (*Maqams* in Oud, internet access on 14 January 2024). It again brought home to me what a culturally active and diverse group of academics and musicians there are in Israel to inspire and educate emerging talents.

My music residency in Israel in December 2012 was a most enriching experience, both in receiving and in giving, musically and personally. I like to think that I brought something special to audiences and students there with my unique intercultural brand of original music – Western merged with African. The response of people I met and lectured to was overwhelming and my passion for the kind of music I engage with generated an intensely energised two-way flow and symbiosis.

Indie[5]-Israel 2016

My trip to Israel was intended to be a personal and professional highlight and it did not disappoint. In order to justify using my research money from Wits University for the trip, it was important for me to have access to some of the top libraries in Jerusalem. My area of research has always been in 'intercultural music'. For this particular field trip, I was investigating the influences of Arabic, Turkish, Ethiopian, and Andalusian music on Israeli music. Having written to various universities explaining the field of my research, I was gratified to receive official invitations from several libraries in and around Jerusalem with personal offers of assistance.

Michael and I arrived in Israel on the eve of the Sabbath, 24 June 2016, in time to attend my great-nephew, Adin Zaidel's *bar mitzvah*[6] the following day. We were guests for that whole weekend with my beloved sister-in-law Pamela and her husband Tsaki Shalev, in Beit Gamliel (not far from Rehovot, renowned for scientific research at the Weizmann of Science). Before the Sabbath began, we walked to the nearby synagogue hall and were treated to an unexpected and spectacular presentation of Israeli music by the siblings of my nephew Adam Zaidel's wife, Yael. The Dickman family is also intensely musical and the joy that exuded from their music-making was palpable. After the Sabbath

5 Largely regarded as 'independent' music.
6 A ritual coming of age in Judaism at 13 for boys.

was brought in by a candle-lighting ceremony, we prayed in the synagogue and thereafter enjoyed a wonderful celebration of the *bar mitzvah* boy with all the customary speeches, dancing, and festivities. It was especially meaningful for me to have been able to represent my brother, Malcolm, the grandfather, who had tragically passed away in 2006.

Hippie harmonies

My music presentations in Israel in 2016 took on a completely different tone from my 2012 visit. This time I did not engage with academia, but rather with young alternative artists in unconventional environments that had come from different parts of the world to join a nascent music community. I had contacted various people I knew to help me organise dates for giving talks, lectures or concerts. Particularly helpful in this was my long-time friend Marlene Samuels (née Rosen), living in Jerusalem. I needed the dates to coincide with my late brother's grandson's *bar mitzvah* in June.

Part of a letter I received from Marlene regarding my visit read as follows:

> I saw an article in this Friday's *Jerusalem Post* that there's a new home for Jerusalem's creative community in The Alliance House … (a community) which aims to boost the arts and innovation scene in Jerusalem. I've just spoken to the musical director at Alliance House and he seems very interested in having you give master classes, etc. I've sent him your CV and he's going to discuss all the details and how to proceed with his team and hopefully move forward from there. His name is Aviv Gilboa. He would like to hear some of your music.

The description of this young, progressive, trendy music community appealed to me enormously and I went into action by sending representative music material to the Music Director, including recordings, scores and reviews. I loved the idea of working with an alternative-minded group. Marlene's letter continued as follows:

> I understand that Alliance House is more like a college where students attend (practical) formal classes with teachers. They're a group of young creatives who give music lessons, operate a recording studio and also do other things, like play in bands. [Some of them are] graduates who want to stay in Jerusalem and boost the arts and innovation scene. The classes are held in the afternoons. It's not a degree course. Rather, the aim is to give the students a transitional space between their studies and professional careers. A non-profit organisation called *Ruach Chadasha* (New Spirit) offered the loan of the building and is part of the Jerusalem Foundation, which creates opportunities for the arts.

I learnt that the mission of the New Spirit organisation is to transform Jerusalem into a leading social and cultural metropolis. The 'centre' was to open on 18 April, just two months before my visit, with the aim of empowering the city's creative community. I was given a list of the 10 post-graduate students and their personal instruments: Aviv, Ido, Shira, Aviram and Mark (all bass guitars); Malka (flute); Guy (saxophone); Amitai (oud); Nevo (guitar), and Edva (piano).

On 27 June I left early for the Alliance House College to present my full-day seminar. It was located in Agrippas Street near the *Machane Yehuda*, an old Jerusalem neighbourhood, established in 1887 – well known for its food market (the '*shuk*'). I had worked out a programme to run the entire day, with a break for lunch.

Alternative Alliances

I introduced myself and began by playing examples of my own music on the piano, as well as on CD and video, using works representing my African and Jewish background and techniques I employ in my cross-cultural composing. I followed this with an extensive workshop on unusual music techniques. I was armed with an array of hand percussion instruments, but mostly encouraged the students to play their own instruments in a total

immersion of new rhythms, harmonies and unfamiliar melodic sound-worlds.

As part of the exercise, we clapped to new beats and danced in circles to fresh and irregular African rhythms. I saw on their faces how much the young musicians enjoyed the different approaches and holistic, multi-disciplinary modes. It was a wonderful, fun-filled and informative experience for all of us. My friends Marlene and pianist-conductor Anita Kamien, who both live in Jerusalem, attended throughout the day, enjoying and observing my work with these highly talented and unconventional young musicians.

Meeting of minds

The academic *raison d'être* for my being in Israel was to learn as much as possible about the myriad of music influences in the Middle East on Israeli art music. This aligned itself with my interest in intercultural music. It was an immense privilege to meet the world authority on this extensively rich subject, Israeli-American musicologist and pianist Dr Asaf Shelleg, senior lecturer at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Shelleg is the author of the award-winning book *Jewish Contiguities and the Soundtrack of Israeli History* (OUP 2014), a post-colonial reading of Israeli art music, as well as the controversial work *Theological Stains: Art Music and the Zionist Project*, which offers the study of art musics in Israel during the second half of the 20th century and how it was shaped by political theology. It is quite a controversial text, but hugely valuable.

In our memorable meeting, Shelleg's information poured from him in a torrent of knowledgeable historical and current facts and philosophies, both musicological and those imbedded in Jewish studies. I scribbled notes as fast as I could, sitting with him at a table in a charming Jerusalem restaurant. Unlike many musicologists I know who can write, but not orate, he was one of the most articulate and most well informed musician-researchers I had ever come across and I valued every moment of his enlightening presence. There were many parallels with our inter-

cultural scene in South Africa and I learnt a lot that I could apply to my own research.

Another unforgettable highlight of our visit was a tour of the Jerusalem Hebrew Music Museum, which houses an exhibition and collections of rare and original ancient musical instruments from previous historical periods up to the present. This interactive tour was exceptional in that one could 'see' the particular instrument up close, but at the same time – wearing high-tech headphones – actually 'hear' a simulation of how it sounded in ancient Israel and today, in the diaspora. In an impressive architectural structure, comprising seven large rooms reflecting different diasporic cultures, regions and historical periods, we learnt and heard sounds which made us feel as if we were veritably walking through the Bible. This is a 'must-see' museum for any visitor to Jerusalem!

Jerusalem joy

And, indeed, immersion in antiquity is inescapable in Jerusalem, where every pebble, alley and wall draws one back into its ancient past. The city is drenched in the blood, tears, and libations of eons. Every centimetre of ground has borne a battle; every doorway conceals another thread comprising the fabric of history. The air itself, redolent with the fragrance of pines, incense and limestone, is unlike any other city on earth. It is also a city of unique, relentless sounds: young men's voices emanating from yeshivas grasping new knowledge, bells from convent courtyards and churches, muezzins from mosques, hawkers peddling wares, processions of priests reciting liturgies in Greek, Latin, and Turkish, children calling to each other as they play, cars hooting, the whispers of the ancient dead calling, to the strident voices of the living. For a composer, Jerusalem is almost frightening in its aural assault. Yet it is not cacophonous. Instead, it is an endless fugue through figures and footsteps of past centuries of both the celestial and the worldly.

While still in Jerusalem, Michael and I were invited to dinner at the home of our dear friends, the renowned husband-wife pianists Anita and Roger Kamien (whose encyclopaedia on music

is used in music schools all over the world). Anita specifically wanted to introduce me to the elderly Israeli composer Menachem Zur, who is celebrated in his country as a renowned contemporary composer. Zur was accompanied by his wife, Lily. Anita also invited Dr Moshe Dickman (my nephew Adam Zaidel's in-law and a renowned neurologist), and his wife, Mimi (a well-known clinical psychologist) who is related to us through marriage. I was struck by the fact that the Kamien home was at 12 *Smuts* Street (nostalgia?) in the *Moshava Germanit* (the German Colony).

During this visit, I experienced amazing kindness from people I had never met before. Ala Kulik, Head of the Media, Music and Map Department at the Bloomfield Library of Humanities and Social Sciences of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, went out of her way to help me access all sorts of texts and scores, even suggesting materials to help in my research – a kindness sometimes hard to come by in South Africa, though nevertheless possible. In addition to the books, serials about music and musicology, I encountered a vast array of scores, journals and sound recording collections with 25 listening stations which are constantly used by students and researchers like me.

Thanks to the Kamiens, Menachem Zur organised an invitation for me to visit the prestigious Mount Scopus University Library. This turned out to be one of the most informative, enlightening and exciting visits imaginable. The music library itself astounded me as it extends over several floors. One would need at least a week to even identify what can be accessed in the way of scores, books, journals, recordings and much more – wow! I was like a child in a candy store and spent hours enjoying the vast array of music materials.

We spent the last precious days of our time in Israel with my sister-in-law Pamela Zaidel in Beit Gamliel. After a scenic train ride into Tel Aviv, referred to as the 'White City' (due to its modernist Bauhaus architecture and buildings of white stone), I visited the Israel Music Institute to peruse its sheet music scores. I brought back several copies of music by Israeli composers, including Betty Olivero, Oedoen (Ödön) Partos, Andre Hajdu, Leon Schidlowsky, and others. I was also delighted to find scores by Zur.

The cultural life in Israel is vibrant and pulsates in spite of the constant threat of war and terrorism; people seem to prioritise what is important: humanity and the arts. The full houses at symphony concerts bear testimony to people's need to aspire to higher levels of living, despite the external and internal pressures.

My 2016 visit to the country left me intoxicated by the confluence of creative forces I encountered – and replete with a new internal repository of musical ideas to develop.

Conferences

Leeds in liturgy

2015 – "Magnified and Sanctified: *The Music of Jewish Prayer"*

I backtrack to 2011 to give a big 'shout out' (that rather annoying current buzzword!) to a person whom I met telephonically in early 2011 and whom I grew to greatly admire. She has played an important role in my Jewish and academic music life since 2011. Geraldine Auerbach, MBE, has made a huge impact on Jewish cultural and music life internationally.

She was born in Kimberley, South Africa, but emigrated to the UK after her marriage. She became Founder-Director of the Jewish Music Institute in London in around 1984, which found its home in 2000 at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. Geraldine was awarded an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) by the Queen in 2000 for her services to Jewish Music in the UK and beyond. Upon becoming an Honorary Fellow of London University in 2008, Prof Keith Howard, Head of Music, described Geraldine as "a force of nature and a tremendous visionary, darting one minute from a new performance of a Holocaust opera at the Wigmore Hall to a Yiddish cabaret at the Yiddish Hoyz".

The words that primarily come to mind when trying to encapsulate Geraldine's achievements are 'facilitator' and organiser *supreme*. She is an avid researcher with a level of passion for Jewish music that has seen the launch of major new organisations (co-founding the European Cantors Association)

and global initiatives like Klezmer and Yiddish Music Festivals. She was instrumental in running the Conversations on Zoom series with very high-level presentations online on a variety of topics (academic as well as non-scholarly) regarding Jewish music, linked to the International Forum for Jewish Music Studies (IFJMS) which can be found on the Humanities Commons website. In this way, she created a serious revival and interest in Jewish music internationally.

One of the most advantageous spin-offs of the awful Covid-19 epidemic was that people were forced to communicate via programmes like Zoom and being educated online, and Geraldine demonstrated how very effective a medium it could be. She has run two live international conferences titled, "Magnified and Sanctified" in partnership with Leeds University in 2015 and one at Hannover University (West Germany) in 2019 – both of which I attended and at which I presented papers.

Geraldine has maintained her interest in her South African roots, researching and writing prolifically on her early experiences in this country and inviting material from expatriates and locals, especially regarding the history of the South African country communities. She has created a burgeoning website called "Community Histories Online" (CHOL) which features a multitude of articles and digital publications, preserving the footprint of Southern African communal life. Live presentations on her Zoom chat room have been given by people inside and outside South Africa, starting in early December 2023 and have been remarkably informative and interesting. The topics have ranged from her own presentation, *How Does a Girl from Kimberley Get to Meet the Queen? A Journey in Jewish Music* to the story of the 1950s jazz opera *King Kong*; biographies of Herbert Kretzmer (of *Les Mis*érables fame presented by Danielle Lockwood), Jascha Heifetz (his tour of SA presented by Dr Michael Brittan) and my own life story, which was billed as *At my Wits End and Other Beginnings: Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph, a Woman Composer of International Acclaim* presented on 21 November 2023.

In May 2011, I received an email from Stephen Muir, senior lecturer in music at Leeds University, informing me that he would

be doing research into the role synagogue choirs play in the expression of identity and promotion of well-being in Orthodox Jewish communities. With funding from the World Universities Network (WUN), he had the opportunity to expand this investigation into one within a South African context. He made plans to spend time in South Africa in February 2012. I offered to host him at Wits University to present a seminar on his research and also suggested that he come for a Shabbat to Sydenham Shul to listen to the choir (which I regarded as 'my' choir), followed by dinner at our home. He was delighted at the prospect, but unfortunately, his visit to Cape Town took more time than he had planned and he had to cancel his trip to Johannesburg.

Given that Stephen was devoting so much of his time to researching Jewish music, I had assumed that he was Jewish. However, he is not, yet he devotes a very large chunk of his life to researching it, often unearthing old manuscripts by Jewish composers that had either been lost in the Holocaust or discovered from elsewhere, and performing these rare, previously unheard scores. Equally fascinating is that a member of his research team at the time, Simo Muir (not related to him), a post-doctoral research fellow from Helsinki, was also extremely involved in Jewish music research and is not Jewish either, nor were most of Stephen's research team.

In November 2014 I received an email from Stephen under the auspices of "Performing the Jewish Archive" (PtJA), with an announcement of a conference on Jewish liturgical music to be held at the University of Leeds from 16 to19 June 2015 called *Magnified and Sanctified: The Music of Jewish Prayer*. This was the first time in the UK that an international academic conference on Jewish music was to be held. The music department had received substantial UK funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council under "Care for the Future" to the tune of £1.8 million, much of which would go towards the conference and further research in this area. This was an astounding amount of money for the arts – especially when calculated in South African Rands.

I immediately wrote to Stephen confirming my attendance at the conference and began thinking of topics for papers that I could submit for possible presentation. I submitted two proposals:

1) *Symbolism and Numerology (gematria) in the Biblically and Kabbalistically Inspired Themes Found in Two Art Music Compositions by the South African Jewish Composer, Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph*; and
2) *Transformed Liturgical Music in the Synagogues in Johannesburg South Africa: Looking forward Through the Rear-View Mirror.*

I was thrilled that the conference reading panel decided that I should present both papers.

What with conference fees and hotel payments in pounds sterling, the South African rand currency felt like toy money – which it has indeed since become. However, I did still have a little research money left in my Wits fund which I could utilise for academic travel. So, with more than 40 papers to be presented by scholars from all over the world covering a richly diverse range of topics, I felt a strong urge to attend, whatever the cost.

The keynote speakers read like a line-up of academic luminaries, including Eliyahu Schleifer from Jerusalem, as well as Mark Kligman and Jeffrey Summit from the USA. The prospect of a concert given by the 'Clothworkers Consort of Leeds' (a semi-professional chamber choir based at the University of Leeds), an optional walking tour of Leeds's Jewish and Victorian heritage sites, receptions, open mic entertainments etc, made the conference irresistible to me.

Today, reliving the intensity and enrichment of each moment there and revisiting my notes and the material presented by erudite and charming academics, I have become acutely aware of the extent I have allowed myself to stagnate academically recently, mainly due to ill-health and two surgeries which have eroded my strength and confidence. Sharing ideas about music with like-minded people (and many brilliant artists) is the life-blood of any musician-composer and I intend on making

every effort to actively re-join the international academic music community very soon.

Michael accompanied me to Leeds, where he was presenting his own full-day seminar for medical students at the university on food and nutrition security. We booked into the Radisson Blu Hotel in Leeds for the four nights of the conference. However, while this hotel chain in Johannesburg is decidedly upmarket, the one in Leeds was very disappointing. The room felt as if it was in the middle of a busy highway, while the lift was repeatedly stuck (something of a nightmare for a claustrophobe like me).

It was rather strange to experience winter temperatures in the supposedly 'midsummer' month of June. Nevertheless, none of these annoyances detracted from the brilliance and excitement of the conference. It therefore came as no surprise to learn that Geraldine Auerbach, music *entrepreneur*, was playing a significant role in organising the event, together with Stephen Muir and Malcolm Miller.

Early-morning registration for the conferences took place on day one - and to get the delegates into a receptive mood, appropriate live illustrations of diverse Jewish cantillations, cantorial music and songs were presented. I delivered my "Symbolism and Numerology" lecture on the same afternoon, focusing on how concepts and numerical relationships from the *Kabbala* influence my art music works; these in turn reflect mathematical ratios, proportions and numerical patterns in my music, particularly in my use of rhythmic devices – but always with symbolic meanings. That same evening, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leeds officially opened the conference with a tasteful private reception. A public lecture on the first evening titled *The Music of Jewish Prayer: Unearthing Layers of Liturgical Chant and Song* was given by the most senior and renowned keynote speaker at the conference, Eliyahu Schleifer, Emeritus Professor of Sacred Music at the Hebrew University College in Jerusalem.

I am not a fan of parallel sessions at conferences, as they oblige one to make difficult choices. One inevitably misses valuable presentations due to overlaps. There was a focus on

synagogue music in Israel, which constituted one of the most interesting sessions, with rigorous discussion and a volley of questions responded to after each speaker. The first keynote lecture titled *The Meaning and Experience of Biblical Chant in Contemporary Judaism* was presented by Jeffrey Summit.

A topic close to my heart was the presentation of Chassidic *nigunim* (mostly wordless sung melodies), which in fact inspired me to conceptualise my talk on that subject for the follow-up conference four years later. Topics in other sessions ranged from *Judeo-Christian-Islamic Music Encounters* to *Jewish Music and Its Influences* and *Current Crises in Synagogue Music today*.

Took pride of place in a conference of this nature was Sabbath and Holocaust music. Presentations highlighted sacred music in Israel and Europe and also underlined in-depth investigations and analyses into historical chants of both Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews. Various liturgical music traditions were introduced and music from regions like Iran, Poland, Spain and Portugal and the Anglo countries occupied many of the slots.

I learnt much from these fascinating talks so rich in sacred customs, which were accompanied by visual and aural examples. An interesting and relevant session covered *Transformation Through Migration* (of liturgical music), with a talk given by Stephen Muir titled *From Russia to the Cape* which focused on archival remnants of a choral cantorial tradition amazingly found in the music archives of Cape Town. It was during this particular session that I presented my multi-media talk on *Transformed Liturgical Music in the Synagogues in Johannesburg*. It felt good to share my knowledge of Jewish music from my own country, South Africa with an international audience.

The second keynote lecture delivered by Schleifer, titled *Kabbalat Shabbat: Kabbalah and Music for the Sabbath Eve*, was tastefully illuminated by music examples sung by female Cantor Mimi Sheffer. Another superb musical treat was a performance by the Ashatones, a barbershop quartet originally made up of Leeds students whose technical virtuosity was matched only by their superb voices and exceptional stage personalities. The third keynote lecture, titled *Sephardic Liturgical Music*, was delivered

by Mark Kligman (professor of musicology and ethnomusicology at the UCLA[7] Herb Alpert School of Music). This talk revealed the significant differences between the Ashkenazi liturgical music traditions and those of the Sephardim, which are aligned more closely with Arabic modes of singing.

I took part in a roundtable discussion titled *Is There a Crisis in Synagogue Music Today?* – chaired by Jeffrey Summit. Having worked for about 30 years with the Sydenham-Highlands North synagogue choir and other shul choirs in Johannesburg, I contributed by stating that I had witnessed over the years a decline in congregational interest in traditional cantorial music; with congregants expressing a distinct preference for modernised melodies and harmonies and more upbeat contemporary rhythmic arrangements.

Live (ly) listening

A conference about music could not in all sincerity be called a music conference without a substantial listening/performance component. What a treat it was to attend a glorious concert on the second evening by the 'Clothworkers Consort' of Leeds with the charming title *One Little Goat: New Discoveries in Jewish Choral Music*. These discoveries are largely due to the research led by Stephen Muir. The mixed choir of around 22 members with director Bryan White presented a varied programme including previously unknown and rarely performed works by Salamone Rossi (16th century), the *Kiddush* by Kurt Weill (1900-1950), and Aaron Copland's *In the Beginning*. The Passover cantata *Chad Gadya (One Little Goat)* by Dovid Ajzensztadt (1890-1942) is a satirical representation laced with much pathos; this manuscript was discovered by Stephen among the papers of Cantor Froim Spektor's private collection in Cape Town.

The tour of the Jewish heritage sights and Victorian Leeds certainly did not disappoint. A Leeds resident and Blue Badge guide for Yorkshire walked us around the ancient sections of the city, revealing some very quaint and historical places, demonstrating

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fascinating Victorian and Edwardian architecture. Leeds is an interesting city on the River Aire, not far from Manchester. Old buildings are juxtaposed with more modern ones, like The Light, a shopping complex with cinemas and upmarket eateries. One evening Michael and I found ourselves in a narrow walkway which opened up into a large and most charming pub, pulsating with jovial (euphemism for 'plastered') patrons and the tallest beer tankards I have ever seen! We both downed a voluminous glass of British beer and happily, though unsteadily, returned to the hotel.

We left Leeds in good time to reach London for the Sabbath, following the conference. Our "home from home" in London over the years has been with our long-time friends, Arlene and Harris Sidelsky, Arlene being American and Harris an ex-pat South African. They have a beautiful home in Hampstead Garden Suburb and very graciously hosted us over the Sabbath with delectable meals and inspiring spiritual discussions around the table.

My 2015 visit to the UK could not have ended on a higher note (pun intended). This was my privileged visit to the Yehudi Menuhin Music School in Cobham, Surrey (founded in 1963 by Menuhin himself, a renowned violinist and conductor) at the invitation of my colleague Dr Malcolm Singer, Director of Music at the Menuhin School from 1998 to 2017.

The day before we left the UK, I travelled to Stoke D'Abernon from Kings Cross Station and was picked up from the station by my former much-loved student Colleen Price (sadly now deceased). My visit to this famous school of music included a private concert in the state-of-the-art new concert hall, a viewing of the historical student buildings and a chance to pay my respects at the graves of Lord Yehudi (1916–1999) and his wife Diana Gould.

Back in South Africa

An exciting offshoot of my attendance and presentations at the Leeds conference was a follow-up invitation from Stephen Muir, again under the auspices of the PtJA, to participate in a wonderful festival, this time on home soil in South Africa at both Stellenbosch University and Cape Town University (UCT) called

Out of the Shadows: Rediscovering Jewish Music and Theatre, from 10-17 September 2017. The event included a travelling exhibition, a mini version of the magnificent Leeds conference exhibition. Stephen asked me to participate as a "respondent" for the two symposia, titled *Looking Forward through the Past.* These symposia would be placed between two concerts of new vocal compositions to be written by students from both universities.

Two close friends of mine, Professors Hendrik Hofmeyr and Hans Roosenschoon from the Cape, had been supporting the project by supervising the students in new works, specially written for the festival. Interestingly enough, I had conducted intensive master classes and given a lunch-time lecture at UCT earlier in June to several of these very same students, who were then requested to compose new pieces for this event of Jewish music. They included Conrad Asman (extremely gifted and successful young composer), Kelsey Müller, Jesse Dreyer, Carlie Schoonees, Natali Ferenz, Leonore Bredekamp, Michael James, and Graham Matthew Pratt, all emerging young talents. I had the joy of previously conducting composition workshops with them, during which we shared productive interactions. In fact, when applying to be participants, they had cited my guidance as being inspirational in their development. Both Hans and Hendrik had told Stephen that they would welcome my input into the new compositions planned for this event.

Since I would be the only Jewish composer, Stephen became enamoured with the idea of my attendance and, in spite of my being in Gauteng, arranged and organised for me to travel to the Cape to take part in this event.

The concerts were of a very high standard, as were the student compositions. Each one of them had successfully reflected the depth of feeling and moods embedded in the poetry introduced to them, on which they based their original music – some actually using the poetry as songs and others using it purely as inspiration for instrumental works.

The programme of the two concerts and two symposia were as follows:

Concert 1: *New Songs from the Jewish Archive.*

Symposia 1 and 2: "Looking Forward Through the Past.

Concert 2: Repeat concert: *New Songs from the Jewish Archive.*

The focus of this week-long celebration of music and theatre was on music by Jewish artists of the 20th century, many of whom were murdered in the Holocaust; pieces that had been neglected, forgotten and even thought lost forever, but later rediscovered via the amazing work of the PtJA project team.

There were performances by the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as at the Cape Town Holocaust Centre with renowned artists like Aviva Pelham and Matthew Reid, students and staff at Stellenbosch and Cape Town Universities, Ivor Joffe, Choni Goldman and the choirs of the Gardens and Green and Sea Point Synagogues. Some of these performances formed part of the Cape Town and Endler (Stellenbosch) Concert Series.

Concert presentations included *Journeys in Jewish Choral Music* (at the Erin Hall in Rondebosch), *Red Riding Hood* (at the Hugo Lambrechts Auditorium in Cape Town and *Fractured Lives: Music of the Holocaust* (at the Endler Hall, Stellenbosch *Konservatorium*).

During this festival week, the travelling exhibition was on display at the Cape Town Holocaust Centre and also at several of the performance venues. It complemented the performances, giving an insight into the work of the PtJA research team. It told the stories of Jewish artists and their works of art brought 'out of the shadows' of the archive.

The purpose of the exhibition was to challenge the audiences to become part of the stories. A probing questionnaire was structured to elicit valuable audience response:

- How does reading stories and seeing performances help us understand the musicians and writers who created them?
    - What about stories never completed and artworks lost forever? Can we understand them more through performance?

- How does knowing these stories affect our experiences?
  - How can we honour fragmented stories and mourn such human and artistic losses?
  - Can empathy help us understand these artists' experiences?

Essentially, we were attempting to hear voices that had long been silenced, feel passions that had been consigned to mass graves all over Europe, and reconstruct visions which had informed both hands and ears long turned to dust. Doing this also brought our own impetus as artists, composers and researchers, still with the gift of breath, agency and opportunity into sharp relief. It was an extraordinarily powerful collision with the urgency of *carpe diem*, as well as with the connective and transcendent power of art.

After the event, PtJA's Principal Investigator, Stephen Muir, headed his report on the festival in the Cape, *Stellenbosch: A Truly* Lekker *Experience:*

> The last of the five 'Out of the Shadows' festivals of rediscovered Jewish music and theatre took place in the Western Cape Province of South Africa from 10 to 17 September 2017. Thirteen performances, two academic symposia, 12 venues, 11 world premières, and total audience numbers approaching 2200 made this one of the best-attended and most diverse of the five festivals organised by *Performing the Jewish Archive*.

The festival also delivered a crucial message for humanity and I was deeply thankful to have participated. Apart from the intellectual and artistic stimulation which the Leeds conference afforded me, there was the tremendously moving realisation that Jewish music – which is often associated with tragedy, persecution and the extinction of entire communities, is in fact alive and well and living among us. The conference affirmed its vitality and power not just as a conduit to the shadows of Jewish history, but as an artery to a vibrant and assertive future.

Seeking the source

Hannover 2019 – *Magnified and Sanctified* II

In November 2018, I received an email from Miranda Crowdus and Martha Stellmacher on behalf of the conference committee of the *Europäisches Zentrum für Jüdische Musik* (*ezjm*) (the European Centre for Jewish Music). It informed me of the second instalment of the Leeds conference, titled *Magnified and Sanctified: The Music of Jewish Prayer* II, taking place at the Hannover University of Music, Drama and Media in Germany from 9 to 12 September. The conference would be presented jointly by the European Centre for Jewish Music, the Hannover University of Music, Drama and Media[8] and the Academic Wing of the European Cantors Association. It was very tempting!

An impressive line-up of keynote speakers was advertised, which whet my intellectual appetite due to their standing in the research community, especially in Jewish music research: Prof Judit Frigyesi from Bar Ilan University in Tel-Aviv, Israel, was one. Returning for this second instalment of the conference would be Mark Kligman, Stephen Muir, and Eliyahu Schleifer.

If I attended the conference, I would be returning to Germany after 44 years away, having been a student in Hamburg in 1974; the irony of presenting a paper at a prominent festival of Jewish music in a country which, a short 75 years before, had all but destroyed its large and active Jewish population was not lost on me. Germany had labelled its Jewish musicians in the 1930s as degenerate and *personae non gratae* leading up to World War II and the Holocaust. My visit, together with my husband, Michael, turned out to be a remarkable experience of learning what

8 The Hannover University of Music, Drama and Media is Germany's third-largest arts university and one of its most renowned institutions for professional training and academic study in the cultural and artistic field. Its 360 teachers, including numerous internationally celebrated artists, educationalists and academics, teach nearly 1 500 students from all over the world in 33 study programmes and world-class master classes. It also arranges up to 500 cultural events open to the public every year.

Germany had been like before the war and what it had developed into economically, socially, artistically, and politically thereafter.

The call for papers which was announced in February 2019 was accompanied by a quote from Frigyesi, who aptly summarised the complexity of music's role in Jewish religious worship as follows: "*The Jewish service could be described as a large-scale musical piece, which is structured through the alternation of musical/performing styles… In the course of the service, transition from one musical style to another often has an almost dramatic effect as, for instance, when speech-like recitation is followed by highly ornamental and elaborate melodic improvisation.* ('Orality as Religious Ideal', *Yuval* Vol 7: Studies in honour of Israel Adler, 2002.)

Songs of the *Shechinah*[9]

I immediately began thinking about a suitable title for a presentation that I could deliver at the conference, as the idea of attending it was extremely enticing. An intrinsic part of my religious observance had been my attachment to the glorious body of music within the Jewish spiritual realm. After returning to South Africa from Boston in 1977, I had developed a deep love for the *nigunim*[10] (songs found in the Chassidic branches of Orthodoxy) – melodies of cleaving to G-d had appeared in around the 18th century together with the religious revival in Judaism, especially Chassidism. The Ba'al Shem-Tov ('Master of the Good Name') was the name by which Yisroel ben Eliezer (1698–1760) – a great Ukrainian Jewish mystic and healer – was known. He is regarded as the founder of Chassidic Judaism.

The Chassidic movement developed many branches and the *Chabad* Chassidic offshoot was our family's particular choice

9 The presence of G-d in a physical dwelling place.

10 Plural of *nigun* – a song of the Kabbalistic Chassidic tradition, generally without words – considered a path to higher consciousness and transformation of being. They are tunes or melodies – a form of Jewish religious songs – which are largely vocal, most often without set lyrics, but sung with vocalisations such as "nai nai nai" or "bim bim bim". They were sung extensively by the Rebbes (great Chassidic masters and leaders), most notably by the Chassidim, who routinely used song as a medium of spiritual elation.

of religious direction. Many of these yearning melodies were composed by their great spiritual leaders, referred to as *Rebbeim*[11] The Chassidic songs, or *nigunum*, have played a powerful role in my life as I have often written vocal and instrumental arrangements of them for concerts and lectures, locally and abroad – for singers, for piano and for orchestras. Because they generally do not have words, the melodies and those Chassidim giving voice to them are not limited – and therefore go straight from the heart to the heart.

I immediately turned to my American 'counterpart', or my Jewish musical 'guru', Avremi Gourarie (South African expat) for his valuable music input into my chosen topic, *The Power of the Nigun*. His depth of knowledge, both theoretical and practical, assisted me enormously. I also unashamedly picked the brains of others steeped in the history, symbolism, and knowledge of the *nigunim*, like Yossi Lew in Atlanta and others in the USA. Locally, I also consulted Rabbis Wineberg and Baumgarten, to ensure that my facts and assumptions from a religious point of view were correct. In early April, having submitted my abstract for acceptance by the conference, I received an email from one of the conference organisers, confirming acceptance of my paper. It was something of a challenge to assemble all the documentation required of a South African to travel to Germany – the *Schengen* visa is expensive and the German embassy demanded a (not surprising) detailed account of exactly where we would be staying at every moment during our visit to the country.

Friendships forever

We booked into the Cityhotel *Königstraße* in Hannover, just a short walk from the conference venue. One of my erstwhile matric classmates from the Pretoria High School for Girls over 50 years ago is a lovely woman, Dorothea Hartenstein, living in Munich. I had reconnected with her when we both attended the Pretoria Girls' High 50th Reunion in 2015. When I mentioned to her that we would be attending the conference in Hannover in 2019, she

11 The plural of *Rebbe*. As opposed to a rabbi, a Rebbe is a leader of a Chassidic dynasty and a greatly learned and holy master.

immediately suggested that if the public was allowed, she and her husband Hermann would love to join us in Hannover, stay at the same hotel, renew our close friendship, and attend my public lecture scheduled during the conference. As music-lovers, they were both keen to attend other lectures on Jewish music on offer at the conference, even though neither of them is Jewish.

As it transpired, our two husbands begged off most of the formal conference lectures and chose to enjoy the touristy sights of Hannover instead. Dorothea and Hermann issued an invitation to Michael and me to return with them after the conference to their home in Munich for a short stay. Never having been there, we were happy to accept. Dorothea also intimated that she had a surprise in store for us there. This promised to be a very exciting adventure on many levels – and we were not disappointed.

We arrived in Hannover on the morning of the conference, 9 September, and went directly to register at the venue (at which we saw several familiar faces, including Geraldine Auerbach from London and Alex Klein from Manchester). After the customary welcome address by various dignitaries, the conference kicked off with a roundtable discussion titled *What Makes a Melody Jewish?* I have given many lectures on that subject and found the new viewpoints expressed fascinating – though ultimately, the topic remains an open-ended question, with no absolute answers.

Like the Leeds conference four years previously, this conference was dedicated to a broad range of Jewish liturgical music topics with its many complexities. Primarily papers, but also keynote lectures, performance sessions, and workshops were presented. There was much passionate excitement among scholars and practitioners alike – and the wide-ranging scope of papers encompassed themes of Hebrew psalmody, cantillation and prayer modes, the transmission of oral as opposed to written traditions, selected Holocaust musics, marked differences between Ashkenazi and Sephardi approaches to the liturgy (*nusach*[12]) and synagogue composition in areas where Jewish communities have flourished across the globe and throughout

12 'Text' or 'version' – referring to the correct wording of a religious text or liturgy.

the centuries. I learnt a great deal about music in communist countries like Czechoslovakia. Most papers were exceptionally well researched and interesting, yet it felt as if we had just begun to scratch the surface of hundreds of years of Jewish music globally.

Finding the feminine

What I found particularly interesting in other presentations were topics that interrogated the relationship of the older traditional melodies to the modern liturgy, as well as several themes focusing on the role of women in the music of Jewish prayer. Naturally, one was always aware of the vast distinctions made in the role of music and gender in orthodox *versus* progressive and more conservative practices of Judaism.

Since I follow the orthodox path of Judaism, it was an unusual experience for me to hear sections of the liturgy sung by female cantors (with impressive knowledge of the religious services and some with exceptionally lovely voices). In the section "Cantors as Composers", Marsha Dubrow presented her paper, *In the Key of Female: Music and Gender in the Modern American Cantorate.*

A most delightful highlight was a concert held on the first evening with the title *From Slavery to Freedom*. The singer Cantor Yoni Rose not only has a magnificent tenor voice, but gave a charming and humorous delivery of a mainly serious subject, the Exodus from Egypt, re-enacting the songs so well-known sung during the Passover service (Seder). A beautiful lecture-recital was presented the following evening by the cantor Assaf Levitin on music by Alberto Hemsi, whose very beautiful music compositions I had not previously heard, but would certainly like to listen to going forward.

Nitty-gritty of the Nigun

Immediately following this lively singing treat, I presented my audio-visual lecture-recital, *The Power of the Nigun: Wordless, But*

Not Speechless – The Deepest Communion with Hashem[13] *through Song*. I had managed to access some magnificent historical photos of the *Rebbeim* (Rebbes) and the music that was composed and sung during their respective lifetimes. After presenting a short history of the music of the Chabad Chassidic community, I illustrated the aural beauty of several of the *nigunim* by playing excerpts, both pre-recorded and live on the piano. The founder of this Chassidic community, the 18th-century Alter Rebbe of Liadi (from the town of Lubavitch) wrote a dictum with which I resonate: "If words are the pen of the heart, then melody is the pen of the soul."

These *nigunim* reflect a myriad of vastly contrasting moods, from the deepest esoteric soulful yearning and cleaving to G-d, to the most ecstatic joyous melodies in quick tempi and dance-like rhythms. I explained to the audience the very essence of the *nigunim* as being the deepest form of prayer in song. There are over 375 *nigunim*, many of which have been recorded, transcribed in sheet music, and documented, as in the book of *nigunim* by Shmuel Zalmanov (*Sefer Hanigunim*). My dear friend Avremi has also produced printed volumes of the *nigunim* as melodies with suggested chord charts below. In my presentation, I discussed the very different harmonic and structural possibilities that one can apply, leading to different versions of the same song, depending on the individual arrangement. This can be a point of contention among arrangers of the various melodies, as it is a very personal taste and musical preference that dictates the final arrangement. I confess that some arrangements are so contrary to my musical instinct that I find them awkward to listen to.

I shared with the audience that my full piano and orchestral arrangements emanated from a place of intuition, a life steeped in Jewish music and a lifetime of listening to quality liturgical music. The *nigunim* had predictably undergone some melodic and structural changes over the many years in the various 'courts' of the Rebbes and in various young Chabad communities, making it somewhat treacherous to categorically present a song as being '*the*' authentic or faithful version. Some feel strongly that the

13 Name for G-d when not in prayer.

'correct' version is the one currently sung by the *Chassidim*. The intensity or rigidity of traditional worship finds release by a singer who is able to rapturously commune with G-d, lose himself in it and, in doing so hopefully find himself and his path. However, it is in the communal singing of these *nigunim*, together with thousands of *Chassidim* at a gathering called a '*farbrengen*'[14] that the ultimate zenith of devotional ecstasy, imploring G-d's mercy, is achieved. This is where the role of music can vastly uplift the soul – and it is this collective strength that gives the *nigunim* their power.

One of my favourite *nigunim* is the *Poltava Nigun* (from Reb Yakov Mordechai Pespalov), named after a city in Eastern Ukraine where Jewish life thrived and was a lively authentic Chassidic enclave. I felt incredibly privileged to play the recording of an archived version of the *Poltava* sung by my son-in-law's *zaida* (Chaim's *grandfather*) Reb Zalman Bronshtein (1964). He had a strong, passionate and glorious voice; this can still be accessed via YouTube. In my presentation, I followed this archive recording by playing a most plaintive, meditative, and embellished interpretation of the melody on saxophone (Reb Sholom Horowiz). I ended that discussion with a full-on modern orchestral arrangement sung by Chassidic icon Avraham Fried. This illustrated how a song can grow into a large instrumental piece of beautiful music without losing its prayerful intention or inner sanctity, given a sensitive and thoughtful instrumental arrangement.

I also presented to the delegates the fundamental music aspects that lead to my own personal choices and decisions on how to provide a musical and stylistically appropriate harmonic and rhythmic framework and fundamental arrangement for songs that exist only as single-line vocal melodies. My method is to intuitively sense which harmonies would best serve the melodies above in order to keep the idea and faithfulness intact, but at the same time not make it into a flashy *virtuoso* piano/instrumental

14 An informal, inspirational Chassidic gathering where religious concepts are shared and melodies are sung, with refreshments and beverages being served. These gatherings frequently last throughout the night.

piece. Several arrangements I had heard by others differed in varying degrees to mine, some going against all of my musical instincts. People came to me afterwards to say that, although they were familiar with Ashkenazi and Sephardi synagogue music, they had had no idea that Chassidim over the centuries had possessed and produced such musical gems – somewhat surprising in this age of efficient communication.

I was greatly indebted to the many people who assisted me in the preparation of my lecture by giving generously of their time, particularly my friend and Jewish music guru in New York, Avremi Gourarie.

A highly entertaining evening followed my presentation, consisting of a wonderful banquet dinner enjoyed and an 'open mic' event held at the local synagogue. Random delegates were encouraged to get up and either sing or speak about topics related to the conference or of special interest to themselves. After the nervousness and anxiety that goes together with a paper presentation, it was time to relax, laugh, and celebrate.

Munich memories

Thursday dawned as our departure day. Together with our friends, the Hartensteins, we left the conference before the closing session in order to catch the fast train to Munich. With legendary German efficiency and precision, the high-speed train arrived in Hannover at the scheduled minute and we arrived in Munich on the dot five hours later, as scheduled. One of the surprises that our friends had up their sleeve was being whisked off in Hermann's car (which he had left at the station) to a delightful kosher restaurant called the *Einstein* on St Jakobs-Platz, which is one of the most admired plazas in the historic old town in Munich. Security at Fort Knox would have been proud of the security checks we had to endure before being allowed into the restaurant. It was a Jewish restaurant in Germany, after all.

The eatery was warm and welcoming and while chatting to the maître d, we asked whether we could visit the beautiful synagogue situated on the same plaza just outside the restaurant. He suggested that we talk to Rabbi Brodman, who lived just above

the Einstein restaurant. He phoned upstairs – and lo and behold: when Rabbi Brodman walked in, there was a most unexpected and jubilant 'mini reunion'; we had met him in Cape Town nearly 20 years previously as the officiating rabbi at the wedding of my stepdaughter Jacqui, and we had completely lost touch with him. He was so overcome with excitement at seeing us that he immediately ordered rounds of beers and quality wines for our table. He insisted on drinking toasts with us due to this unexpected reunion. We were happy we were able to enjoy the beverages with him and our hosts, accompanied by heaps of stories, laughter, great food, and jollity; we collectively filled in the many years since seeing him with anecdotes and reminisced (very noisily!) until late into the night, when the restaurant tactfully made it known that it was closing.

Rabbi Brodman very kindly offered to show us the famous Ohel-Jakob (Jacob's Tent) Synagogue (built around 2005) the next morning. The building, which resembles *tefillin*[15] (two square phylactery boxes) with Stars of David encasing it, is part of the Jewish Centre, which also houses the Munich Jewish Museum. Because of the stringent security measures required before one could enter, the rabbi arranged to meet us rather at the *Einstein* again the following morning and take us through his secret private route. He led us via a lift downwards to the bowels of the earth and then up some passages and a maze of stairs into the synagogue. It was not a large sanctuary, but profoundly spiritual and atmospheric – very much enhanced by a special wall of memory depicting hundreds of names, dedicated to the Munich Jews murdered in the Holocaust. We then visited the Jewish Museum, which I found distinctly disturbing, due to the exhibition of ugly anti-Semitic Nazi propaganda from the Third Reich era. Yet it was important to have these images imprinted on my mind and to never forget.

Prior to our Munich visit, we had been invited to spend Shabbat with a Chabad family in Munich, namely Rabbi Diskin and his wife, Chani. We would sleep in the Chabad House adjacent to their flat and have Friday night dinner with them. The Diskins

15 Small leather boxes containing Hebrew texts ritually placed on the forehead and on the arm near heart by Orthodox Jewish men.

took us to the window of their study overlooking a building directly opposite the Chabad House and pointed to the rooms on the third floor; chillingly these had housed the headquarters of the Third Reich *gauleiter* (regional head) in Munich. When it came to the Sabbath candle-lighting time, I felt incredibly privileged to be able to go back in time to a very dark period in our history and to bring special lights to illuminate the shadows in such a place.

The next morning we walked to the Chabad Shul for Sabbath services and a special lunch-Kiddush[16] celebrating the birthday of an 83-year-old Holocaust survivor. However, before we could enter the synagogue, we were stopped and checked for weapons by several menacing-looking guards, armed with large rifles – a stark reminder of Jewish life in Europe even as much as 75 years after the Second World War.

The *surprise* and special treat in store for us, conspired by our hosts, Dorothea and Hermann, turned out to be tickets for a brilliant symphony concert at the renowned *Gasteig* (Auditorium) on that Saturday night, featuring the visiting Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of the legendary Zubin Mehta in one of his last appearances as conductor. This was a dream come true for me – the serendipity of the IPO's concert tour at that very time in Munich was fortuitously powerful. The date of the concert (14 September) also coincided with Michael's and my 43rd wedding anniversary (and, incidentally, the milestone of exactly 43 years since Leonard Bernstein had become the IPO's illustrious conductor in 1947). What a celebration it turned out to be!

The concert opened with *Concertino for String Orchestra* by Hungarian-born Israeli composer Ödön Pártos – a meaningful gesture by the IPO to include the work of one of their esteemed past local performers and composers. Pártos had been a brilliant violist in the orchestra for nearly 20 years from 1936. The work is only moderately 'modern' and was therefore quite accessible and lovely. The Beethoven *Piano Concerto No 3* which followed was ably performed by the talented Turkish composer and pianist Fazil Say, although I personally found the display of too much unrestrained

16 A reception following the service for the congregants, at which drinks and snacks are served.

romantic passion rather 'over the top' for this more austere work by Beethoven.

That said, given the long orchestral introduction during which he had to patiently wait before the piano enters, one could forgive Say's enthusiastic entry! This virtuosic and visual spectacle was loved by the audience. In fact, Fazil was so excited by the audience response that he immediately played a very 'wild' *encore* of a work he had composed himself based on Turkish folk tunes – a manic performance, but nothing could detract from my ecstatic enjoyment of the occasion.

Then came what, in my opinion, is the *pièce de résistance* of any orchestral symphonic programme – the *Symphonie Fantastique* for Orchestra by Hector Berlioz (1830), arguably one of the most colourful and riveting pieces (especially played live in concert) in the symphonic repertoire. It is the forerunner of a music genre called the 'symphonic poem' by composers such as Liszt, Mahler and Strauss. I had always loved the symphonic poems of the Romantic era and this *Symphonie Fantastique* is an epic programmatic[17] symphony composed for huge orchestra, with brilliant focus on the percussion section (my favourite section of the orchestra) which produces a large variety of dramatic, booming and spine-chilling *timbral* effects. This helps to create a huge spectrum of fluctuating moods and musical colours.

In five separate sections (as opposed to the classical-era four-movement symphony), it portrays an episode in the life of an artist who is haunted by the vision of the perfect, unattainable woman and illustrates his self-destructive suicidal passion for her as it progresses – a typically painful love story! Berlioz uses a core repeated melody to depict the woman, called an *idée fixe* (or *leitmotif*), a recognisable theme-tune. In its time, the work was viewed as controversial, as it portrayed debauchery induced by opium and also depicts witches in the frenzied final scene, a sacrilege which went against Victorian religious beliefs. The movements are titled:

17 A 'programmatic' piece of music is essentially a narration of a story, with events unfolding in the music itself, representing an idea, scene or emotion.

- Reveries (Passions)
- A Ball
- Scenes in the Fields
- March to the Scaffold
- Songs of the Night of the Sabbath (the Witches' Sabbath)

In this brilliant performance, I was riveted, sitting on the edge of my seat, captivated by the highly dramatic interpretation presented by the IPO under the baton of Mehta, who conducted much of the time sitting on his high chair, since he was already 83 years old and in poor health. In my next life, I would love to be a world-class orchestral conductor, as there seems to be nothing more exciting than 'playing' this vast instrument called the *orchestra*, which responds so willingly to the baton in one's hands – like a current of electricity conveyed by a lightning 'conductor'. What a fitting and exciting end this was to a wonderful visit to both Hannover and Munich.

What to say about these experiences abroad, in communion with artists, visionaries and academics? I returned from each of my trips enriched, emboldened, and – in certain cases – disrupted, which is always a positive and necessary experience. My interactions with those who showed me other approaches to the making and receiving of music broadened my ability to hear, process and ultimately, to compose.



At the Festival of South African music in Youngstown, Ohio in 1995 (from left) Prof Walter Mony, me and Surendran Reddy



In the Youngstown Art Gallery: myself and Surendran preparing to perform in a concert of South African compositions



André Strydom, faculty member at the Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music and me as guest composer, lecturing to his students at the college

The Southern African Music Rights Organisation

Copyright or wrong?

One of my first meetings in person with the founding leadership of the South African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO)[1] took place around 1972 when I visited South Africa, while still studying overseas. I had gradually begun compiling a portfolio of my original compositions and was acutely aware that it was extremely important to safeguard one's copyright in music, as well as any attendant intellectual property[2] rights. I met the charming and charismatic Dr Gideon Roos Senior, who – aided by his sons Gideon Junior and Paul – founded SAMRO in December 1961 and was the organisation's first chairman. He had been made Director-General of the SABC in 1948, but by 1961 he was so disenchanted by the racial policies of the National Party attempting to use the SABC to promote its ideology that he left and devoted himself to looking after the rights of *all* composers, irrespective of colour and creed. He was thus motivated to initiate an organisation that could cater for all musicians and music publishers. And so SAMRO was born!

1 SAMRO was established in 1961 by the South African Copyright Act for the benefit of music creators, by licensing music users, collecting licence fees and distributing royalties to music creators. SAMRO currently represents more than 18 000 Southern African music composers, lyricists/authors and music publishers. The organisation administers performing rights. It is one of many CMOs around the world: a Collective Management Organisation. SAMRO has reciprocal agreements with 225 collecting societies in 150 countries allowing it to collect music royalties on behalf of its members around the world.

2 The owner of 'intellectual property' gives him/her the exclusive right to copy, distribute, adapt, display and perform a creative work, often for a limited time.

Rights – or wrongs?

Intellectual and especially creative artistic copyright is a complex and often confusing subject, the question of plagiarism being frequently less scientific and more subjective, especially in the realm of music copyright infringement. Each country has its specific music copyright laws and although there is an international body (CISAC)[3], a music royalty collection and rights holders' protection society overseeing the crucial area of patenting, there are still grey areas when it comes to definitively proving plagiarism in music. There are only a limited number of melodies (albeit thousands) and notes in music, but how many notes must be 'stolen' before it becomes copyright infringement?

An early example of alleged copyright abuse was the case of singer and songwriter Solomon (Ntsele) Linda, who was eking out a meagre living as a beer-hall singer and was later a record packer on the Gallo payroll. He composed a song called *Mbube* (also popularly known as *Wimoweh*). This song was later to become the immensely popular and very lucrative (for those in the USA) musical success *The Lion Sleeps Tonight*, used in the Disney film *The Lion King*[4]. Linda received meagre compensation and died penniless in 1962; it was only in 1980 that a tombstone was laid at his grave, as his family had had no money to do this at the time of his death. This complex issue, which will not be discussed here, is the fraught relationship of music creators and singers with record companies and music publishers that existed then and, to some extent, still does. So often, less informed and less literate older composers are taken advantage of because they are simply not aware of their rights. There are hundreds of such cases, even today; many involve women who are taken even *greater* advantage of in the music industry than men. This is where

3 CISAC stands for the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers. It is the world's leading network of authors' societies. CISAC's primary role is to protect the rights and interests of creators in various artistic fields, including music, audio-visual, drama, literature and visual arts.

4 A brilliant documentary following on the film, directed by Sam Cullman in 2018 is called *Re-mastered: The Lion's Share* and can be accessed on Netflix.

SAMRO attempts to assist the rightful owners in the accreditation of their intellectual property.

Thanks to the efforts of intellectual property lawyer, Owen Dean and South African journalist, Rian Malan, the four daughters of Solomon Linda were finally compensated with most of the rightful fruits of their father's creation. It was a cornerstone case for music rights and was the first time that anyone in the Linda family had reaped any due benefit.

After starting in Cavendish House in downtown Johannesburg, SAMRO was housed in the early 1970s in a building called SAMRO House in Juta Street Braamfontein, occupying several floors of a very large, but visually uninteresting building. SAMRO had fully begun operations as a copyright asset management society in January 1962 with a membership of 40 South African composers and 13 music publishers, at the time offering an alternative to the British Performing Rights Society (PRS), the royalty collecting society based in the United Kingdom. SAMRO was accepted as a fully-fledged member of CISAC in June 1962. SAMRO is one of several CMOs[5] in South Africa. Later in 2007, its management bought a very large building at 20 de Korte Street Braamfontein, which it named SAMRO Place.

I greatly enjoyed my visits to SAMRO in the late 1970s and 1980s, as the Roos family was exceptionally warm and friendly and always insisted on sharing a cup of tea and current music information with me. Annette Emdon, music publisher and South African agent for Boosey and Hawkes, was the first chairman of the SAMRO board. In addition to administering performing royalties, SAMRO also established a retirement annuity for members and a funeral benefit scheme. I considered these developments in the realm of social investments to be astoundingly generous and not common at that time for non-profit organisations like SAMRO.

5 Collective management organisations; some of the others being DALRO (Dramatic, Artistic and Literary Rights Organisation – a wholly-owned subsidiary of SAMRO), SARRAL, SAMPRA (Recording Artists/Needle-Time rights), RISA (Recording Industry; Mechanical and Video rights) and CAPASSO (Mechanical-Digital rights). These bodies have changed over the years but always encompassed the three chief music rights: reprographic, mechanical and performing rights (right of public performance).

As an older retiree now, I was thrilled to be able to withdraw my SAMRO pension money and invest it to have an important income.

One of the first Black composers to become a member of SAMRO was Strike Vilakazi, who composed the very popular anti-apartheid song called *Meadowlands*, becoming the first Black composer-member of SAMRO. There was a prolonged copyright tussle between Strike and Bertha Egnos as to the identity of the originator of the music which Bertha used in her 1974 stage musical, *Ipi Tombi* (more correctly known as *Ipi Ntombiya*). They both claimed ownership of the song that became known as *Mama Thembu's Wedding.* I have it on good authority that the melody was, in fact, a traditional African one which was not original to either of the composers; on that basis, the claims were finally resolved.

Promotion of new music

Before I returned to South Africa, I had entered into correspondence with Michael Levy, whose designation at SAMRO was Organiser: Serious Music (a category which was internationally better known as 'art music'). He was my point of reference for all queries regarding copyright and royalties; for registering new works and public performances of works. Michael was a mine of information on the rules of copyright and its extensive ramifications in the arts fields. Levy digitally produced the important *Catalogue of Serious Music* in 1978 and 1992 (2nd Edition). He was enthusiastic about promoting new music and gave his support wherever possible to composers and to newly instituted composer societies.

One of the newly formed composer societies in South Africa was the "New Music Network" (NMN) established in July 1981, with the purpose of promoting and performing 20th-century music in South Africa. I became a founding member of the NMN together with a few fellow musicians, including conductor-composer Jacques de Vos Malan, Kalman Richter (cello), Jill Richards (piano and flute), and Clifford Wybrow (clarinet) with the support of SAMRO. Thanks to the unwavering support of generous individuals like the philanthropist-composer Eva Harvey we embarked on an ambitious programme of composition

workshops, the commissioning of new works, and monthly concerts – several of these taking place at the Harvey home, called "Bobolink", in Sandown.

Many performances ensued locally of original South African compositions, but concerts also included other contemporary art music pieces by avant garde composers. I performed as pianist in many of these concerts, giving the première performance of works such as Ligeti's *Three Pieces for Two Piano*, subtitled *Monument-Selbsporträt-Bewegung* (1976) together with pianist Jill Richards. The level of appreciation by concert attendees was remarkably high, but unfortunately audience numbers remained very low. As a result, the 'New Music Network', which was so enthusiastically embraced by lovers of contemporary art music, ceased to function due to lack of funding and very small audiences. As another attempt at forming a composers' organisation to promote contemporary South African art music, Michael Levy founded the "South African Music Guild" (SAMG) accompanied by a journal called *The Voice of the Composer* in 1986. This too, unfortunately was short-lived.

At a time when digitised information was still in its infancy, SAMRO's work was computerised right from the outset, as it was always dependent on computer technology to be able to conduct its core business. This technological application in the early years was achieved with the assistance of the Swiss affiliate of SAMRO, known as SUISA.

In 1997, the Roos family resigned from their eminent positions of a triumvirate leadership of SAMRO, and Rob Hooijer took over the reins as CEO. When my colleague Prof Walter Mony was planning to emigrate to Canada in 2007, he nominated me to take his place on the SAMRO Board of Directors. I was thrilled to be occupying a seat on this illustrious board and was taken to be introduced to the new CEO of SAMRO, Mr Nick Motsatse (the first Black CEO of SAMRO), who, having been appointed in 2006, was taking over from Rob Hooijer. Motsatse was exceedingly warm and welcoming, offering any assistance I might need – and he gave me documents to peruse regarding the duties and responsibilities

of Directors on the Board. Alan Johnson, whom I hardly knew, continued as Deputy CEO and CFO.

So began my 10-year tenure (homonym intended) in 2008; there is a compulsory rotation of directors every three years, but one can remain on the board as long as one is voted in again. And so my stint began in the hallowed music annals and information-laden musical corridors of SAMRO. I immediately felt very at home in those surroundings and gradually met others in the hierarchy. I began attending meetings and executing my duties. I felt exhilarated to be contributing to new ideas, growing the SAMRO brand and promoting music of my own and that of fellow composers, including being active in facilitating performances of new compositions.

Our Chair at the time was Annette Emdon, a formidable lady who ran the organisation like a tight ship. She had taken over from Gideon Roos Senior and was exceptionally knowledgeable, diligent, and terrifyingly competent. Her deputy was Mzilikazi Khumalo; more about him later. The Chief Financial Officer at the time was Greg Zoghby, a man who lived, ate, and slept numbers – his balance sheets were always immaculate and transparent. Bronwen Harty was the Chief Operating Officer who, later in 2016, rather surreptitiously followed CEO Sipho Dlamini (of AEMRO notoriety[6]) back into the music industry when he resigned and moved on in 2016, after a short tenure, leaving under something of a cloud[7]. But I am leaping ahead of myself. At the time, there was a highly efficient lady, Joyce Schulten, who was a most competent Group Company Secretary, Human Resources Executive and loyal member of the SAMRO staff. She became another of the 'casualties' when drastic changes were made to minimise the losses.

I recall with fondness sitting in vibrant meetings with legendary non-executive figures on the board, such as John

6 Arab Emirates Music Rights Organisation – it was a financial debacle.

7 The CEO was instrumental in creating a music royalty collection society in the United Arab Emirates, which resulted in SAMRO losing R47 million. The Board was not presented with all the facts nor did the CEO have the support of the full board in this decision.

Edmond and Sipho 'Hotstix' Mabuse (a music icon needing little introduction to South Africans and audiences internationally) – two of the longest-serving board members; as well as personalities like the talented Coenie de Villiers (renowned pianist and singer), Fred Woods (a successful composer, especially of children's songs), and others. The board was later joined by powerful, talented and colourful music personalities like the late mezzo–soprano Sibongile Khumalo, Loyiso Bala (of the well-known Bala brothers), Rowlin Naicker, Joe Niemand and Gabriel le Roux.

Under the old Companies Act, SAMRO had been operating as a 'company limited by guarantee'. SAMRO transitioned to a non-profit company on 1 May 2013 as the designation of 'company limited by guarantee' as a corporate form was no longer supported by the Companies Act 71 of 2008.[8]

Never Bored

The SAMRO board meetings were lively affairs; always robust, if occasionally somewhat heated, but mostly collegial. The agendas included ratification of budgets, strategies to improve revenue streams for members, especially from the SABC and other music users, and ways to better the lives of member stakeholders. A most troubling issue which was frequently discussed during board meetings, especially pre-digitisation and online music streaming, was the destructive practice of music piracy. It was alarmingly easy for dishonest people to copy cassettes or later CDs of original music and sell them cheaply on street corners. It was the composers who were getting the raw end of the deal, as they received low fees in the mechanical rights area.

8 A company had to choose to become either a 'for-profit' or a 'non-profit' entity. Neither of these new designations was a good fit for the culture and goals of SAMRO as there are members and not stakeholders per se. However, ultimately, at the AGM in 2014, the members rejected the 'for-profit' proposal and opted for a non-profit company. There were also efforts by management to advocate an 'economic co-operative' form of governance as perhaps being the most beneficial, but that, too, was rejected by the members. At the time of this writing, SAMRO operates under the name of the Southern African Music Rights Organisation NPC.

In addition to the main Board of Directors, I sat on several SAMRO sub-committees.[9] There were members who wondered why board meetings seemed to go on forever... there were frequently controversies about various pertinent issues, like the actual make-up of the board in terms of relative numbers of executive directors, non-executive author (composer) directors, non-executive publisher directors, and independent non-executive directors. Strong feelings were expressed on either side – based most often on which constituency one represented. There was a feeling among composers that the publishers were attempting to control the board and, due to their extensive catalogue of composers, were able to use their proxies to gain a majority vote. It is after all a composers' organisation.

Another area of potential conflict concerned the property that SAMRO bought in 2007 in Braamfontein named SAMRO Place, with the aim of housing all the Music Collection Organisations therein. There were on-going issues regarding space, rentals, and dealing with difficult tenants. A significant source of discontent with which the board had to grapple was the issue of obsolete technology not serving the members adequately; the general complaint was that huge amounts of money were invested in systems, such as the Zeus System, which were failing members in the areas of data-capturing and distribution capabilities. Complicated issues of staff salaries, allegations of fraud in the organisation and the appointing of auditors, as well as overseeing large amounts of income and expenditure, formed critical areas of discussion.

I loved the camaraderie of friends on the board who mostly exhibited excitement, enthusiasm, passion and much humour; I admired and appreciated the generating of practical strategies for music creators, such as festivals of music and live performances. I valued the generosity of the more experienced board members and the manner in which my input was valued over the years.

SAMRO commemorated its 50th anniversary in 2012 with a series of events, including the Builders' Awards, which recognised

9 Including the 'Nominations and Governance' and 'Social and Ethics' Committees.

musicians, staff members, and others who had contributed to the organisation over the years. I was a recipient of a Builder's Lifetime Member Achievement Award in 2012 for "dedicated and faithful service to the organisation".

At the end of June 2013, the Chairperson of the SAMRO Board, Reverend Abe Sibiya, announced that Nick Motsatse would be stepping down as CEO of SAMRO and would be replaced by the Deputy CEO at the time, Sipho Dlamini, starting July 2013. This announcement was met by the board with some surprise and reservations, as the position of CEO had not been formally advertised and the board had not been privy to any arrangements for succession planning. However, the board was assured by Motsatse that Dlamini was the perfect candidate to step into his shoes, having worked in the organisation previously in marketing and having also been deputy CEO, thus shadowing Motsatse, who also assured the board that he had done due diligence in the process of succession planning.

SAMRO launched the *Wawela* Music Awards in 2013 as a way of paying tribute to South African composers who had made a significant contribution to both the local and international music scene. For a couple of years these were prestigious events, somewhat in the league of the SAMAs[10]. From 2016, however, the *Wawela*s were dogged by mismanagement and controversy, with the marketing department coming under severe fire for inefficiency, along with allegations of fraud. As far as I know, the event has now been disbanded.

Free-for-all (but *not* for intellectual property)

SAMRO Annual General Meetings became 'war zones'. Members such as Eugene Mthethwa, Mzwakhe Mbuli, and Chicco Twala, among others, with Graeme Gillfillan[11] as 'puppet master', did

10 South African Music Awards.

11 A music executive and copyright lawyer who was a controversial figure with a reputation for being embroiled in many contentious copyright issues, some of which put him on the wrong side of the establishment. To his credit, though, he was a 'crusader' for the voiceless composers whom he tried to assist with claiming royalties.

their utmost to disturb the decorum and disrupt meetings. That is not to say that they did not have several valid causes of complaint, although some were articulated from a purely personal perspective. However, the powers that be lost control too many times and unpleasant chaos ensued. Many of the ordinary members expressed strongly that their needs were not being met, that revenue streams for artists were not improving – with many dying in poverty and unable to support families – and that there was great inequality in the way royalties were being administered in the organisation.

There seemed to be an on-going tug-of-war between the music publishers and individual composers, with the publishers allegedly obtaining the 'lion's share' of the diminishing pot of royalties by their having considerably more voting power. A huge cause of disagreement by members was that they were not offered a medical aid scheme – an impossible 'ask' from SAMRO at the time. The organisation was already putting vast sums of money aside for the SAMRO Retirement Annuity Fund (SRAF) and for the Funeral Benefit Scheme. Viewed from the inside as a director with financial knowledge, to have a medical aid scheme would have been an insurmountable financial burden that the organisation was reluctant to carry. It was also difficult to explain the vagaries of royalties (especially of undocumented works) to musicians who were, understandably, very emotional and felt that they were being short-changed.

SAMRO seemed like a happy and safe place to be – until it no longer was. SAMRO entered a period of great turmoil starting around 2014. Board evaluations were done to try to establish the areas that contributed to the internal trust deficit. One of the most controversial and reputationally destructive initiatives was by the CEO Dlamini. In late 2013, some months after he had been appointed, he was to launch a project called AEMRO, by creating a royalty-collecting society in the UAE, similar to SAMRO. The rationale he put to the board for its implementation was as a beneficial extra revenue stream. This initially sounded feasible – and two foreigners (allegedly Syrian nationals) from the UAE, who were to act as our Dubai partners, were brought to South Africa

to give a presentation to the board and were entertained royally by management.

Controversial Issues

A single light moment comes to mind when ruminating on those stressful AEMRO meetings: the two sheik-looking Dubai representatives (dressed in flowing white robes and gold–roped Arabian-type headdresses) were invited to lunch after one meeting. The Head of CISAC at the time was Gadi Oron, an Israeli living in Paris who was present at that meeting. Our Chair asked for my advice in terms of seating, and I suggested placing Gadi, the Israeli, strategically in one corner, the UAE Arabs in another corner (with their special *halal* meals) and me in another corner (with my special *kosher* meal). Although everyone was extremely polite to one another, management chose to act on the side of caution.

However, as time went on, the expenses for SAMRO skyrocketed and were questioned by the board; these were outrageous dollar expenses for the Dubai agents' salaries, offices in a five-star hotel, travel and subsistence expenses for the two agents and, not least, several trips by our own SAMRO management to Dubai. I only very recently learnt from someone I knew in the organisation who went to look at the Dubai 'offices' that they appeared to be unused and were merely an apparent front for non-business activities!

In defence of the board, when we repeatedly questioned the legitimacy of such expenses, the CEO appeased us with 'facts and figures' that we accepted, until we found out (when it was already too late) that these numbers were largely falsified. The board was placated with stories that things were going well and that revenue would start coming in, though we saw no evidence of delivery from Dubai. What the board found out only much later was that more than one contract had been signed between the CEO with the two foreign nationals, who were being paid exorbitant salaries and not delivering on promises made. It gradually became evident that kickbacks were changing hands, yet the board remained *naively* trusting of the CEO.

As a board, we had oversight on a large array of issues – one of these being 'strategy *versus* risk'. We were exposed to some of the best lecturers and seminars on corporate governance that SAMRO could access for us. Informed people such as Simo Lushaba from the Institute of Directors spoke to us about board responsibilities. However, there has to be a level of trust between a board, the chairman and the CEO. Sadly, our experience was that this trust was abused. On 24 May 2017, I drafted an e-mail to Rev Sibiya[12], Acting CEO (who also enjoyed visits to Dubai) and board colleagues; expressing my intense discomfort with what was happening about the AEMRO debacle. In my e-mail I stated:

> I have read and tried to digest the material as presented to the board regarding the progress in the AEMRO matter... I am extremely concerned about the level of legal assistance we now must avail ourselves of in order to push against what seems to be quite a resistance from various quarters against AEMRO being legally constituted. There are obviously all sorts of factors, some of which we know and some of which we may not know. This is deeply worrying. I must go not only on facts presented (which are minimal), but with that nagging feeling called 'gut feeling'. Given the multifactorial elements in the situation, I cannot but register for the record my extreme caution going forward and that I would personally 'cut losses'. I am very aware of everyone's fervent desire to see this working... but at some point, we need to face the facts. Are we throwing good money after bad? My opinion is that the latter sentiment is true – and I hope I will be proved wrong! There are too many unknown factors in this 'deal' to know with any certainty that it will ever come to fruition... In all conscience, I cannot say that I approve the continuation of the initiative.

Not enough people on the board felt the same way as I did and by the time everyone realised what was happening, there was a

12 In addition to being CEO of SAMRO at the time, Rev Sibiya held a major stake in the recording studio Urban Brew; this represented a distinct conflict of interests.

large debt of accumulated expenses. This led to a ghastly period of recriminations and accusations. As recommended by SAMRO's legal advisers, charges were laid at the local police station against the Dubai partners in the UAE, but the horse had bolted, and the damage had been done – damage in the region of R47 million Rands! A forensic audit in a foreign country would have been prohibitively expensive and SAMRO was forced to cut its losses. After less than three years as CEO, Sipho Dlamini resigned at the beginning of 2016. Reverend Abe Sibiya, who became Chairman of the Board in September, 2012 following Ms Emdon's retirement, became Acting CEO in 2016 and Sibongile Khumalo, renowned singer, humanist and music activist, who had been Deputy Chair of the Board, took up the reins as its Chair during this transitional period. In 2017, *Mam* Sibongile resigned and was replaced by Jerry Mnisi.

The search for a new CEO began in earnest; the search would take many, many months and necessitated extra urgent board meetings to sift through the list of possible appropriate CEOs. It was imperative that a suitable CEO be found in the wake of Dlamini's resignation. Gender and race were to play a major role in this search. It took nearly 18 agonising months with the assistance of the recruitment company of Woodburn Mann to appoint a new CEO. Nothando Migogo was appointed in July 2017, but controversy followed her tenure as well. A forensic audit was begun, but this proved to be fruitless. Mark Rosin was brought in, in February 2020 to save a declining situation and to 'rescue' SAMRO. This was not intended to be a long-term tenure, and he worked extremely hard for nearly four years and was largely successful at turning the organisation around for the better. At the time of writing the current CEO is Annabell Lebethe who is currently embroiled in an alleged case of corruption – cry our beloved country!

Despite my having a substantial number of public performances, both locally and abroad, due to the recent and current chaos and mismanagement in the organisation, I am lucky to receive a royalty annual disbursement payment of 45c or less. Although I have registered my original works repeatedly, it

appears that the records are in disarray and I am frankly weary of my attempts to have them rectified.

I retired as Director on the board of SAMRO in September 2018, as did most of its other sitting members. I was extremely sad that the E-factor[13] had put an end to a board that had shown strong commitment, hard work, dedication, and positive efforts – and had achieved tangible results. The departing directors were and still are people in the music industry who had given so much of themselves to music. The retiring board comprised esteemed and respected people such as our competent and caring Chair, Jerry Mnisi, stalwart colleagues John Edmond, Sipho Mabuse, Sibongile Khumalo, and Gabi le Roux, as well as the younger active and well-known members Joe Niemand, Rowlin Naicker, Loyiso Bala, and Relebogile Mabotja. Some of us remain in touch as friends and colleagues.

The SAMRO Foundation – the arm that gives

My work with SAMRO had a second arm: an outreach initiative which I found extremely rewarding – the SAMRO Foundation. It was my joy and honour to be invited to become a trustee on the SAMRO Endowment for the National Arts (SENA, later known as the SAMRO Foundation, now sadly defunct) in 2011; this was the Corporate Social Investment (CSI) wing of SAMRO corporate, tasked with executing the corporate's social projects and initiatives. The international body, CISAC, allocated a maximum of 10% to its satellite organisations for CSI projects. It was up to the individual royalty organisations to decide what percentage to allocate to its social and cultural projects.

The SAMRO Foundation had a sterling reputation for using its allocation in the pursuit of music projects that were of great benefit to its members. For me as an artist and composer, the SAMRO Foundation was a shining light in the music industry and embodied the core values on which SAMRO ostensibly stands; it was the exemplary CSI wing for music and the arts in South Africa, with education outreach programmes, sponsorships of

13 The AEMRO Factor.

NGO music schools and was renowned for its valued sponsorship of composers and musicians in South Africa – programmes which in any other country would have presumably been supported by their governments. The Foundation brand was arguably stronger than the SAMRO brand. It represented its members extremely positively, its composer members were supported well and its commissioning structures were equitable in terms of race and gender. The Foundation was often called on to manage perceptions and misperceptions of race and gender.

Early on during my SAMRO tenure, I met André le Roux who was appointed to oversee the SAMRO Endowment for the National Arts (SENA) in 2006. In 2010, its designation changed to the SAMRO *Foundation*, fulfilling the role of the corporate social investment arm of SAMRO. André is an astute man with vision and a sharp intellect. Together with his right-hand man, James French, who has impressive credentials in the arts community as well as musician and efficient administrator, Anriette Chorn, (who was exceptionally knowledgeable in the music education sphere and a valued friend) and Naseema Yusuf, his loyal and competent PA, André conceived of and executed ambitious plans for changing the landscape of the South African music industry. He accomplished a great deal until SAMRO corporate decided to radically alter the direction of the Foundation.

The Stakeholder Hub in SAMRO that is designated to digitally upload and store records of registered original music and intellectual property has suffered enormous challenges over the years, causing composers to endure huge frustration when registering their music and claiming royalties. Although SAMRO is equipped with a digital platform on which to achieve this, works have still mysteriously and frustratingly disappeared from the system. This of course significantly affects the payment of royalties to composers. Their website too seems to have unfortunate glitches.

I recall spending many arduous hours in December 2012 with Noelene Kotze, the wonderful archivist who was phenomenally knowledgeable at the SAMRO Foundation. She kindly offered to assist me in identifying my many works – and to

upload these compositions of mine on to the registered database at SAMRO. Some of my compositions were there, but many were missing. This was a laborious task and I am deeply grateful to her for her generosity and time. Sadly, several of my registered works have *again* disappeared from the database and it is an uphill battle to try to restore them.

With over R50 million raised towards sponsorship over the years, the Foundation engaged in a vast number of educational programmes, supporting an array of NGO music schools, with micro-grants or subsidies that help them survive in a small way, but at least gave them a SAMRO Foundation endorsement and a stamp of approval in terms of recognition, which allowed them to leverage other funding.

I fondly recall the wonderful personalities with whom I sat on the early Foundation Boards: I remember Jabulani Tsambo (better known as Jabba-Man, Hip-Hop Pantsula or HHP), a larger-than-life character who exuded warmth, empathy and generosity and dedicated his tragically short life to the betterment of the youth and in service to music. HHP allegedly took his own life after suffering from severe depression over many years. His death was a dreadful loss to the arts community and his ardent young fan base. Other trustees were Neo Muyanga (composer), Dr Sylvia Bruinders (educator and music researcher), Motsumi Makhene (arts educator and composer), and Richard Nwamba[14], an exceptional radio personality. These trustees contributed selflessly to the ideals of the Foundation. It was an honour to serve with such talented and enthusiastic personalities.

Ground-breaking work in the music industry was achieved by the Foundation in the area of commissioning new music works and bursaries for music students in higher education. Over 100 bursaries were awarded to undergraduate and post-graduate students who were pursuing full-time music studies at various South African universities in 2019; R13 000 per student may not seem a great deal, but it frequently made the difference between a student continuing at university or not. Various arts bodies like the Roodepoort International Eisteddfod of South Africa (RIESA)

14 The voice behind Channel Africa's, *Africa in Song*.

made substantial bequests to the Foundation for all the categories of sponsorship, namely Western art, jazz and indigenous musics.

African ideals

A magnificent portrait of Princess Constance Magogo kaDinuzulu Buthelezi graces the walls of SAMRO. She was married to Inkosi Mathole Buthelezi and had the distinction of being the mother of Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party. As a Zulu princess, she became a torch-bearer for the preservation and development of traditional African music. These ideals aligned completely with those of SAMRO. As a pioneer of women's rights, she fought for women's value to be acknowledged, recognised and celebrated. She was a most worthy representative symbol at SAMRO and a widely admired icon. She was an early influencer for female achievement and of great importance as an early accomplished musician-artist.

Princess Magogo was taught to play traditional instruments and composed Zulu 'classical' music by writing many songs and playing the *ugubhu* (a stringed bow with calabash resonator), on which she accompanied herself in song. Some of her performances were recorded by the legendary ethnomusicologist and researcher Hugh Tracey. As a woman I greatly admire her and the fact that she transcended the proverbial 'glass ceiling' by even becoming an *imbongi* (praise singer), a role traditionally reserved for males. Many of her compositions were beautifully sung and recorded by Sibongile Khumalo, who also sang them in the opera *Princess Magogo* in 2002.

What was arguably seen as the flagship of the SAMRO Foundation (the last competition was held in 2019) were the annual Overseas Scholarship competitions, rotating annually between composers, singers, instrumentalists, and keyboard players in the realms of Western art, jazz and, as proposed, traditional African music. Candidates competed in the realms of Western Art, Jazz, Indigenous African Music, and the late Surendran Reddy's 'clazz' style. These awards enabled hundreds of young, local talented musicians to study overseas at institutions outside South Africa. Final concerts were usually glittering

gala affairs with well-known guest speakers and beautiful concerts, with music presented of a remarkably high standard. The first winner of this SAMRO Overseas Scholarship was the composer Graham Newcater, followed by the exceptionally talented composer Peter Klatzow in the 1960s, both of whom are now deceased.

Live Music Support via *Concerts SA* like its predecessor, the *Mmino* Project, was funded by the Norwegian Embassy for 20 years (from 2012) and attracted a huge amount of interest. It also provided exceptional support for artists in venues around the country. The Norwegians have also generously funded progressive arts organisations, institutions and active initiatives like the Pan African Society for Musical Arts Education (PASMAE). Since its inception in 2013, Concerts SA has contributed vastly to the local music scene, supporting 15000 artists over the years who performed at 5000 concerts, to an audience of over 1 million people in small venues in 11 out of the 16 SADC[15] countries.

By genre, 59% of the music performed had been jazz, 39% popular music and 1% indigenous African music. *Concerts SA* (www.concertssa.co.za, now administered by IKS Cultural Consulting) has offered artists an opportunity to earn an income other than via royalty cheques, which is crucial, going forward. In the absence of any tangible or sustainable government support, this kind of initiative has been the lifeblood for oxygen-starved desperate musicians and performing artists.

The Work of the SAMRO Music Archive and Commissions Committee (SMACC)

In my opinion, one of the most valuable initiatives by SAMRO, administered by the Foundation, was the establishment of the SAMRO Music Archive nearly 60 years ago, incorporating works (some dating as far back as the 1940s); it is a repository for

15 Countries of the *Southern African Development Community* including South Africa, Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Swaziland, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

original music predominantly by South African composers for the preservation and documentation of sheet music, articles, reviews, and recordings. It is available for research into and for the study and performance of music by South African composers. These archives can be accessed from across the globe and provide critical information, sheet music for researchers, orchestras and solo performers, as well as a collection of very valuable documents, instruments, and artefacts (including the Huskisson Collection, the De Waal/Carstens Collection and work of luminaries such as Gerard Sekoto).

One of the Foundation's core business drives and philosophy was to the composing of new original music works. South African composers were strongly encouraged to apply for available commissions. The only real prerequisite was that the composer should have secured a performance date for the applied-for commission, the rationale being that the music work might otherwise languish in an archive somewhere without the important act of its public performance. It is axiomatic that music only really exists once the notes on the written page jump off the paper (nowadays they may exist only digitally) and into the hands of the instrumental performers, to be played or produced in the electronic medium.

Over the years, hundreds of composers, both young and not so young, were privileged to be commissioned to produce new, original pieces of music ranging from solo works to larger ensemble and orchestral pieces. Works commissioned covered a vastly diverse range of styles and organisations, for example, the International Steelpan and Marimba Festival, the Field Band Foundation and the Soweto Theatre were very popular and regular organisations requesting and receiving funding for new scores.

Although the SAMRO Foundation had no formal written agreement with the UNISA Music Foundation, the mutual support and respect between the two organisations gave birth to much productive collaboration. The UNISA Foundation initiated the SAMRO Foundation's relationship with the Amersfoort Jazz Festival and this is a wonderful on-going relationship now driven by Indigenous Knowledge Systems, (IKS Cultural Consulting), run

by André le Roux, who stepped down from the board of the UNISA Foundation in October 2018.

Remarkably important work was being done by the Foundation in the neglected area of indigenous African music (the Indigenous African Music project IAM – plus the SAMRO Scores project), supported by the US Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation. A wonderful researcher and expert in the field, Nandipha Mnyani was appointed to lead this initiative and she was doing a wonderful job. Programmes for transcribing traditional African music were being undertaken by experts and repertoire from extant culturally significant African music was being suggested for transcription.

I took an active role in transcribing traditional African music, as well as reviewing the work that students and others had done, to check its accuracy. In this way, this important body of music and song will be captured, documented, and preserved. It was even mooted at the final board meeting in 2019 that a special scholarship be introduced for scholars of this relevant area of local music. An Indigenous African Music Scholarship would run parallel to the standard Western Art and Jazz categories for the SAMRO Overseas Scholarships Competition. The Foundation had already been phasing in indigenous art music as part of the competition, with performances and competition elements, including an IAM award. This was stimulated by a desire to present this music at the same level of excellence for the overseas scholarships, parallel to the current competition.

With the advent of the new SAMRO Board in 2019, the allocation to the SAMRO Foundation was drastically cut by 45% – by millions, in fact, leaving a decapitated foundation no longer able to pursue most of its valuable legacy projects and sponsorships, as it had done for so many years. One of the first casualties was the SAMRO Overseas Scholarship Competition, followed by the cutting of 100 bursaries, the Stakeholder Hub and the funding of 47 NGO Music Schools.

The last board meeting of the Foundation that I attended took place on 19 March 2019, alongside the following trustees: Tebogo Alexander, Sibongile Khumalo, Percy Mabandu, popular

ClassicFM (now defunct) radio personality Kutlwano Masote (Chair) and Leon van Wyk, Nomfundo Xaluva (Vice-Chair). Officials present were André le Roux (Managing Director) and James French (Manager). Relebogile Mabotja and Ryan Hill, with David Alexander (not present), both of whom had been agitating to get onto the SAMRO board for many years and finally did, represented the SAMRO board. The purpose of the latter members was to dispose of the current Foundation Board, as their goals allegedly 'did not align' with those of the Foundation. These accusations, however, were seemingly simply a ruse to dissolve the board, use the funds ostensibly for their own purposes and *most* disappointingly get rid of critical NGO structures like music schools that were being supported.

The reasons that were provided seemed somewhat disingenuous, as the Foundation supported and represented a huge diversity of music and musicians, including jazz, indigenous African, classical, Western art, and popular musics. This so-called 'disjunct' in philosophy soon became clear when many of the Foundation initiatives were immediately amputated – the overseas scholarships and prize-winners' concerts, arguably the high-profile 'flagship' of the Foundation (which had been held for around 60 years and awarded scholarships to all races and genders!), NGO music schools, bursaries to university students and the Stakeholder Hub. The disappointment of the music community at the demise of the Foundation was palpable and strongly expressed by the public. The final Foundation board meeting was in April 2020, when a resolution was proposed to dissolve the Foundation.

In retrospect, however, despite drastic budget cuts and a shift in its primary ideals, I felt extremely gratified to have been part of a music foundation that assisted in launching the careers of many talented young people in the music industry. We served the under-served and gave many young people the opportunity, dignity and hope in very challenging environments. As well as sponsoring high-profile events, we in the Foundation assisted in sponsoring less well-known projects in an effort to imbue the love of music in as many young people as possible ranging from very talented students to those simply delighting in the joy of making music.



Gideon Roos Senior, founder and CEO of SAMRO (left) together with myself, Annette Emdon (Chairman of SAMRO for many years) and my mother

Impious Bias: *Types and Stereotypes*

A Strange Tale of Masada, Catfishing and Cancel Culture

'Catfishing' has become a buzzword in contemporary society. It's a strategy with which a person can fool (or simply bully) others into believing what they are saying, representing or exemplifying something else, and in this way, gain almost anything, from money, celebrity status to sexual favours. Sadly, it is one of the by-products of a society obsessed with social media, whose posts people tend to swallow wholesale and at face value. It is also a sorrowful indictment of the lack of discernment within the society. It is a monumental irony that we live in an age when we have never had greater or more rapid access to news, opinion pieces and (crucially) varying views of political, social and cultural issues – yet we (speaking for myself mainly) have never been so disinclined to use it. Bloggers, journalists and, indeed, anyone with a smartphone or computer can spew forth wildly inaccurate rhetoric, gain a following and get their 15 minutes of fame, 'going viral' by going vituperative.

Yet it is not a new phenomenon. Years before social media and the hashtag generation, putative academics in universities were wont to make sweeping pronouncements, fuelled by the desire to parade their own so-called "erudition", regardless of the prejudice, outrageous projection or outright absurdity of their assertions. Equally sadly, victims of this form of deception are often lured through artificial friendships and deceitful individuals. But even more tragically, catfishing in a nuanced form is practiced in the echelons of academia, in a situation that predates social media by many years. Until one becomes prey to this practice, it remains an abstract concept in the back of one's mind.

I, however, write from bitter and bruised experience of this, in an episode which remains one of the most upsetting, though enlightening, of my life.

Mangling of *Masada*

Given the name of my work *Masada,* the university that commissioned it and the fractured period of time in South African history during which it was created, a young post-graduate student used her reading of my work as a cynical, disingenuous and politicised barb, in a paper read at an international academic conference. This had little to do with academic freedom of expression, as will be seen further on in this chapter.

The person's reading of my work constituted an obtuse, misinformed, and simplistic *ad hominem* attack with noticeably racist and anti-Semitic undertones. The text of the academic paper in question displayed not only a duplicitous revisionism of history (a phenomenon which became relatively common in post-apartheid South Africa), but also a grotesque distortion of the facts. It was viewed by many as an essentialist, superficial, and unintelligent reading of my music, which ultimately discredited the writer herself.

I was approached by a student from the Western Cape in early 2011, who asked if she could fly up to interview me about my piece *Masada*, a quintet for String Quartet and bassoon. *Masada* was a commission by Prof Fanie Jooste from Potchefstroom University and was composed in 1989. It was her intention to present a paper at an international conference in London themed "Art Musics of Israel", scheduled to take place from 28–31 March 2011. The event had been organised by the Jewish Music Institute (JMI) Forum for Israeli Music, in association with the Institute of Musical Research (IMR) and School of Advanced Study at the University of London (SOAS).

I willingly agreed to help her in any way I could and set aside an entire day for her to interview me in person and thereby gain knowledge about my composition as well as the history and motivation behind its origin. She had sent me a list of interview questions to be discussed during her visit, which I had agreed to address in person. Upon her arrival, I generously gave her a copy of my score and my personal written notes and analyses. I also elaborate extensively on my inspiration and rationale for *Masada*, the genesis of which had entailed a visit to the legendary

mountain at the foot of the Dead Sea in Israel in 1989 (see the chapter on "My Jewish Music", in which I expound at great length on that beautiful experience).

I shared my excitement and feelings of awe with the student – and elaborated on the evolution of my music work, expressing not only the spatial beauty of the area around the Dead Sea, but also the historical symbolisms of the ruins of the Hebrew civilisation found at its zenith.

In retrospect, it became clear that on the pretext of gaining insights into my composition and appearing to be genuinely interested in presenting an honest appraisal of my work, the student had absolutely no intention of respecting any of my answers to her questions – or honouring the value of my oeuvre – which, by 2011, was considerable. This became clear to me when she superimposed a political agenda on her reading of it, for her own nefarious purposes and, by extension, those of her supervisor.

After the extensive time I had spent with her, I had requested her to send me a completed draft of her paper prior to the conference. Nothing was forthcoming until a few days before the event. I concurrently also received a phone call from the organiser of the London conference, Dr Geraldine Auerbach, MBE (Hon Fellow SOAS), who knew me as a respected and renowned South African musician-composer. Dr Auerbach told me that she had been quite horrified when she read the abstract of the student's paper. She had accepted the abstract of the paper in good faith, but wanted to warn me of possible impending defamatory remarks contained in the full conference paper after seeing the proposed title.

What should have immediately alerted me of course to the student's misleading intentions was exactly the title of her paper, "The Unspoken Cultural Alliance: Israel, Afrikaner Nationalism and Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph's *Masada*", suggesting that my work endorsed or was part of an 'unspoken alliance' with Afrikaner nationalism, but in a hugely derogatory manner. I was however, somewhat naïve and could not imagine that a fellow South African academic would try to stick the proverbial 'knife in my back'.

It was a shock to discover that she had incorporated virtually nothing of the extensive information I had given her about *Masada*, whether in pure music analytical terms or indeed the motivating origins about the music material – and, indeed, most importantly, my inspiration and intention in writing it. She made a point of deliberately ignoring virtually every aspect of the musical content I had shared with her. Rather, she had inappropriately and incorrectly politicised my work and, to use her own words, superimposed 'tenuous links' where they did not exist.

In scholarship and journalism in newly post-apartheid South Africa, it became popular – nay, almost mandatory – to use tropes and historical revisionism that would deflect any light away from the role of the embarrassed, (former) pro-apartheid adherents, many of whom came from some traditional Afrikaans families and presented themselves retrospectively as anti-apartheid activists. Certain academics in this aforementioned category suddenly became liberal left-wingers overnight! Dr Joaquin Sousa-Poza[1] (2005), celebrated psychiatrist and psychotherapist, makes mention of this particular syndrome.

The day before the London conference, at which the student was planning to read her paper, I met with two close music friends of mine, Prof Malcolm Nay and Nikki Richard (HoD Music at King David Victory Park School), to discuss and address this scurrilous paper in a document of our own, in order to refute its disingenuous content. We dealt with the text, paragraph by paragraph and repudiated the student's crude and racist insinuations. That evening, I phoned the organisers of the conference to request that my rebuttal paper be allowed to be read following the student's presentation. This was not only immediately approved, but encouraged. I then asked a young colleague of mine, the respected musician and historian Professor Shirli Gilbert from the University

1 Dr Joaquin F Sousa-Poza (July 2005), past professor of psychiatry at Sherborne University, Canada, referred to the phenomenon of guilt expiation as "repairing the broken self with Expiation of Anger", based on research he conducted on this "fall from grace", or historical trauma. According to him, one of the methodologies used by individuals (and, indeed, communities) to absolve themselves of feelings of guilt and sin is transferring the perceived guilt to other parties. It constitutes a search for self-atonement.

of Southampton, to read my rebuttal paper at the conference in my absence. Gilbert is a scholar of Holocaust music and I was delighted to hear that she would be present at the conference and readily agreed.

Prof Gilbert read our hastily-written response paper after the student delivered hers – and it was met with a great deal of interest and tangible support. So much so that a few members of the audience, who were familiar with my work (like Israeli musicologist-composer Daniel Galay), contacted me shortly afterwards to express shock at the student's bizarre paper and solidarity with our rebuttal. My strong sense then, and indeed even now, is that there was (and is) a bias within a bias – the old spectre of racist anti-Semitism rearing its ugly head. These feelings have been borne out over the years since then, with disturbing personal attacks and veiled anti-Semitic incidents emanating from select writings of certain students strongly influenced by their academic supervisors.

Of related interest is that in a conference paper titled "Making the Right Noises: Political Correctness and the South African Composer", which I presented in April 2016 at the University of Cape Town in a special colloquium, I wrote the following:

> *Politics and art are strange bedfellows. The artist or musician historically values his/her independence and does not take kindly to being dictated to regarding what she/he is permitted to write or compose, whether by individuals or by a specific ideology or regime. Stories of composers during the Nazi regime and the Soviet Union's repressive times are legion. It is in the nature of the creative being to want to express concepts, ideas and feelings in an unconstrained manner – whether in words, paintings or music – and to be accountable purely to his/her own imagination in a free aesthetic environment. Of course, the artist does not function in a cultural vacuum or in isolation, so it is fair to say that a political environment inevitably has some influence on the thinking and soul of an artist.*

Retrospective activism

We in South Africa have lived through an extremely difficult period in history. Many artists and musicians (including composers) chose to remain in the country and not go into exile. They continued writing, painting, performing, and creating in their homeland. However, some chose to leave, either to avoid conscription or as a form of protest against the policies and practices of the white supremacist regime. Those who remained, for a myriad of reasons, continued to produce works of art and music, giving credence to the fact that there are many forms of resistance against a repressive regime, including expression through the arts.

However, the degree to which political overtones are daubed onto creative work by over-zealous critics or analysts can reach egregious and grotesque proportions. A mode of research emanating largely from Stellenbosch University's Music Department (in the breakaway unit subsequently known as *Africa Open*) and transplanted to select musicologists at UNISA has tended to paint all white composers who remained and worked in South Africa during the apartheid era with the same tainted brush. That brush is intended to label 'established' white composers who continued composing in this country as somehow being complicit with the apartheid regime. Hopefully, in time, such simplistic and accusatory theories will be debunked by researchers with a much more intelligent, more nuanced and mature understanding of a very complex issue.

Mary Rörich (2003) had written an article in the *Mail & Guardian* in which she labeled composers Peter Klatzow, Roelof Temmingh, Hans Roosenschoon and others of "being too white, too blinkered, too needy, too up our own fundamental orifices". Stephanus Muller at Stellenbosch University wrote a reply reproaching Rörich for being "selective about music history before 1994", specifically referring to her condemnation of Klatzow, whom she disparagingly labelled "the leader of the pack". To this, Muller stated:

> Few musicians or musicologists will dispute the fact that Klatzow is still, as he was in 1983, one of South Africa's best and most original composers. This will remain the case, even if aesthetic preferences shift, or political imperatives change.

How ironic that some musicologists in South Africa, Muller included, did a complete about-turn in their public allegiances post-democracy. Political imperatives dictated a drastically revised viewpoint – and public utterances by selected Stellenbosch 'musicologists' certainly changed dramatically, as did the views of other white musicologists retrospectively. This constituted hypocritical, expedient and revisionist politicking by them after 1994.

The great South African playwright Athol Fugard had correctly observed that any story or work of art, honestly told or created, is *ipso facto* political, because it reflects and projects authentic interactions between individuals – people experiencing themselves and each other – in specific circumstances, at specific times, against a specific (but incidental) historical backdrop. While his work includes and considers that backdrop, its focus is primarily the interaction and experience, rather than the political context in which they occur. For this reason, he has consistently rejected attempts by dramatists around the world to label his work as 'protest theatre', insisting that it instead be called 'theatre of the human'. Other artists, however, have embraced the 'protest' epithet, pointedly using their work to highlight and decry injustice.

Writing texts bolstered and affirmed by the tenets of the 'new musicology'[2] has emboldened certain musicologists in South

2 According to the tenets of the new musicology, research into or investigation of a piece of music that ventures to undertake a traditional musical analysis based on its building blocks, namely the parameters of music such as melody, harmony rhythm, texture or tone colour, has assumed an inferior and pejorative connotation and has become philosophically and politically incorrect, and therefore unacceptable. While I am totally aligned with an interdisciplinary approach, I cannot embrace one which excludes the very nature and essence of music itself. 'Sanitising' and simplistically politicising music – or, indeed, any art form –

Africa to point accusing fingers at others to deflect their own questionable political histories – in this particular case, targeting a whole range of white composers who chose to remain in South Africa during the apartheid era (including esteemed prize-winning composer, Hendrik Hofmeyr, who at some point did leave the country) and continued to be creative.

This is where my personal understanding of 'catfishing' comes into play. The student was, at the time, a young academic. She was voicing comments about a work that had been composed 22 years earlier and articulating criticism of me and my writing in a manner that completely sidestepped academically justifiable writing protocols. Essentially, she was projecting political values and convictions derived from her own assumptions onto me – but more likely those of someone else in the wings, who was goading her on. It became apparent, in my experience that some mentors at universities choose to weaponise, influence, and indoctrinate their students to carry out their own duplicitous agendas. I can only assume that they do this in order to deflect their *own* guilt, or shame regarding the role they – and possibly their own forebears – may have played during the apartheid era.

This incident made me highly cynical about the quality and current practice of the discipline of musicology, particularly the new musicology. Like postmodernism, the 'new musicology', although primarily characterised by a broad heterogeneity of disciplines, was largely influenced by cultural studies, queer theory, social and postcolonial studies, gender studies, and critical theory. These new 'ologies' or 'isms', like several other contemporary dogmas, are open to broad interpretation and frequently misrepresentation - under the guise of 'freedom of expression' or 'academic freedom'. They reject the idea of logic or what is referred to as 'scientism' in the arts. In music, this manifests as a blatant rejection of music as an independent art form with its fundamental sonic attributes characterised by its own intrinsic quintessential measurable properties such as pitch, melody, rhythm, texture, timbre and harmony.

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in this arbitrary, prescriptive manner effectively castrates a work, its creator and its audience.

In many ways, the post-modern and new musicology ideologies buy into the popular notions of 'wokeness' or 'wokeism', but frequently without critical evaluation, intellectual honesty and more objective depth of thought. In an age when chatbots, continually revised lexicons, and political correctness are replacing genuine enquiry – and dictating which questions we may or may not ask, let alone answer – it seems that 'artificial intelligence' is frequently just more artificial than intelligent.

Yet the student's calumny of my work and her 'agenda' flouted even the new musicology, which holds that reductionism has no place in analysis. She resorted to crass generalisations, tenuous links and vagueness in an academic paper that attempted to position my composition *Masada* in an 'unspoken cultural [aka political] alliance' not only in Israel (which, of course, is where Masada is located), but in Afrikaner nationalism – referencing my music in an inflammatory and contemptuous sense. It is laughable that a foolish young South African woman had the effrontery to present such a paper at a serious International Jewish Music Conference. I subsequently sought legal assistance in bringing a case of defamation against her.

My legal representative sent her a five-page letter, headed "*Notice to cease and desist from defamatory conduct*". In addition to this, a brilliant academic colleague of mine in a different discipline in the School of Arts at Wits University – who was deeply disgusted by her presentation – prepared a paper for the Musicological Conference in Pretoria in 2012, tearing her diatribe to pieces. It stated: The student's argument arrives at an astonishingly trite and superficial conclusion. He referred to her approach as a "one-track-minded analysis", and asked what was to be "gained by the academic community in terms of knowledge and method, by such procedures", adding that her work revealed 'minimal hygiene in scholarship and argument. This critique revealed the scholarly absurdity of the writer.

Malcolm Nay in his doctoral thesis (2023) – with reference to *Masada* – wrote: "The student's analysis of the musical content struck me as puerile and unrelated to its realisation and emotional

power in live performance; far too often, musicologists do not consider performance in their analysis of musical works."

The defamation case against the student received little traction, as her academic superiors in Stellenbosch closed ranks and entered into a long correspondence claiming academic freedom as their defence. However, no amount of 'academic freedom' should violate the rights of an individual by unsubstantiated *ad hominem* attacks or indulge in any form of discrimination[3]. It is in the third exception In the Bill of rights, relating to 'hate speech', that the student's paper would have had relevance in a court of law. Her words were intended to cause psychological, emotional, and professional harm to me by distorting my work and presenting it as a racially-loaded contrivance. I decided that I had made my point and would not pursue a lengthy and costly case against her and her mentor.

A performance of the work in question, *Masada* for String Quartet and bassoon, was featured during the international conference proceedings in London as mentioned above. It was performed by the Regent Quartet and a London-based bassoon soloist.

After the performance in London, the 1st violinist, Caryn Cohen, emailed me saying:

3 Academic freedom in the South African Constitution is dealt with as part of 'Freedom of expression' in Section 16 (1) of the Constitution. Essentially, the section provides that: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes … academic freedom and freedom of scientific research." However, the rights of the individual are provided for in the Bill of Rights in Section 8(1) of the Constitution. Other rights are equally important, such as the right to dignity. Moreover, Section 16(2) of the Constitution specifically provides that the right of freedom of expression (including academic freedom) does not apply in three circumstances: (i) propaganda for war, (ii) incitement of imminent violence and (iii) advocacy of hatred which is based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion, and which constitutes incitement to cause harm.
It is in the third exception, relating to 'hate speech', that the student's paper would have had relevance in a court of law. Her words were intended to cause psychological emotional and professional harm to me by distorting my work and presenting it as a racially-loaded contrivance.

> *We all so enjoyed performing* Masada *today as well as the process of getting to know the beautiful work. The performance was very well received, and I think it went quite well. I sincerely hope we managed to get your thoughts across. We found the work challenging but very satisfying to play. I hope we will get another chance to perform it at some point. It was recorded and I will work out the best way to get this to you … I also attended the lecture given by the student – and your response to her paper was read out very effectively. The plan had been for her to work with us on the piece between her lecture and the concert. However, once we realised how much she had misinterpreted your music, we decided not to work with her. Our interpretation had always been based on your programme notes. As a white, Jewish, South African, like you, I found her ideas of associations with Afrikaner Nationalism (in the context of Israel) completely absurd.*

It was gratifying to know that the interpreters of my music did not have their artistic expressions tainted by a misguided person who imposed her own disingenuous and overtly antisemitic agenda on my musical creation.

Awards, Rewards, Prizes, and Surprises

Kindnesses and kudos

The Order of Ikhamanga – presidential national orders

I had heard of the Order of the British Empire (OBE), but not of a South African equivalent of national orders. It was, therefore, a very pleasant surprise when, in early September 2004, I opened a couriered envelope bearing the insignia of the South African president's official crest. It was an invitation to me and my 'partner' from the then President Thabo Mbeki to attend a formal award ceremony of the presidential orders in the stately room of the Union Buildings in Pretoria from 10am to 12.30pm on 29 October. This was to be followed by a luncheon in honour of the recipients, of whom I was to be one. The venue for the luncheon was the marquee on the western lawns of the Union Buildings. The dress code was either "dark suit (male), uniform, or traditional" – none of which I had in my wardrobe, although I did have a very elegant smart royal blue suit comprising a long skirt and a chic jacket with satin lapels. Two rather fancy accreditation cards on lanyards were sent for me and my husband Michael, which would give us access to both the ceremony and the luncheon.

In further correspondence with the president's office, it was arranged that we would be accommodated the evening prior to the award ceremony at the beautiful Sheraton Hotel in Pretoria opposite the Union Buildings. We arrived at the hotel on the Thursday afternoon and were later treated to a lavish dinner, after which we retired to a luxurious suite. After a wonderful breakfast the next morning, we were escorted to the Union Buildings – a venue that was overwhelmingly exquisite for me, having grown up in its shadow my entire young life in Pretoria. It brought back exquisite memories of many an afternoon after school, playing

with my brother on its vast lawns, either flying kites or reading books with friends on the steps by the exquisitely kept gardens surrounded by the fragrance of newly-watered, colourful flowers, and sprawling lawns.

This particular 2004 ceremony coincided with the anniversary of 10 years of democracy in South Africa and there was an air of great expectancy as we were guided into the stately government room with its colourful pennants and flags. A gold-plated commemorative booklet was presented to each awardee upon arrival. While we waited to be seated, I read some of the illuminating information in the brochure written by the Rev Frank Chikane, Chancellor of the Orders. The birth of a new non-racial and non-sexist democracy in South Africa necessitated a critical review of the national orders, which had been undertaken.

A new way forward

Seeking to move away from the past, the president's Advisory Council was tasked with commissioning research bodies, holding group discussions with stakeholders and consulting with jewellery and medal designers, with the aim of creating a brief for new medal designs, relevant to the new democracy. Investigations and surveys were conducted into new indigenous symbols and representation in an attempt to capture a new aesthetic that would reflect the spirit of a brand new democracy. I learnt that the current prestigious orders are the highest awards which a country can bestow on its citizens and foreign nationals.

They are: The Order of Luthuli, the Order of Mapungubwe, the Order of the Baobab, the Order of Ikhamanga, the Order of Mendi[1] for Bravery, and the Order of the Companions of OR Tambo. This annual investiture ceremony is to honour men and women for their exceptional contributions in the fields of sport, creative

1 This recognises South African citizens who have performed special acts of bravery. The British warship, *Mendi*, manned by 816 South African black recruits, was struck by a sister British vessel when nearing France in February 1917. The recruits were bound for the European theatre of war as menial army aides. The ship sank quickly and, realising they were about to die, the recruits chose to face death singing and dancing as African warriors.

arts and culture, for exceptional life-saving bravery, icons of selfless sacrifice, for outstanding achievement, and contributions to our society in the development of South Africa. Some of the awardees had passed on and a few selected recipients were from outside the country – all people of influence and service. In rather beautiful poetic phraseology, the tribute read: "Some are born and bred of this soil, others of distant lands – yet all are deeply rooted to our beloved country, South Africa. These men and women have nourished our souls with the beauty of art, the splendour of performance, and the grace of sport."

Pomp and Ceremony

The ceremony began punctually with the arrival of Mbeki and his wife, First Lady Zanele Mbeki. When the national anthem was gloriously sung by a wonderful choir situated aloft on a *Juliet* balcony in fabulous African traditional dress, I was particularly proud to hear 'my' anthem magnificently sung to honour the awardees – this music being one of the reasons I had been included in the esteemed award line-up. What followed was a welcome by the Chancellor Rev Frank Chikane and a ceremonial oration by the Grand Patron of the National Orders – the enthusiastic and jovial praise-singer adding a vibrant and rich, indigenous flavour to the occasion.

With much pageantry, the investiture of the national orders took place. I went up rather nervously when my name was called, having been told exactly how and where to walk in a brief rehearsal. It was a proud moment when President Mbeki placed the exquisite bronze medal around my neck as a recipient of the Order of Ikhamanga, for my "outstanding contribution as a composer, pianist and teacher in the development of music in South Africa and internationally". After looking at the brochure again after 20 years for the purposes of this memoir, I discovered that as an awardee, I am entitled to indicate this by using the following post-nominal letters: OIB (Order of Ikhamanga Bronze) – a charming discovery, since I have never to date used this title.

'Ikhamanga' is the isiXhosa word for the unique and beautiful flower, the strelitzia (also known as crane, or bird

of paradise) and is one of the world's best-known and most striking-looking blooms. It is indigenous to South Africa and grows wild in the Eastern Cape. It forms the central motif in the Order of Ikhamanga medal and symbolises the unique beauty of the achievements of South Africans in the creative fields and in sports. At the centre of the design an ancient terracotta mask is depicted (modelled on one found near the town of Lydenburg) and below that is an African drum. Above the mask is the stylised crest revealing the brilliant rays of the sun. The crest exemplifies a feathered headdress worn by performers in the arts.

The award of the Order of Ikhamanga comprised: 1) a badge with medallion on a neckband: 2) a miniature medallion to be worn as a brooch or on a breast pocket and 3) a lapel rosette. All of these different medals in bronze were contained in an impressive heavy wooden box, together with my magnificent large scroll with the crested written dedication. Although I am certainly biased in this respect, I am of the opinion that the Ikhamanga design is the most beautiful of all the medallions in the 'orders'. I was thrilled to be in the esteemed company of recipients like Natalie du Toit (swimmer supreme), Ingrid Jonker (poet *primo*), Alfred Khumalo (journalist and formidable photographer), Dolly Rathebe (musician *magnifique*), Sydney Brenner (medical researcher *par excellence*) and Tshilidzi Marwala, globally acclaimed AI expert and scientist as well as future Vice-Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg and current Rector of the United Nations University in Tokyo. In addition Prof Tshilidzi was instrumental in facilitating and supporting Michael's illustrious career in food security at UJ.

There was a photo opportunity on the side of the Union Buildings called the West Wing after the ceremony and we then proceeded to the marquee for lunch. On our way there, we encountered Jacob Zuma coming towards us, though at that time, we were unaware of the rumbling political machinations and treachery going on under the surface in the ANC. After he greeted us with pleasantries, we exchanged a few friendly words, little realising what was about to transpire politically. We did not see what lay in the wings for poor beleaguered President Mbeki.

Table *accoutrements* – local is *lekker*[2]

The table appointments at the luncheon were exquisite adornments; handmade beaded and wire ornaments placed on African-styled fabrics. The beautifully printed table menu and table numbers were made from recyclable natural fabrics and natural twine. On our table, was an indigenous-print round tablecloth. Having noted our special dietary requirements in our response to the initial invitation, we were treated to a lavish three-course kosher meal, catered by the legendary caterer Shelley Geffen; this consisted of a starter of West African *couscous* and chicken salad topped with a honey and herb dressing; followed by the main course of 'medallion' of beef and lamb cutlet (a nice touch, given the medallions award) accompanied by a potato and butternut 'duchess' plus seasonal vegetables, enhanced by a pepper and sun-dried tomato cream; and finally a decadent dessert comprising individual chocolate gateau, surrounded by a berry drizzle and chocolate friandaise. I regard myself as something of a 'foodie' and enjoy experimenting with new and scrumptious recipes when I have the time!

During the meal, we were treated to some inspiring speeches and were delighted to be joined unexpectedly by other guests, our long-time friends, Rabbi Yossy and Rebbetzin Rochel Goldman, who were naturally placed with us at the kosher table. The rabbi recently reminded me that, during the luncheon, he was diplomatically trying to keep the peace between Deputy Minister of Defence Mluleki George and Pieter Mulder, leader of the Freedom Front. At one point, the minister asked Rabbi Goldman whether he thought there would ever be peace between Israel and Pa...kistan! That was certainly a new take on the conflict in the Middle East. With admirable aplomb, the rabbi overlooked this gaffe and gave a respectful, non-committal reply.

We took our beautiful table handouts, programmes, and brochures home with us as mementos of a glorious event – and several weeks later, I received a video recording of the entire ceremony, plus beautiful group and individual photos that had been taken on the day by registered mail. A huge framed exhibit

2 Afrikaans word meaning 'nice' or 'cool'.

of the occasion hangs on my dining room wall and displays the written tribute, together with the beautiful brass scrolls, the official programme and the magnificent pendant medal. For me, receiving the award was acknowledgement not just of my work as a composer and musician, but also of my identity as a South African playing a part in the development of a new democracy, in which diversity, tolerance, and idealism should triumph over prejudice and oppression. It was a deeply emotional experience for me and remains one of the highest points of my career.

In the early 2000s, I had been requested by Radio Cape Cod, USA (WOMR 92.1 FM) to submit my compositions. Canary Burton, the station manager, introduced herself to me by e-mail, having heard some of my music on a programme hosted by Marvin Rosen, called *Classical Discoveries WPRB,* which often focused on women's music. I was blown away to be informed that I had won the Burton Award in January 2000 'for favourite composer' on the programme called *The Latest Score,* as voted by the radio listenership. The radio station sent me a beautiful personalised certificate, which I treasure.

It is always most gratifying to be recognised by international organisations, rather than only local ones (as a 'big fish in a small pond'), so it was also particularly exciting in 2006 to receive the ASCAP[3] Award given by the Music Rights Society of the USA for 'original music performed in the USA by a foreigner' for the period 2003/2004. The USA is a 'large pond' in which to be recognised and I felt extremely validated by this award for my new musical offerings. As a composer, one spends so many lonely hours squeezing out the creative juices that it feels fabulous to be appreciated.

Back in Pretoria … I was contacted by the TuksAlumni Association from the University of Pretoria in 2007, regarding a decision by their board to present me with their annual award as an alumna who had made a substantial contribution to music, thereby bringing prestige to the university. At a special tribute dinner, I was presented with the TuksAlumni Laureate Award, a bronze effigy of the Alumni House, *Kaya Rosa* – the magnificently

3 American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers.

decorated *Wilhelmiens* house (derived from Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands), in late Victorian style, which stands at the main entrance to the university in Roper Street. The house was replicated precisely from the 1895 original building in Skinner Street, with its wrap-around *stoep*[4] and delicate filigree work. The owner, Leo Weinthal, had named the house after his wife, Rosa – the word *Kaya* meaning 'house' in isiZulu.

Walking off the stage that evening with the statue, I was petrified of falling, as the bronze award was alarmingly heavy and I could barely carry it. I had to be assisted off the stage lest my knees buckle and cause me to fall headlong into the lap of the head of the Alumni Association.

When in Rome …

2018 – 'Global Women in Music for Human Rights' Prize

As early as 1981, I became a member of the international society for the promotion of women's music, *Donne in Musica* (Women in Music). I was later elected as a member of the International Honour Committee of the Foundation and became its first African representative and an adjudicator. I was most fortunate to have attended the second festival held in Rome in 1982 (42 years ago) with a memorable performance of my work, *Five Pieces for Woodwind Quartet and Soprano*, with the renowned Filipino soprano Lilia Reyes, for which I received a standing ovation. The South African Ambassador at the time attended the performance in Rome and very graciously held a reception at the Embassy for me after the concert. *Donne in Musica,* also known as FACDIM[5], was founded by the talented British-Italian soprano Patricia Adkins-Chiti in 1978 to give voice to centuries of neglected women composers. She facilitated performances of 27,000 women composers from 113 countries! The organisation was energetically and selflessly driven by her for 40 years until her sudden and untimely passing in 2018 – which was a personal tragedy for me, as explained previously.

4 'Verandah' in English.
5 *Fondatione Adkins-Chiti: Donne in Musica.*

In alignment with the incredible work done to promote music by women composers, a 'call for scores' was circulated at the end of December 2017 by the FACDIM for a special Women's Day concert in Padova, Italy, to take place on 8 March 2018. I was exceptionally privileged to have my *Masada* (version for String Orchestra and Bassoon), selected from hundreds of scores submitted for adjudication. Maestro Claudio Scimone would be conducting the orchestra, *I Solisti Veneti*, reputed to be one of the world's leading chamber orchestras.

The following six works were chosen to be performed in Padova: my *Masada*, *An Passages* by Rain Worthington (USA), *The Mountain Spirit* by Fuhong Chi (China), *Orchinus Orca* by Cassi To (Australia), *Ad Anna F* by Silvia Bianchera (Italy) and *Alpha* by Anna Stereopoulou (Greece). While I passionately desired to be at that performance in person, I knew this would not be possible, as my daughter would be getting married virtually a week later in Cape Town. My efforts to secure a recording of that performance have been unsuccessful to this day, despite countless attempts.

A press release by the *Donne in Musica* Foundation on 7 May 2018, reaching out to women composers to submit their scores for a global event, was publicised in the media as follows:



Global Women in Music for Human Rights

Women's music is an essential part of world heritage

> The fundamental role of women in the creation and transmission of tangible and intangible cultural heritage

> and the creation and practice of music belongs not only to a people or a culture, but to all of humanity.

The UN Human Rights Office celebrates the 70th Anniversary of the Adoption of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (10 December 1948) and has launched a worldwide campaign to promote, engage and reflect on human rights. Gender inequality in the field of music is a worldwide challenge. Sustaining the women creating music will influence public opinion and stimulate their full participation in cultural life.

Fondazione Adkins-Chiti: Donne in Musica has organised a '*Global Call for New Music*' for women composers and creators of music of all ages, nationalities and musical backgrounds. Participants will compose/create a song, choral or instrumental work inspired by the struggle for human rights. Ten works, chosen by an international Reading Commission and publicly announced at the end of July, will be performed and recorded in a Gala Concert in the Teatro Argentina, Rome, Italy on 5 November this year.

> "*Art and human rights are universal languages and the UN Human Rights Office is pleased to count on the support of the Fondazione Adkins-Chiti: Donne in Musica in the 70th anniversary campaign for the* ***Universal Declaration of Human Right****s. It is an occasion in which to reaffirm that the rights of women and girls are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. We look forward to the engagement of all musicians, teachers and researchers in promoting women's artistic empowerment.*" – Laurent Sauveur, Chief of External Relations of the UN Human Rights Office.

***Donne in Musica* (*Women in Music*)**, born in 1978 as a movement, became an international non-profit foundation in 1996. It promotes and mainstreams music by women composers, songwriters, and music creators of all ages and nationalities working in all genres, while co-ordinating a network of over 27000 composers, affiliate organisations, performers, pedagogues, and musicologists in 113 countries. The Fondazione Adkins-Chiti: *Donne in Musica* encourages excellence in contemporary music

and intercultural dialogue worldwide. Its pioneering role in the affirmation of the concept of the uniqueness of women as creators of music has been recognised by the Italian government, UNESCO, EUC, EUP, and UNESCO's International Music Council. Its daily work includes promoting knowledge and respect for women's cultural diversity, creativity, advocacy, and recommendations to protect and assist composers – Capacity-building, research, and publication of books and scholarly papers – Music for the mind – Supplying music for Conservatories in need.

A further truth to power stated:

> Women's fundamental role in the creation and transmission of tangible and intangible cultural heritage; Conception and practice of music belongs not only to a people or a culture, but to all of humanity. This **70th anniversary global call** reinforces the right of all girls and women to **express** themselves freely, **develop** their artistry, **communicate** through all media and obtain just **recognition** for their creativity. Women's music is an essential part of world heritage.

An enticing motivation for women to participate followed the general announcement:

> Such is the enthusiasm to be part of this incredible moment that the European Parliament has offered the Foundation its patronage of the event on occasion of the European Year of Cultural Heritage. This means that the president of the European Parliament, Antonio Tajani, will address the audience to this effect, together with UK MP Hon Mary Honeyball. Italian MP Hon. Silvia Costa will be presenting the evening, and artistic directors, M° Erika Zoi and M° Damiano Giuranna will guide us through the musical aspects of the performances.

I saw this as a golden opportunity not only to be part of an international composers' competition and have a highly-publicised performance of my music, but also to honour my promise to again personally visit my dear friend, Patricia

Chiti, in Rome after 36 years of separation. We had maintained correspondence through letters at first and then through e-mails, keeping up to date with each other's lives, careers, and activities. She was thrilled to hear that I would be submitting a work for adjudication.

Background to my Oratorio for Human Rights composition

In early 1996, the Institute for Human Rights Education in South Africa received a request from Andrew Young, Mayor of Atlanta, USA, to commission a full-length oratorio, based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was to be performed at the Atlanta City Hall during the opening of the 1996 Olympic Games in that city. A handful of local composers (including me) were invited to compose sections of the large work and the original words were adapted by Doris Ravenhill for the South African context. Section 6, the longest section, was allocated to me. The topics were very close to my heart: *social security, work and rest, standard of living, mother and child, education, culture, and copyright.* Sadly, our participation in this high-profile event did not come to fruition due to lack of funding, but it had sown the seeds of what would later become the basis of my *Oratorio for Human Rights* for Rome in 2018. I applied myself with fervour to meet the deadline for the composition competition and submitted my *Oratorio for Human Rights*[6] scored for full orchestra, soprano solo, baritone solo and mixed SATB[7] choir to an adjudication committee.

6 The *Oratorio* begins with a rhythmic melody in the big kettle drums (timpani), which is joined by the brass in a fanfare-like crescendo. The strings join in with a marked melody and rhythm. The piece alternates between choral sections and solo singing. Melodies are simple, modally based and in syncopated rhythms. One of the central themes about labour is based on the modal melody sung by the High Priests in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem during services. There is a central 'lullaby' for mother and child in a rocking motion. The section on 'education' which follows uses a jazzy, syncopated melody. African elements are used extensively harmonically and rhythmically. The same fanfare heralds the end of the piece, with soloists joining the choir in a grand climax of all the forces.

7 Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass: 4-part choir arrangement.

Given my passion for percussion instruments, I included an African percussion section comprised of a *djembe* drum, two *dumdumbas* (drums) and African shakers made of pods.

The text for the winning Oratorio needed to match the profound significance of the occasion. The words I used were as follows:

Social Security

Economic, social and cultural rights give us dignity – and humanity.

We each have the right to develop our own personality.

Social security helps one become the person one wants to be.

Work and Rest

We all have the right to do the work that we do best

And to rest and recreate, to recreate and rest.

We need protection when we can't and when there's argument.

Equal pay for equal work, for work of equal value,

A chance to show our enterprise.

Opportunity and security. We all have the right to work and to play.

That's what it's all about.

Standard of Living

Mother and child are special, they need that extra care.

Everyone's standard of living is the issue everywhere.

Education

Education is the heart and soul of our humanity – Ubuntu.

Peace pivots on the justice and the caring it can bring.

Everyone shall have the right to receive it free.

The only limit lies in our capacity for enlightenment,

Meritocracy, for democracy.

Education is the heart of our humanity – Ubuntu, Ubuntu!
That's what it's all about!

Culture and Copyright
We all have a right to the better life, sharing the culture of our community,
Enjoying the arts, the sciences and new technology.
Everyone has the right to own and profit from their creative work.
Morally. Materially. We all have a right to a better life.
That's what it's all about!

I was delighted to receive the following message from FACDIM:

> Over 400 scores from 196 countries were evaluated and adjudicated during August - September 2018 and it is with great pleasure that I can now inform you that your composition has been chosen as one of the top 10. However, the count of instruments included in the piece exceeds the limit requested by the category 'ensemble', which allows for a maximum of 12 instruments.
>
> In order to be able to include your work in the top 10, our artistic directors would like to suggest that you make some adjustments to the submitted score.

So as not to miss this exciting opportunity, I went into immediate action to rework my music to fit the required brief, drastically downscaling the orchestral forces and rearranging them to accommodate only 12 performers – I achieved this with some difficulty of re-conception. After submitting my revised score, I received this text from Valerie Susan Baxter:

> It is my great pleasure to inform you that your score submitted for the Call 'Global Women in Music for Human Rights' has been adjudicated a winner among the top composers. This outstanding achievement entitles you to a visit to Rome as the guest of the Patricia Adkins-Chiti

> Foundation: Women in Music from 4 - 6 November 2018 to participate in the Gala Concert of the same name to be held at the *Teatro Argentina*, Rome on 5 November 2018 and to receive your award together with your fellow composers from different parts of the world.

My excitement was immense, in large part due to my anticipated reunion with my dear friend Patricia. However, that joy was sadly short-lived. In August, I received the devastating news from the *Donne in Musica* team that Patricia had passed away very suddenly in June and I had had no idea whatsoever. I had not heard from her since late May, but had attributed her silence to her being overwhelmed with work for the upcoming occasion.

So it was with a very heavy heart that I arrived in Rome to celebrate an event that was the culmination of Patricia's lifelong passion for music by women – now, sadly, without her charismatic presence, other than her face projected on a screen at the *Teatro Argentina*. Like so much else in life, a project is successful as long as it is being driven by a person with commitment to the cause, as Patricia had been. Prophetically, this was sadly to be the last *Donn*e event.

Michael and I were met at the airport late at night by limousine chauffeurs who transported us to the Grand Hotel Palace, an elegantly beautiful, typically grand Italian hotel on the Via Veneto.

Having a free day prior to the concert, we opted for an 'on-off' bus tour of Rome. It was, unfortunately, much more 'on' than 'off', as it rained heavily all day, although we did enjoy driving past the Arch of Titus, the Spanish Steps, and the Trevi Fountain. Michael also managed to do a strenuous touristy climb of the Coliseum, while I relaxed in a coffee shop 'people-watching', a favourite pastime of mine.

Highlight and super surprise

The Gala Concert that evening was preceded by a cocktail party at which we were meeting the UN delegation, the South African Ambassador and other dignitaries. I had a fortuitous meeting

with Veronica Sabbag, representative of the 'United Voices 4 Peace', as it led to a performance of my symphonic work at the United Nations event in New York in March 2023. The South African Embassy sent a delightful lady, Jeanette Mphephu, as its representative. Our friends Dorothea and Hermann Hartenstein, who travelled from Munich to be with us at the event, were our guests at the *Teatro* that evening.

I had not been able to attend the scheduled rehearsal of my music prior to the concert. However, during the cocktail hour pre-Gala evening just outside the *Teatro* itself, my ears pricked up when I heard the very familiar strains of my Oratorio being rehearsed, filtering through from the magnificent opera theatre to the foyer, so I hurriedly dashed in.

Lo and behold, I was astounded to see a large augmented orchestra on stage rehearsing my music and realised that the organisers must have increased the number of players from the requested 12-piece ensemble format to an orchestra of over 30 players for my work! I was later informed that they had decided that my music warranted full orchestral forces. I was astonished by this generous gesture, as it obviously required substantial extra funding on their part. This beautiful pre-concert run-through had given me an opportunity to make comments and suggestions to the conductor. I duly explained the meaning and the pronunciation of the African word, '*ubuntu*'[8], which I had used in the lyrics for the choir. I knew we were in for a royal treat when I heard the voices of the rich, booming baritone and the mellifluous soprano soaring up to the six-tiered balconies.

I managed to record precious snatches of the run-through on my cell phone. I was told that the concert was going to be recorded for Italian television, but – like my Padova performance – I was very sceptical (given the strict commercial Italian TV copyright laws) that I would ever receive a video or audio copy.

8 An ancient African word meaning, 'I am because you are'. This implies that 'my humanity is contingent on yours' and if either of us breaks that obligation, we betray not only ourselves, but each other. This principle is central to African society and is also reflected in traditional African music, which frequently takes the form of a 'call and response' – a music conversation.

Unhappily, my scepticism was borne out. Had it not been for a music-lover in the audience who informally videoed the entire performance with his cell phone and subsequently sent it to me, I would have no recording to date of that spectacular performance in Rome. [This can be viewed on YouTube – *monocolo3* as "Oratorio for Human Rights – Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph].

I brought home the glossy Gala Concert brochure which itemised the various pre-concert addresses delivered by the dignitaries, followed by the music. I shared the programme with nine charming women composer finalists from all over the world: Isabel Guzman (El Salvador), Annie Fontana (Italy), Linda Hijazi (Jordan), Carmen Alfaro Mendez (Costa Rica), Jane Meryll (USA), Mathilde Groos Viddal (Norway), Elizabeth Gonzalez (Uruguay), Katarina Pustinek Rakar (Slovenia), and Shruti Rajasekar (USA). Also on the programme was a performance by the Children's Voices Choir of the Rome Opera Theatre, comprising 40 young girls.

My winning work was performed by the *Roma Sinfonietta* Orchestra and Choir, conducted by Maestro Fabio Maestri together with soloists Damiana Mizzi (soprano) and Roberto Abbondanza (baritone). Artistic direction was given by composer Maestra Erica Zoi and Maestro Damiano Giuranna. Sitting next to my husband in the front row of the magnificent *Teatro Argentina*, my elation was as complete as any composer's could be, hearing my music score coming alive in the expert hands and instruments of a superb orchestra, conductor, and gifted soloists and choir.

Madame Veronica Birga (UN) and Gigliola Zecchi Balsamo (FACDIM) presented the composers' awards after the execution of the ninth piece. Thereafter my winning work was given pride of place as the last performance on the programme. I was overwhelmed by the quality of the performance and the subsequent applause and appreciation.

I felt then that Patricia was looking down from her special place in Heaven and saying: 'I see you and hear you, my friend! *Grazie e arrivederci!*[9] To close the evening on a high note, Italian

9 'Thank you and farewell!'

actress Monica Guerritore delivered a special message as a tribute to Patricia and to *Donne in Musica*.

Ancient traditions and romantic Rome

The next morning, together with our friends Dorothea and Hermann, we made our way down to Via Catalana to visit the Great Synagogue (*Tempio Maggiore di Roma*) in the Jewish Quarter, which was built in 1902 – 1904 on the banks of the River Tiber, overlooking the former ghetto. It is located in a very colourful neighbourhood called Trastevere. The building is huge and most impressive in its grandeur. It also boasts the only square dome in the entire city, with the interior lavishly decorated in an eclectic *art nouveau* style. We were particularly enthralled by the exquisite bronze and gold *menorahs*[10]. There had been a vibrant Jewish community in Rome as early as the 2nd Century BCE, thus making it one of the oldest Jewish communities outside Israel. We were then guided to the basement below the shul to discover a remarkable museum with a significant reconstruction of Jewish life in Rome, as well as ancient books, historical documents and stone artefacts from thousands of years ago.

Having worked up a large appetite from so much walking, we found a most delightful kosher restaurant for lunch in the ghetto called *BellaCarne* (literally 'beautiful meat') on the Via del Portico D'Ottavia and sampled their famous and scrumptious local speciality of Italian artichokes, deliciously dripping in olive oil.

In this richly edifying museum we read a fascinating story relating to Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai, one of the *Tannaim*[11] who was an important sage during the late Second Temple period and during the transformative post-destruction era. When the Romans invaded Judea and besieged Jerusalem, the Jews scattered in fear. Realising that there would soon be prohibitions on Jewish study and practice, a group of Pharisees devised a plan to smuggle

10 It is a seven-branched candelabra, which is an ancient symbol in Judaism. Nowadays, candelabras used for Chanukah have eight branches.

11 Ancient Jewish sages, who originally transmitted the oral tradition in the Mishnah, spanning approximately 20 B.C.E. to 220 C.E.

their master, Ben Zakkai, out of the city in a coffin as it was forbidden to leave Jerusalem.

Upon deceptively leaving the city, Ben Zakkai emerged from his coffin and sought an audience with Vespasian who was only a military commander at the time. Approaching him, Ben Zakkai addressed him as "Caesar". This infuriated Vespasian (who mistakenly thought Caesar was still alive), but when Ben Zakkai explained that he had prophetically seen Caesar's death and Vespasian succeeding him as Emperor of Rome, Vespasian forgave him. This emboldened him to beg Vespasian, the new Emperor, to let him establish a Jewish academy of learning in Yavne. What an amazing concurrence it was to learn about this piece of history in Rome - and then to discover, upon visiting Israel the next day that our grandson Aharon had recently begun studying in the *Keren B'Yavne Yeshivah*, the very same academy founded by Reb Yohanan ben Zakkai many centuries previously.

After our two-night stay at the luxurious Palace Hotel courtesy of *Donne in Musica*, we moved to a B&B called "The Home in Rome" on Via Ravenna, near the Piazza Bologna; a small, truly 'homey' establishment run by exceptionally hospitable people who could not do enough for us. The owner, Eva Gerbi Naccache made sure that there were always snacks and hot drinks for us 24/7. We tried out some wonderful kosher eateries in the area, the best of which were Little Tripoli, a local meat diner offering delicious fare – and *Flour Farina e Cucina* (Flour and Cooking), known for its delicious pizzas, pastas, and milk-type dishes.

From The Home in Rome, we soaked ourselves in magnificent outdoor wonders like the Villa Borghese Gardens (established by an aristocratic Italian family who were art collectors), where we viewed sculptures by Bernini (1598–1680) of poets and writers like Lord Byron (1788–1824), Goethe (1749–1832), and Victor Hugo (1802–1885). The opulence of the architecture and the artworks was incredible.

Contiguous to the Borghese Gardens is the Villa Medici, the most elegant example of Mannerist architecture of the 16th century, a palace owned by the Medici family who ruled in Florence for almost 300 years. They were renowned patrons of

the arts and music and known to be one of the wealthiest Italian banking families in Italy (though reputed to have acquired their wealth through corruption and tyranny). All the stories I had read regarding Italian patronage of composers and artists came alive in that one beautiful day in Rome. It was very difficult to say: '*Arrivederci alla bella Roma*'[12].

Like Israel, which is steeped in antiquity and overwhelming spiritual artefacts, Rome is a thoroughfare into ancient history, with its glorious edifices, museums, and galleries, though it has its own inimitable ethos: one of pride (even hauteur), invincibility, and the artistic and architectural extravagance of Catholicism, but also the innate warmth, compassion, and humanity of Italianate culture and a vibrant Jewish history. Musically, the city is rich in tradition, particularly its reverence for opera, which is regarded not as a rarefied form of art, but as an intrinsic element of national identity. Much of this ambience excited me, despite the brevity of our stay, and has remained with me ever since.

Career Culmination – and a Caring Collection

A crowning glory in my professional life was a celebration in my honour on the 20 August 2025 at The Odeion School of Music at the University of the Free State (UFS) Bloemfontein Campus. The UFS hosted a spectacular and memorable event which included an on-stage exhibition and a magnificent tribute concert of my music, held "in honour of one of South Africa's most celebrated composers. Her career reflects a rare balance of daring creativity, refined craft, and deep cultural rootedness" (review in UFS news Archive 21 August 2025 – Story Tshepo Tsotetsi: photo Stephen Collett).

My complete archive of over 100 compositions across diverse genres plus other valuable material was officially handed over to the School. Prof Vasu Reddy, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Internationalisation at the UFS, who officially welcomed guests and received the collection on behalf of the university, said the following in his erudite tribute:

12 'Goodbye to beautiful Rome.'

> Today we gather here to recognise a living legend, and to honour a life steeped in music, in meaning, and in mentorship… Her compositions have shaped our national identity – from the concert stage to the anthem we sing. We celebrate a woman of many facets – a composer, educator, pioneer, and a friend of the UFS."

Prof Reddy added:

> Prof Zaidel-Rudolph's archive is not just a donation – it is a legacy of knowledge, creativity, and cultural memory. Your voice as composer will remain bold, intricate, and unmistakably your own as we treasure your gifts. It will serve as a living resource for students, scholars and performers. Your archive will fuel research, ignite performance and stimulate the imagination for generations to come. For the university, the archive represents more than shelves of manuscripts. It offers young musicians and researchers direct access to the creative process of one of the country's foremost composers, while preserving a cultural inheritance that belongs to the nation as a whole.

Turning to me on the stage he confirmed the importance of the Humanities:

> "Your archive will provide new impetus to the UFS aspiration as we create responsible societal futures. Without the arts and music, such aspirations will be poorer. We accept with huge gratitude your bequest, as it will also help us collectively to shape a more humane, creative, and inclusive future."

"This is nothing less than a national treasure," said Dr Jan Beukes, Head of the Odeion School of Music. He described the handover as a moment of profound significance, not only for the university but also for South Africa's cultural landscape. "To be entrusted with such a legacy is an immense privilege. As custodians, we will safeguard it and ensure that students at undergraduate

and postgraduate level have access to an extraordinary field of research possibilities."

In my emotional response I said that the occasion carried deep personal meaning: "I could not think of a more fitting repository for my music material than the University of the Free State," and I adding that "it warmed my heart to know that my work would be carefully respected and presented". I emphasised my hope that the archive would inspire students, researchers, and music-lovers for years to come. The UFS's Archive for Contemporary Affairs will have oversight of the collection.

My gratitude was underscored by a broader reflection: "It fills me with a sense of incredible gratitude that there is an institute that is sufficiently committed to look after the music of a South African composer, to curate it, look after it, promote it, and let it be there for others."

A tribute concert was held at lunchtime, which featured the world première of my newest commissioned work, 'Unications for String Quartet'. My programme notes explained that the music was inspired by a yearning for harmony in an often-divided world. "At my age and stage, having lived a long life so far, thank G-d, my sense is that people need to be more loving and unified - the sisterhood and brotherhood of nations.

The première was equally special for the musicians. Violinist Samantha Durrant of the Odeion String Quartet said the ensemble felt privileged to work closely with the composer. "We were extraordinarily lucky to really get into this work and understand her music as best as possible," she said. "Prof Rudolph gave us her time, her enthusiasm, her precision, and that guidance was invaluable."

Performing her music also carried personal resonance. "It brings us so much joy to play music written by a woman, for women," Durrant said. "We love Mozart, Beethoven, all the greats, but it is wonderful to reflect on the fact that we have extraordinary composers in this country, writing music of equal brilliance."

"Prof Zaidel-Rudolph's music, her legacy, and her generosity will forever be part of the UFS story in the years to come," Prof Reddy concluded. By entrusting her archive to the UFS, Prof Zaidel-Rudolph has ensured that her life's work will live on in both performance and scholarship".

I am deeply honoured!



A joyous occasion receiving my Honorary Doctorate in Education (D.Ed. honoris causa*) from the University of Pretoria in early September 2008; being capped by the Vice-Principal, Nthabiseng Ogude and given a medal by the Dean (on the right)*



UFS honours me with a Lifetime Music Award: From left: Prof Vasu Reddy, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Research and Internationalisation; Myself; Dr Jan Beukes, Head of the Odeion School of Music and Dr Frelét de Villiers, Academic Head at the School of Music; at the tribute concert and handover of the entire archive of my life's work. 21 August, 2025



The awe-inspiring and spectacular view of the golden balconies and red velvet seats of the Teatro Argentina in Rome on 3 November 2018 - at the Final Concert of my Oratorio for Global Women in Music for Human Rights



In the foyer of Teatro Argentina, Rome, before the performance of my winning work, Oratorio for Human Rights - *with Jeannette Mphephu, representative from the South African Embassy*



Effigy of Kaya Rosa and Alumna Scroll – the 'weight' of the Award made it all worthwhile!

CODA Confessions

Coda, as a musical term, is a section 'tailed onto' the end of a work that concludes a piece or movement. In many ways, it sums up an array of inspirational ideas, sounds, memories, impulses, sonic and visual images, as well as a variety of tone colours, announcing the end of a fresh, original composition, referencing the stimuli that give life to inanimate notes: a life of technicolour rather than one of monochrome.

In this, the coda to my autobiography, introspection demands that I share my innermost feelings with you, my patient reader. I was born into the right family at the right time. My parents' talent and dedication became the driving force that inspired not only me, but generationally the conduit of inspiration to my children as well. I confess to having been somewhat over-ambitious, competitive, driven, and perfectionistic most of my life. This fairly obsessive streak and my A-type personality have led to my being hard on myself and expecting a great deal from others – but mostly from me.

I have frequently been rescued from my work obsessiveness by our daughters, who drew me out of my creative cocoon and into their bubbly youthful circle with an anecdote or 'htbt' (had to be there) hilarious reminiscence - and finding myself laughing unrestrainedly at a ridiculous joke. Work stress and tension were frequently and magically relieved by my boisterous offspring, who, like many children, frequently had a lively, mostly improvised, 'song and dance' routine with which to entertain the family.

Looking back at my life as a composer and teacher, I am patently aware that standing on the shoulders of music giants has elevated me enormously and taught me the cherished craft of music; translating the myriad of contemporary ideas into musical tones and phrases. But what triumphs for me in the end are the sounds of love, the sounds of compassion, and the sounds of empathy, joy and forgiveness – human qualities that the beauty of music can only enhance and reveal.

Although I devoted an entire chapter to my role as a woman composer in a man's world, with attendant frustrations, in all honesty, I must confess to having very little grounds for complaint. On the contrary; I occasionally took full advantage of being a woman and even welcomed the added attention and deference if it contributed to new horizons and impartial career advancement.

It was a privilege to spend more than half my life at Wits University in the Music Department which was witness to excellence in teaching and magnificent music, but also to mischief in almost equal measure; too frequently in academia one finds a distressing power-play and petty politics. Creatives by their very nature are competitive – and with resources at tertiary institutions becoming less and less, there is fierce rivalry within disciplines in the arts. During these years, however, with limited institutional funds, I was privileged to be sent to conferences and festivals by the university – an opportunity that I could not have afforded myself had I been outside the tertiary education system. How fortunate I was to experience the high scholarly level at international meetings, emerging as I did from a country that had been boycotted and ignored during the apartheid era.

I have been continually driven to compose, to be productive and to inspire others to maximise their potential through my teaching and encouragement. In my earlier years, I viewed any time spent without writing down new notes as time wasted. For that reason, I was often torn between my need to compose and my desire to participate in and enjoy family holidays and outings. Working mothers in general attempt to find 'balance' in their lives between family and work; but experience has taught me that there simply is no such thing! Balance is an elusive quality that is surreptitiously sabotaged by unpredictable occurrences, frequently technical, but also often human, which urgently demand one's attention.

Although I am an avid reader with eclectic tastes in literature (though favouring biographies), musical sounds, not words, have been the language of my life. For that reason, putting pen to paper (or, more accurately, fingers to typing keyboard) as I

have undertaken in this Memoir, has meant navigating uncharted waters. I am unapologetically an inveterate 'punster' as will have been witnessed in my book. I am given to understand that the drive to create puns is frequently found in the DNA of musicians; it is possible that at the basis of this proclivity lies the actual sound of the word that lends itself to humorous reformatting and alternative amusing contexts and possible double *entendres* in a phrase.

On a solemn note, however, it is a common adage that if one does not learn from one's mistakes, then one is doomed to repeat them. I have learnt many lessons throughout my life – above all that there is no substitute for the value of a loving family. I have learnt that one's children generally turn into much better versions of oneself. It is as though previous generations have distilled the finest qualities of lineage – and, with these assets, have reincarnated worthy new souls, stronger, wiser, and more resilient than oneself.

My daughters have inspired me, taught me what it is to love, to be loved, to be mothers, to forgive and to continue the exquisite unbroken thread that is life. They do their utmost to protect me (though frequently unsuccessfully) from their own problems and challenges. They have shown enormous understanding towards me in my need over the years to spend time engrossed in my music. I have also been blessed with a husband whose sacrifices have allowed me to lead a rich personal and professional existence.

In the Memoir I have delved voraciously into my past, to re-discover and relive many precious memories. Some of them were painful to recall, but most of them were joyful and treasured recollections: cherished experiences that have energised me in ways that I can only look back on in wonderment. I have shared a great deal with my reader, however, certain memories are tucked away and will remain secrets buried in the recesses of my mind. It has been, I believe, remarkably generous of G-d to have shown me such kindness throughout my life's adventures.

That generosity has remained somewhat enigmatic. For all the private and professional annotations I have made of my career and my journey through music, a large part of me has

not understood why I was born with a compulsion or rather, a propulsion – to compose, perform, teach, and immerse myself in music, often at the cost of precious time with those most dear to me. All I know is that it has been a force which refused to be silenced or subverted, and one which has felt – on so many levels – sacramental: the way I could best serve my Creator, who implanted it in me.

While family and love remain fundamental in my life, music has been the ink and notation of my time on this earth. My great joy was to share so many of my music experiences with my family who happily traipsed along to performances and shows, sitting proudly up front and enthusiastically cheering me on.

For that reason, I have long reconciled myself to not always understanding, but simply trusting the process and obeying the force. And it is in that spirit that I have written, and now end, this narrative. What I do know is that for as long as I have lived, I have done so in the textures, timbres, rhythms, contours, and cadences of music – and after I have departed this world, my mark on it will continue to be found there and in my remarkable and cherished descendants. That little five-year old girl, who sought refuge in music during the storm, is alive and well and grateful beyond measure to have shared my story with you.

This is the legacy I bequeath to family, society, and posterity.

J Z-R



Contemplating my past

Acknowledgements

It was a serendipitous day when Michael introduced me to Prof Tshilidzi Marwala, erstwhile Vice Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg and renowned global citizen who is currently gracing the corridors of the United Nations University in Tokyo, Japan as Rector. He in turn introduced me to Prof Bongani Ngqulunga from the Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Studies (JIAS); they both believed that I had an African story worth telling. I am sincerely grateful to Prof Ngquluka for initiating and overseeing the creation of my Memoir as part of the African Biographies Project – and I thank him for his encouragement and indispensible support. To both these great leaders I say: *Ri a vha livhuwa nga maanda*[1]!

What a privilege it has been to be in the company of esteemed writers and their memoirs in this enterprising initiative. Prof Victoria Collis-Buthelezi, Prof Ngquluka's successor, slotted in seamlessly and graciously at JIAS after the upward mobility of Prof Ngquluka, who attained the distinguished position at UJ of Senior Executive Director: University relations, Student Affairs and Sport. Apart from the daunting spiral staircase to her office at the "Castle", I enjoyed my meetings with Prof Victoria, whose enthusiasm and warm reception of me and my book were heartening.

Wikus van Zyl from UJ Press has been a steadfast and remarkable guide and mentor throughout this process. I am truly grateful to him for his astute input, brilliant intellect, and warm support; for always going the extra mile in his insightful and welcome suggestions, encouragement and regular communications with me. Wikus, you have shown incredible patience and consideration throughout this, my debut (and only) Memoir. As I've often expressed to those close to me: I feel far more at home putting my hands on the piano keys than on the typewriter keyboard.

1 'Thank you very much' in TshiVenda.

My gratitude extends to many people: My beloved mother, Evelyn Zaidel, who devoted her life to her two children; and specifically to me in my music career. Had it not been for her conscientious and painstaking efforts to document and meticulously preserve every newspaper review, concert programme, examination report, and meaningful milestone in my life's journey in music, I would have found it extremely difficult to author my autobiography, which I dedicate to my mother. This vast amount of valuable material exists in several files in my home and constitutes my precious archive and source for extensive research.

My dear father David, whose quiet presence belied his strong supportive character and powerfully glorious tenor voice, was the genesis and main source of my musical genes, for which I am most grateful. Malcolm, my cherished brother taken from us too soon, protected and looked after me like a precious gem. Malcolm, I miss you every single day. You gave me the magnificent gift of being able to be your loving sister – and you gifted me your children, grandchildren, and your beautiful wife Pam, my beloved sister-in law, confidante and astute literary advisor – yes, maths and music do blend beautifully together!

There have been countless people along my journey who have contributed in no small measure to my life in music: primarily my mentors, lecturers, teachers, and colleagues. Hopefully you have been immortalised in print somewhere in this Memoir.

My resolve to tell my story may never have come to fruition without the love of G-d and the blessings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. There is no greater caring community in the world than the Johannesburg Chabad Jewish community whose many members selflessly and generously supported me throughout my long and terrifying illness many years ago. My gratitude goes also to the caring individuals, who miraculously appeared and stepped up to the plate at just the right moments in my life when my needs were greatest – musically and medically – you know who you are.

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Jeanne **Z**aidel-**R**udolph

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3 English translation: "Composers break out and focus now on Africa".
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Appendix to Memoirs

Supplementary programme notes on selected compositions referred to in the text.

Personal comments after the titles are the composer's.

Further information can be obtained from my website: https://jeannezaidel-rudolph.com

1. *Kaleidoscope* for woodwind, brass, and percussion (1971) – a life of many colours

Instrumentation:

- Flute, alto flute, piccolo – oboe, *cor anglais* – clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon,
- Alto saxophone, horn in F, trumpet in C, tenor trombone.
- Percussion - 20 instruments with either 2 or 3 players.

Kaleidoscope is a very early work in one movement written prior to studying with the renowned composer, György Ligeti in Hamburg in 1974. It therefore displays elements which are closer to the Webern tradition; though it already demonstrates my fascination with tone-colour composition, a hallmark of Ligeti's work.

Just as a kaleidoscope tube through which one looks, produces reflections of pieces of coloured glass by rotating the tube, so too is this work for orchestra a cameo of ever-changing colours, timbres, and rhythmic textures. These changing shapes produce an infinite variety of tone colours and kaleidoscopic patterns. The percussion, as with most of my works, features prominently in the sound-world material. The language in the work is aligned to the European avant garde.

One can hear fragments of the whole, though the complete picture is never revealed. Webern-like music cells are contrasted with a continuum of sound, largely found in the percussion *tremolandi* and timpani rolls. Even the repeated patterns

undergo timbral transformation. The work is written in 7 short sections and is based on a 12-tone row; this is designed in such a way that the intervals continually expand and contract. Mirror images and fragments of the series are employed. In certain sections even the rhythmic proportions are serialized based on the order of numbers in the tone row. The illusion is created of viewing these rhythmic miniatures through the wrong end of a telescope.

2. *Tempus Fugit* for orchestra (1986)– time has indeed flown

In this work I have attempted to capture the spirit of a multi-faceted South African society with its cultural diversity. In order to achieve this collage in the music, *Tempus Fugit* comprises complex layerings of African music elements together with Western timbres and orchestrations. In the work there are musical gestures symbolising sameness and contrast, unity and diversity.

In our 'rainbow society' the contrasts and changes are reflected in the music by metrical changes, change of pace and constant timbral metamorphoses by alternating instrumental groupings. Its multi-dimensional nature is interpreted musically by the use of multi-tonalities in that the tonal focus constantly shifts. The piece is energized by driving and somewhat relentless rhythmic patterns. The percussion section is extra-large and includes many drums, roto toms, shakers, bells and tuned percussion like Xylophone, marimba etc.

Three contrasting sections flow into one another without a break.

Tempus Fugit opens with a marimba introduction playing a simple 4-note theme from which most of the material of the piece is derived, namely a descending major triad in 3rds followed by a sudden upward semitone, which somehow 'spoils' the equilibrium of the chord. This is immediately followed by a statement of the theme (inverted) in the flutes and violins, supported by the basses which occasionally interject with the rising semitone 'feature'.

During this opening the horizontal themes are synchronized at various unison and octave points between instruments to symbolize common societal goals and unity, yet octave displacements allowing for cultural differences. Large melodic leaping gestures are gradually replaced by a smoother melodic texture. Additive techniques are used and each repetition takes the theme a little further. When the tonal centre reaches pitch 'A', it symbolises the common tuning note of any orchestra and forms the nucleus of the work.

Following the introductory section there is an *accelerando* into a 4-note statement reminiscent of the opening. This leads into the characteristic responsorial African choir (i.e. antiphonal 'call and response'). The figure is enunciated in opposing instrumental blocks – the winds in long note values with a response by the strings in shorter note values. The focus is still harmonic and thematic. What follows next is more linear and contrapuntal: a section in 9/8 metre 'dances' with changing note groupings, e.g. 2+3+2+2 then 3+2+2+2 , typical of African rhythmic sub-divisions. Harmonically, open 5th are used. Against this regular pulse background a melody is layered between the Cor Anglais and flute solos. A 4-note descending motif (C Bb A G) is established and interpolated at various junctures – and a 7/8 section ensues based on the 4-note pattern. This motif is used in diminution as well as augmentation in the last movement as well.

The texture is poly-rhythmic with melodic layerings of 4 pulses against 6, resulting in phase shifting, cross rhythms and overlapping expressions. A final 4-note fanfare brings this section to a close but retains a marimba *tremolando* on middle C (representing the basic physical world), which is a link to the second section.

Nox et solitude plenae sunt diabolo (*Night and quietude bring many demons*) sub-titles the second 'spiritual' section. The African bush at night! Out of the darkness emerge terrifying creatures and screeches which burst through the calm background texture, then recede once again. Various instruments emerge, highlighting these sudden flashes. This reflects life as it is in our surreal imagination – fear and terror of the unknown. Instruments are

used in extreme registers to increase tension and penetrate new levels of consciousness. These seemingly haphazard outbursts become united in a central synchronized climax, and then disintegrate again until the blurred texture slowly diminishes and clears harmonically to open octaves on 'E' in the orchestra.

This prominent 'E' pitch forms the link to the 3rd section, which opens with a 'chirping', mechanical and repetitive 'E'. It symbolizes the clocklike mechanized precision of a world dominated by technology – a kind of relentless *moto perpetuo* which the renowned composer Ligeti would have called "a granulated continuum", i.e. quick repetitions of the same note. The trumpets announce a descending 7-note theme against this repetitive texture. It is a poly-rhythmic section with syncopations, ending with frenetic, irregular groups of 2s and 3s. The hypnotic, repetitive texture is given tone colour through changing colours and instrumental timbres in the orchestration.

3. *At the end of the Rainbow* for orchestra (1988) – the pot of gold awaits

The first section creates the mood of social decadence. As related, Noah was one of the few righteous men as depicted in the Old Testament; sin had come to erode human values, which led to the catastrophe of the Flood. The work begins with instruments in their low registers to symbolise the depths of immorality to which mankind had sunk. The ominous string *tremolandi*[1] of the opening bars are punctuated with insistent low tones on E flats: I chose that pitch because E flat translated in German is *Es*, meaning 'eat', symbolising the serpent's urging man to *eat* from the Tree of Knowledge. This very act of Disobedience turned the balance in the world away from Innocence.

The musical theme which becomes the *leitmotif* (recurring motif), representing 'sin', is derived symbolically from the Hebrew word, *Chet*. This term is transformed into the musical notes, C B E C# (or later Bb). This slithering, snakelike figure

1 Constant, quick up-down bowing on the strings to create a trembling, vibrating effect.

is first enunciated and interpreted by two bassoons in their low register.

The theme (calculated by transferring the notes into numerical values) equals 9, so the entire section that follows with the theme musically inverted, is in 9/8 metre divided into 4 + 5, which gives the sound-world its irregular and somewhat disturbing quality. It is heralded in by the oboe and trumpet, and then diversified throughout the orchestra with the texture becoming thicker and thicker, designed to sound threatening and ominous.

This is followed by a section called the 'Drunken Waltz', epitomised by sliding *glissandi*[2] and a circus-like rhythmic accompaniment on the side drum – a sense of irony. The solo violin plays an 'inebriated' variation of the Sin theme to emphasise the mindless pleasure-seeking of that generation. The first inkling one has that all is not well comes with the appearance of loud interjections on high woodwinds. It is a fact that *before* humans are able to sense impending danger or natural disaster, animals – especially birds – are aware of it. The screeching bird-like figure on flutes and clarinets comes as a warning of the impending Flood. Here, too, the timpani roll illustrates the mounting *angst.*

A contrasting section follows, which is subtitled 'The Building' – in other words, 'Noah to the rescue'! The hammering and knocking sounds of the building of the Ark in the percussion instrument, called the 'claves', are given exactly 120 repeated beats to signify that the Ark took 120 years to build, a religious opinion I had researched – my focus again on numbers!

This whole section is characterised by polyrhythmic[3] repetitive percussion figures. The xylophone sets up an irregular *pentatonic* (five-tone) *ostinato*[4] in triplets, which is counterpointed by un-tuned percussion instruments like drums in shifting rhythmic phases and patterns. The melodic peaks of

2 A continuous slide up or down between two musical notes/pitches.
3 Overlay of rhythms on top of one another, creating rhythmic complexity.
4 A repeated rhythmic and/or melodic figure.

the xylophone *ostinato* are formulated into the pentatonic melody in the violins, the figure then undergoing a slight modification with what is referred to as a flattened 5th, somewhat depressing the feel and again creating an ominous sense of foreboding.

The number **7** now comes into prominence. It represents Nature, as in the seven days of the week, the rainbow having seven colours, there being seven continents – and planet earth having seven seas. I depict the seven biblical pairs of animals going into the ark by seven different pairs of woodwind instruments playing a lively motive together in a melody of minor 3rd intervals, with the instruments harmonically a minor 6th apart. We hear the animals entering the vessel in pairs of oboes, horns, clarinets, trumpets, bassoons, trombones, and flutes, separated by dramatic percussion interruptions in the timpani drums.

The same musical material is used as a transition or bridge and consists of an 'opening out' pattern, which ascends and descends gradually, symbolising the ascent towards higher spiritual values. The first soft raindrops are introduced musically by a five-note repetitive (*ostinato)* pattern on the harp, and later on *pizzicato* strings (pitter-patter of rain).

Throughout this section, we hear ominous timpani drum rumbles, together with touches of the 'Sin' theme as a warning to the generation. The rain becomes heavier and the 'Storm' theme erupts in the woodwinds – a variation of the 'Sin' theme now in six notes C-B-Bb-F-E-Bb. Then the heavens open – and boiling mud gushes forth from the bowels of the earth.

This very free aleatoric section illustrates chaos and catastrophe, with frenetic music figures descending, meeting dramatic ascending patterns from the lower instruments. It is a cacophony of sound which gradually subsides, leaving a solo vibraphone *tremolo* as the aftermath of the Flood … a lonely voice in the wilderness.

The process of purification of the earth by water is complete…

A raven, depicted by a clarinet, is sent out to see if the deluge has abated, but it returns. However, the dove, portrayed by the flute, flies out optimistically and does not return, which signifies that the flood is over – and the bird has found somewhere safe to settle. The process of regeneration and regrowth is symbolised in the music by instrumental *crescendo* outbursts, as though the world is once more *bursting* into blossom. Snatches of the 'Sin' theme recur as a reminder and warning, but the music progresses optimistically until the final statement of this theme in long note values (at a loud *fortissimo* dynamic) – very loud throughout the orchestra.

And then… *The Rainbow*: The symbol of G-d's promise to and covenant with mankind that there will never be another flood capable of extinguishing man. The final bars reflect a mood of deep ecstasy, signifying that the illusive pot of gold indeed exists, if one lives an ethical life – the reward being final redemption and beauty. I suspect elements of indigenous African material crept in subconsciously, as they always do in my work, especially in the 'Building' section using African polyrhythms. There is musical ambiguity at the end of the work – the sound-world is both major and minor, giving the listener the freedom to interpret the musical message – strains of evil… but ultimately only good.

4. *Sephirot Symphony* for wind, brass, harp and percussion (1991) – Exploring the Roots of the 'Tree of Life'.

It is stated in the ancient *Zohar* and many books on Jewish mysticism that there are 10 spiritual levels in the *Kabbala* that can be actualised in the physical world:

The highest of these spheres is: *Keter*[5] (Crown). If, however, the esoteric attribute of *Keter* is omitted due to its impenetrable

5 ***Keter*** (Crown) is a flash of intellect, a spark of inspiration; it is the essence. It cannot descend or come down. It is so hidden, concealed and sublime that it is difficult to even begin to understand it, given man's finite intellect. Although it is the furthest away from *Malchut (*Kingship*)* in the diagram, the crown of *Keter* gives it a certain bond with the kingship of *Malchut*, although this latter is

nature (by Man), then the first three attributes in the *Tree of life* will be *Chochmah*[6] (Wisdom), Binah[7] (Understanding), and *Da'at*[8].

These above esoteric qualities (*not* used in my Symphony as they are too inscrutable) are followed by seven *Sefirot* or spheres, subdivided into two triads as illustrated in the diagram below: *Right–Left–Centre*; and again *Right–Left–Centre*; plus a singular last one in the *Centre*. These seven attributes which form the basis of my composition are the

G-dly emanations of: *Chesed* (Kindness), *Gevurah* (Judgement), *Tiferet* (Beauty), *Netzach* (Victory), *Hod* (Splendour), *Yesod* (Foundation), and *Malchut* (Kingship).

The seven *lower* spheres embrace the attributes and characteristics that exist in *both* the spiritual and the physical worlds. Whereas the highest three attributes (*Keter*, *Chochmah*, and *Binah*) encompass the Intellect, the next seven attributes are called Emotive Faculties. In my *Sefirot Symphony*, I have honed in on the seven *lower* spheres, since the upper three attributes are

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the closest to the physical existence. If *Da'at* (Knowledge) functions in the scheme, *Keter* cannot be included because *Da'at* is the bridge between intellect (distant) and the emotions (closer).

6 ***Chochmah*** (Wisdom) represents the first creative activity of G'd. It is the *Yud* (the 10th letter in the Hebrew alphabet) in G'd's *(Hashem's)* name. Everything derives from it; it is inherent in everything and it animates everything: the seminal idea, the intuitive flash of intellectual illumination. It is the potential of what *is*, brought out from obscurity, where the details are not yet differentiated and externalised. It is intensely concentrated in that initial seed of Creation. It is symbolised in the concept of Father (*Abba*). (Numerical Value = four).

7 ***Binah*** (Knowledge) is the expansion and elucidation of *Chochmah* and externalises the potential of *Chochmah*. It is the idea which becomes understood through the cogitating of its details. It is represented by the *Hey* (fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet) of G-d's name, i.e. a little more concrete; it has length and width and although still abstract, it is clearer, but not yet actualised. It is symbolised in the concept of Mother (*Ima*). (Numerical value = 42). Together with 4 of *Abba* = 46 = 4 + 6 = 10, reduced to 1 (G-d's Unity).

8 ***Da'at*** (Understanding) is the unifying principle or bridge that joins the faculties of *Chochmah* and *Binah* and is the practical application of a mature concept, bringing together intellect and emotions, and leading to action. It is symbolised in the concept of 'Son' (*Ben*) and affects the two previous *Sefirot (*spheres*)*.

so opaque to our intellect that they are virtually beyond human comprehension.

Diagram of the *Tree of Life* Below:



The diagram shown above illustrates the Kabbalistic *Tree of Life* in which each of the seven spheres is 'coupled' or grouped with a

particular tone, an attribute, a planet and one of our 'forefathers'; which symbolically reside and belong together.

The seven concurrent sections of the music tap into and reflect the meaning and power intrinsic in each level of the mystical *Tree* and the attendant characteristics; for example, the attribute of '*kindness*', linked in the diagram with "Abraham, the tone 'Doh' and the planet Jupiter", epitomises unlimited giving and open-handedness – this is depicted in the music by ebullient and generous, ascending scale-like flourishes of sound, mostly in the woodwinds.

Every section is based on a different tonal pivot moving through centres on C D E F G and A, up to B on the seventh level, thus a rising ascending process. I have infused each spiritual attribute with a particular instrumental colour emanating from a rising tonal base. Although the scale itself rises upward from C to B (in musical notes) in each of the seven sections, there is a basic contradiction permeating the music: the actual spiritual levels with which each music letter is twinned, *descend* from the heavenly state of perfection downwards towards the imperfect physical world.

Only a hint of a *hint* of *Keter* (Crown) is manifest in the introduction, with C (Doh) as a tonal basis at the beginning of the piece. The character of the opening is processional, and majestic and this theme comes full circle in a cyclic arc to *Malchut* (kingship) at the end; except now, with each sphere climbing a tone higher, when the theme is repeated in *Malchut*, it is now used on the tonal basis of 'B' (the seventh note up from C) in a similar kingly, ceremonial and slow rhythmic pattern with similar texture and colour. The drums, together with the flute theme, give it its royal character. The music in each of the seven sections echoes and reflects the essence of the particular *sphere*.

All the attributes attached to the musical notes in the Kabbalistic *Tree* of Life diagram are totally applicable to qualities of human beings on earth. They are also attributable to G-d's characteristics in the higher realms. The numerology of the first sphere (***Chesed*** in Hebrew), when the value of the letters are added up, comes to 72 (7 + 2 = 9). The rhythmic metre used is therefore

9/8 (nine quavers beats in a bar). The theme, based on 'C' (*Doh*), is taken over by the horns, which are then joined by the trumpets and other brass instruments, reaching an emotional crescendo.

A xylophone introduces the attribute of *Chesed* (kindness) and this repeated figure, called an *ostinato*, is taken over by the marimba – both percussion instruments give a hint of my love of African instruments. The 'unlimited outpouring' and benevolence of *Chesed* is interpreted musically by a series of ecstatic ascending scales with *no* restraint. These scales in the woodwinds are based on the rising *octatonic* (*eight-note*) scale. The number *eight* symbolises the transcendence of nature, whose number is *seven* (seven days in the week). The number *eight* thus implies the order *above* nature and is compatible with the Messianic concept in Kabbalah.

But this unbridled 'outpouring' of kindness needs to be balanced by some restraint; this is provided by the second characteristic ***Gevurah***. The second section displays a lively theme in the oboe – but one that is constantly (sometimes irritatingly) interrupted by the restrictive and judgemental, loud interjections of strength in the brass instruments. This 'restraint' balances out the unlimited giving of *Chesed*. A timpani-drum flourish ends the *Gevurah* section with its severity and judgement. The tonal centre, 'D' (*Re*) dominates this section. These last two attributes when combined result in the third... the harmonious exquisiteness and equilibrium of *Tiferet* (Beauty).

Tiferet is ushered in by sweeping *glissandi*[9] on the harp. The harp (King David's beloved instrument) epitomises and signifies beauty and harmony. The stately opening theme is played by the harp, and is then taken over by the oboes and flutes against a repetitive *ostinato* pattern in the harp. The key centre here has risen to the tone, 'E' (*Mi*), third up from '*Doh*'). The merging of *Chesed* and *Gevurah* into *Tiferet* is portrayed musically by merging the themes and melodies of each. The aspects of 'mercy' and 'truth' are revealed here in this reconciliation of themes, where the three Hebrew letters spelling *Emet* (*Truth*) has a numerical

9 Running the fingers rapidly in a gliding or sliding movement over the strings (of the harp).

value of 441 (separate 4 + 4 + 1 = 9); the nine-note ascending theme becomes prominent once more. Since *Tiferet* conceptually is closer to *Chesed*, the scales of kindness predominate.

A mystical, musical bridge joins this triad to the next three spheres. The low bassoons (bar 204) land on a loud F (*Fa*), beginning ***Netzach*** (Victory). The second triad of *Netzach*, *Hod* (Splendour) and *Yesod* (Foundation) derive their characteristics from the source of the first triad. However, it is now on a more earthly level, i.e. *lower* spiritual channels through which the upper attributes carry out their purpose and application. From the symbolic arrangement of the spheres (see diagram), one can see how the spheres, which are in the same vertical line below the upper spheres, display similar qualities; for example, *Yesod* is influenced by *Tiferet*, but differs in intensity and tonal colour in the music.

The 'Victory' in *Netzach* is psychologically over one's own emotions and the music recalls hints of the *Chesed* theme, but with more direct communication. The 'endurance' quality of this fourth *sefira* (sphere) is illustrated in the music by long, sustained note values in the winds against rhythmic repetitions in the xylophone and marimba. *Netzach* and *Hod* usually go paired together like 'two halves of the one body' supporting the upper body. The basis of F (*Fa*) as the tonal centre provides a strong support.

The ***Hod*** section**,** like *Gevurah*, typifies strength and splendour reflected in the colourful, rich sound and full orchestration. The theme is also designed to demonstrate the *restraint* of excess – a factor we can all relate to in life. The tonal basis is now 'G' (*So*) and the *Gevurah* theme of nine notes in the bass clarinet (a favourite instrument of mine) is followed in *fugal*[10] style by the oboe and then taken over by the bassoon. A complex counterpoint develops and the theme enters in trumpets and xylophones and finally in the trombones in a music device called *augmentation* (in which the tones/note values are doubled in length and duration), which gives the music a grandiose quality.

10 A music style and compositional procedure that uses imitation of themes between the different music lines in a complex web of simultaneously sounding linear melodies called counterpoint.

Again, *Hod*, and *Netzach* are united by *Yesod* down the centre of the diagram.

Yesod (Foundation, Righteousness): Together with *Yesod* the previous spheres are brought to perfection. The tonal centre is A (*La*) and as Glazerson (1998) points out, the tone A is the foundation of the orchestra to which *all* instruments are tuned. *Yesod* is the attachment of Heart and Soul, the channel of communication; again, a uniting bond in humanity. I interpreted the concept of righteousness musically in the application of an open, transparent texture and unison-playing (same melody, in octaves and unisons) in all the woodwinds. Its link with *Tiferet* (in a straight line above it in the diagram) is shown through the return of the harp, but now the harp theme is joined by the flute in the unity of perfection.

The last sphere, which is the link with the lower *physical* world, i.e. the 'world of speech', is ***Malchut*** (Kingship). This is a unique state of being, rather than an activity. According to the Kabbalists, this 'lowest level' of the *Sefirot* is a passive sphere into which the other spheres pour, yet it is the actualisation of the original Creative plan. 'Kingship' also refers to the potential of humanity to transcend the corporeal and actualise its inherent majestic qualities as creations of G-d. This is the ultimate aim of life: to make the earthly realm, in which human beings are mired, fit for the Messiah. It manifests in reality and therefore the music returns to the opening majestic strains of the nostalgic *Keter* (Crown) theme, but this time seven notes *higher* (on B tonality) (*Ti*).

There is an important and noteworthy contradiction – the music itself ascends a basic pitch-note *higher* in each sphere, yet spiritually it is a *downward* movement from the loftiest spiritual realms towards the physical world. This nexus is figuratively the 'mouth' of G-d, where potentiality is actualised with the creation of finite creatures. With this Divine Light the music comes to a close in a broad crescendo in the whole orchestra, ending on a final 'B' tonal centre (*Ti*) – suspended in time ... but awaiting the upper *Doh*, the eighth note to complete the cycle and herald in the Messianic Age.

5. *Arba (Four) 'Minim'* for cello and piano (1992) – four *species* found in nature

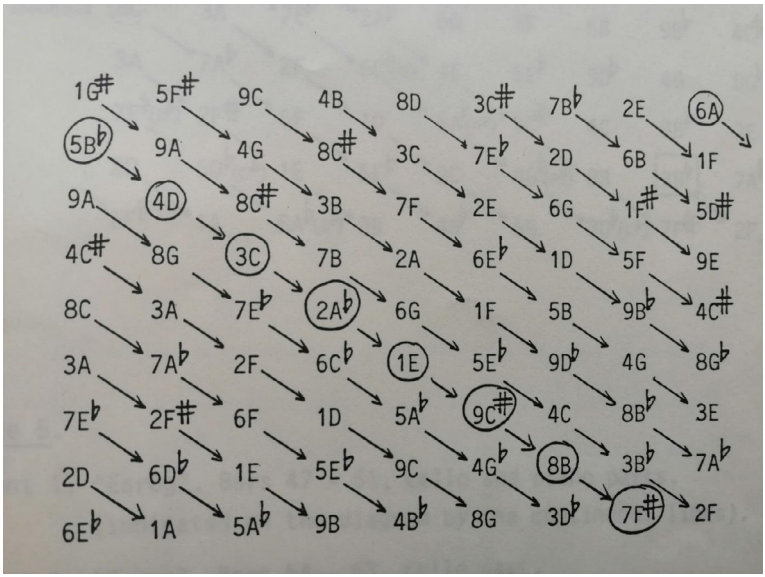
In this composition, initially commissioned by the SABC in 1982, I applied a mathematical formula called the "Magic Square of the Moon" to generate the tones[11] (pitches), as well as to generate the length and values of the selected tones. Numbers and music are almost synonymous as used here in construction.

The word *Sukkah* (booth) in Hebrew, if the value of the individual letters are added together, has a numerical value of 91 - the same numerical value as the letters spelling G-d's ineffable[12] name combined using the respectful way of referring to G-d, namely 'The Name' (*Hashem*). Nine plus one equals 10, a number which in turn can be reduced to *one*, which is the true essence of monotheism. The number 9 forms the structural basis for this musical work. 9 is a *magical* arithmetic number – by multiplying nine with *any* number, e.g. 9 x 3 = 27 and then adding the two numbers (2 + 7), the result is again 9. This works for any number when multiplied by 9 (see diagram below).

The notes as well as the rhythms are derived from this formula – thus creating a total *unity* within the work. The concept behind this is that all people, irrespective of their intellectual, financial and life's circumstances, are equal in the eyes of G-d and should be respected and unified. The number 9 is used throughout to calculate rhythms, tones and other musical parameters; for example, nine beats in a bar – frequently used irregularly as: 4 + 1 +4 = 9: or 2 + 2 + 3 + 2 - not the usual 3 + 3 + 3. This gives a fresh sound-world to rhythm and beat subdivisions (see diagram). The *Magic Square of the Moon*

11 The terms 'tones' and 'notes' or 'pitches' are interchangeable – different conventions are used in different countries.

12 It is the Hebrew *tetragrammaton* name of G-d; transliterated into the four letters Y K V K (Yud Kay Vav Kay).
The reason is that G-d's name is too sacred to be articulated aloud in Jewish law.



This consists of a matrix in which the sum of rows and columns equals a fixed number (here 45). In this diagram I use number 9 as the magic 'clock' highest number for the music.

The Square (in the diagram) begins in the left-hand corner with the number 1 (G-d's Unity and perfection). Number 4, representing the four species in nature, is *added* accumulatively both horizontally and vertically. Since 9 is the highest cut-off number in this scheme (like a clock), we continue adding 4: thus, after 9, the next number is 4 and after adding 4 again, the next number is 8. But adding 4 to 8 (with a cut-off of 9), produces the number 3 and so on. In this way, the Square yields 81 possible pitch-tones as well as values and time durations. Each number is linked with a note-name and a time unit.

The fascinating numerical results are:

The numbers, reading from *right* to *left*, when *skipping* a digit, (magically) *ascend* backwards.

The left-hand diagonal reading down to the right, shows number rows backwards (1, 9, 8, 7, 6 etc.).

The right-hand top corner and all diagonals when read downwards from right to left, show the numbers as being *identical*.

So with this "Magic Square" based on the whole number of 9, there are many rows and paths of numbers to choose from when applying to in the music.

The mathematical 'square of the moon' gave me a formula for composing in a unified and beautifully enchanted and imaginative way, providing randomised, yet pre-ordained length of notes, resulting in strange, irregular rhythms. In addition, I constructed a nine-note melody, with these inner numerical and symbolic ratios but producing a *pastoral* feel from nature (in keeping with the idea of the species of plants from nature). The result is that the themes, melodies, harmonies and rhythms in the music interrelate as one unified whole.

6. *Suite Afrique* for cello and piano (1993; 1995 version for viola and piano) –dance to the beat of your own drum

There are four dances in the Suite:

The ***Rain Dance*** can be played either first or as the 2nd dance in the Suite. It is a powerful, stomping, rhythmic invocation to the ancestors to bring rain, with aggressive punctuations on the strings, reflecting the cry for desperately needed water and sustenance – South Africa being a particularly water-scarce country. Soon, however, the tone becomes gentler and I introduce a beautiful traditional Sotho folk song (in Setswana[13]), *Mangwane Mpulele* (the *Wedding Song*), although in a transformed way from the original. I strongly recall my nanny, Winnie, singing this melody to me when I was a child. The song has to do with rain, but in a more 'domestic' way; a man calls to his mother's younger sister: "Auntie, open the door for me – I'm getting wet with rain." He also informs her that with two or three cows, he could pay the dowry for his bride – a heart-warming African story.

The second dance, ***War Dance***, depicts in music the endemic nature of tribal wars in Africa. Like the "Rain Dance", the style is quite aggressive, but whereas the "Rain Dance" is constructive, this is destructive and disintegratory. The music illustrates the

13 The language, as it is referred to.

pervasive and destructive nature of combat. The 'triplet' motif features throughout this dance as a warlike fanfare. The "leg-stamping" motif from the 1st dance widens out and becomes a falling major 3rd followed by a rising minor 3rd.

There are different articulations and 'attacks' on the cello and piano, showing the different strategies of war. The theme of "closed" intervals i.e. semitones and tones signifies the "closing" of ranks against the enemy: G# G A G# – a tight-knit motif that revolves around itself. A central quieter section ensues with a mournful piano ostinato (again falling 3rds) in an irregular 7/8 metre against a plaintive string line, bewailing the losses of war and the helplessness and futility thereof. The tonal centre, which at the beginning is C#, finally settles on C (Doh) at the end, showing the futility of war i.e. "Back to square one – Doh!"

Hypnotic Dance, the third dance, evokes the spiritual essence of a human being in search of greater meaning in life. The opening in slow harmonics is reminiscent of a man in the *veld* walking along introspectively, whistling quietly to himself. The essence of this "hypnotic" style reflects a search for the spiritual connection that brings a sense of peace. A 7-note descending theme is heard: D C G D C E D – in a mixture of pentatonic and later mixolydian modes.

The piano joins the cello in a desynchronised counterpoint with the same melody and the viola/cello strums like a guitar. Gradually, the tempo accelerates and small units are repeated. These become more intense and lead to a new theme of 11 notes. The cello joins the piano in many counter melodies derived from the same material.

The downward "glissando slides" between notes is very typical of African song. Themes are repeated in different irregular patterns and polyrhythms, even in canon (strict imitation). The music builds up into a frenetic, hypnotic, repetitive and feverish dance. This repetitive theme is one of hope and redemption – a supplication for peace.

A mini string cadenza reminds us that we are still listening to a virtuoso piece of serious music. A jazzy *pizzicato* section follows before a return to the quiet "harmonics" theme of the

opening. A coda follows which builds up into a frenetic hypnotic repetitive dance.

"**Afro Angst**" is the fourth and final Dance in the Suite. This is not so much a dance as a mood and feeling. In general, there is deep anxiety in present-day society based on fear, mistrust and violence. Anxiety is expressed musically in sudden, fierce gestures and long, sustained tones, juxtaposed with short, sharp patterns. The feeling, of anxiety is created by a low, "grumbling" section in the cello and is expressed musically in sudden gestures and long dotted values, followed by short notes in falling minor 3rds.

The tension is relieved by a melody or chant in the cello in long notes against a fluid shifting 'ostinato' in the piano – a *Cantus Firmus* of hope and redemption – a kind of supplication for peace. Finally a musical "convergence" takes place when ascending triplet figures in the piano criss-cross with descending triplet figures in the cello – a kind of optimistic "meeting of minds".

The '*Pesante*' Section that ends the work is predominantly in open 5ths and consists of a repeated bell-like figure heralding a pragmatic resignation of the realities of life. This *Coda* of rising figures in the cello brings the piece to an end on the tonic of D, where it all began.

The work is a technically and musically challenging piece for the performers and demands imagination and a developed instrumental facility.

7. *Partials and Pedals* for piano (2008) – sonorous and hypnotic overtones - commissioned for the 11th UNISA International Piano Competition

This work was inspired by the split-tone/throat singing (creating overtone-harmonics) of the NGQOKO Women's Group from the Eastern Cape. Having worked with this vocal ensemble I was immediately impressed by the richness of tone and timbre produced in their music by this vocal technique. In this piece no literal transference of that sonic world is attempted, but rather

the concept of harmonics and pedal points (fundamentals) has been introduced to add a special colour.

The intervals that dominate the work are octaves, fifths, and thirds, namely, the strongest partials in the natural harmonic series. These generate multi-phonics which enrich the texture. Lively octaves in contrary motion open the piece and these are located on a shifting "Bb" pedal point. The rhythmic patterns fall naturally into groups of notes in twos and threes irrespective of the changing metre with subtle alterations of values. Although there are polyrhythmic moments, the focus is more on cross-rhythms and vertical harmonic states. Ambiguous major and minor thirds further emphasise the harmonic series.

The unrelenting motion gives way to a central synthesis – the free expression of three fundamental tones, (C, Ab and E) in a swirl of sound and their resulting eleven overtones. This is followed by a grounded section in rotating motion around the pedal points of Eb and Bb, sometimes straight and sometimes in triplets. A return to the descending chordal figure finds itself located on the pedal point of Eb, the obvious 'dominant-tonic' relationship, manifest in the natural acoustic realm of the overtone series. Clever use of the sustaining pedal can enhance this sound-world.

The piece comes to a close with a return to the octave figure, this time positioned on the Eb pedal point. *Partials and Pedals* is a tactile and virtuosic work that allows for relative freedom in interpretation.

8. *Pendulum* for Piano and Orchestra (2010) – finding equilibrium in life.

The *1st movement*, the longest of the three, is stately and thematically based; it opens with the clanging of the tubular bells in falling 4ths, accompanied by drum percussion and bassoon. This descending bell figure is taken over by the strings before the first entry of the piano introducing the characteristic four-note (jazzy) syncopated motif. The material throughout this movement is dominated by linear and vertical chords in tonal 4ths, with animated dialogue between the piano and orchestra. The piano

comes into its own in a cadenza-like solo, which is eventually joined by the bells as it accompanies the piano on its return to the opening orchestral texture.

The *2nd movement* is rather dark, brooding and mysterious, with dissonant orchestral sound blocks and vibrating tone colours, punctuated by plucked string *pizzicati*. It recreates a mood similar to the one found in the slow section of my Tempus Fugit with nocturnal shadows, underlying tension and foreboding. The role of the piano is to cut through the opaque texture with rapid arpeggiations using diminished 7ths as the chord basis to lift the atmosphere into a spiritual realm as expiation for the terrors of the night. An illusion is created of a quick tempo, but in reality, this is the 'slow movement'. The arpeggios are transformed into impassioned melodic entities using the same small, intervallic structures.

The *3rd move*ment is discussed in detail in the text.

9. *Wits Trio Tribute* for piano, violin and cello (2013) – composed for dear friends

This work was commissioned by and premiered by the 'Wits Trio' at a Tribute Concert held in my honour to mark the end of my lifelong career in WitsMusic after over 40 years. It is in three movements with the outer 1st and 3rd movements encasing a middle deeply expressive movement.

A rotating murmuring figure introduces the material for the 1st movement which is in a loose Rondo form in which the recognizable motivic material recurs several times in different forms and instrumental transpositions. Each instrument has its turn to enunciate the thematic material. A middle celebratory section in longer note values is located on the tonal centre 'A'; but the dissonance triplets soon return. The rhythmic units are unpredictable and irregular, making it extremely difficult to perform – just ask the Wits Trio.

The 2nd movement is an elegiac and plaintive lament of a time and place long gone; its longing character yearns for a glimpse into a bygone era with distinctly nostalgic Judaic

overtones. The opening rising figure in the cello represents a kind of supplication, a prayer – this is followed by ambiguous harmonies in the piano ranging from dissonant intervals reflecting *angst* to the more optimistic tonal harmonic resolutions. The falling harmonic minor intervals are offset by the constant attempt to rise higher and higher in register, ending with high harmonics in the violin. This is an example of my music that expresses my roots and spiritual essence, resulting in music of deep longing, nostalgia and yearning.

The 3rd movement is driven by a relentless mechanical figure, which contains sequentially repeated patterns. Although pulse-based and relentlessly rhythmical there are enforced signposts that interrupt and halt the momentum. This is life! When things are going smoothly there are unexpected intrusions and interruptions, but one resumes with vigour and energy. The musical figures are broken up with interjections and motivic and rhythmic imitation between the instruments as in an interdependent symbiotic relationship. Again this is the *weltanschauung*[14] of my mature years. We are all interdependent human beings and cannot exist without one another. The music develops into a heavy rather exaggerated Russian-sounding dance – my Lithuanian ancestry and roots are clearly showing!

10. *Quin-Tête-À-Tête* for string quartet and percussion – a friendly chat with a high-five

The work begins with long note values in a gentle sustained *tête-à-tête* character as a friendly interaction, punctuated by little left-hand *pizzicato* interruptions in the strings. Very soon the texture becomes musically quite intense – eventually erupting into a fiery argument between the strings and percussion emitting quick bursts of sound, hurried scale-like passages and the use of extreme registers in a *forte* (loud) dynamic.

In spite of the fragmented texture which ensues, granulated repeated pedal points in the marimba (taken over in the lower strings) lend an air of sustained stability to the texture.

14 A particular philosophy or view of life.

Though played by one percussionist, the variety of percussion instruments required in the piece creates many different timbres and contrasting textures and is technically very demanding on one percussionist. A brief *Reprise* (repetition) leads into a quasi-indigenous African music section with aggregates of 2s and 3s in a rhythmic and quite forceful sound-world. This finally leads into a *Coda* ('tagged-on' bit), bringing back the persistent rising triplet figures and interlocking polyrhythms, typical of the thematic shapes in the work.



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To encounter *Sound Me Out: A Lifetime of Music and Memories* is to experience the extraordinary journey of a woman who has shaped the soundscape of South Africa. Jeanne's story unfolds not only as a chronicle of personal achievement, but also as a reflection of our nation's cultural evolution – one that spans from the apartheid years to a democracy still finding its harmony.

Sound Me Out offers readers not just a record of Jeanne's achievements, but a glimpse into the heart and mind of an artist whose music, teaching and friendship have left an indelible mark on so many lives – mine included. Her reflections on gender, faith, family, and the intertwining of African and Jewish musical traditions reveal the many layers of her creative world: one that is deeply personal and profoundly universal.

Alexander Johnson
Composer and Professor of Music
University of the Free State

