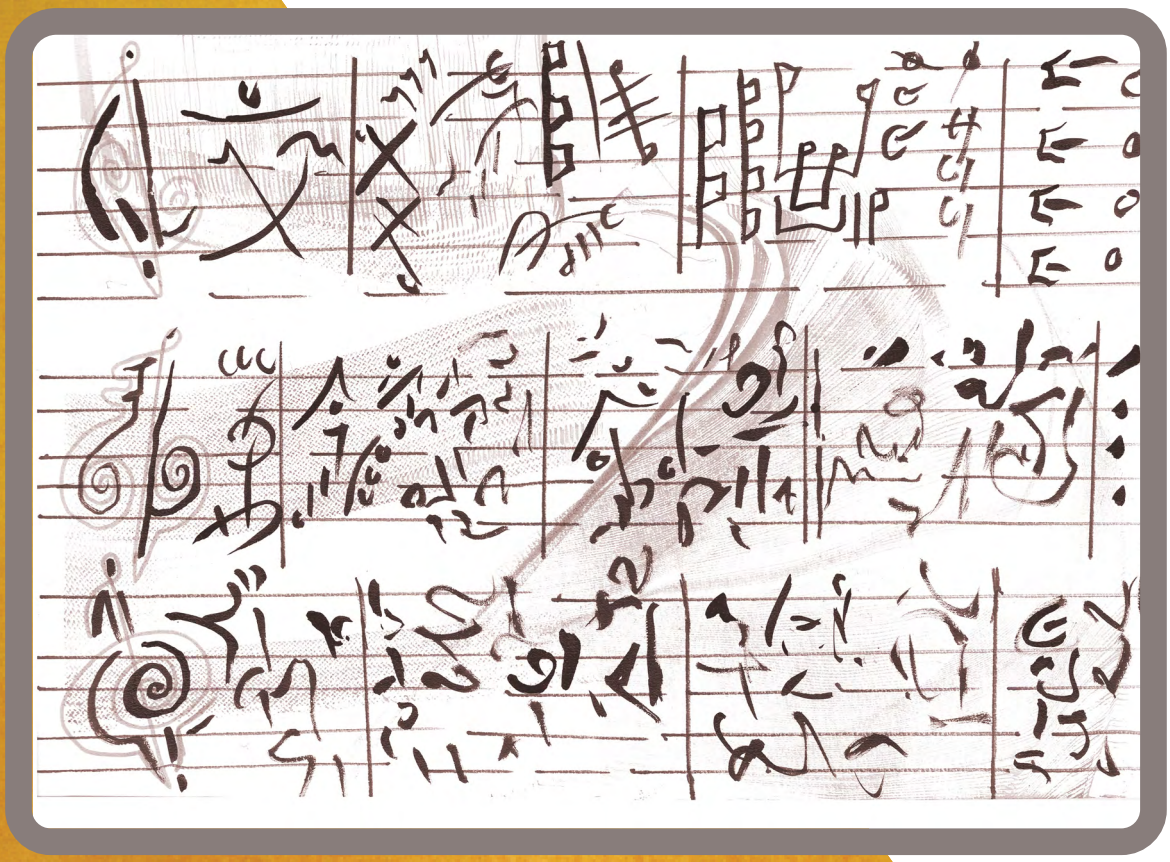
Defining South African Music

- Musicians & Aficionados Speak



AFRICAN MUSIC
MARABI
KWELA
MBAQANGA
GHOEMA
CAPE JAZZ
SOUTH AFRICAN JAZZ
FREE JAZZ – The South African Impact

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Foreword and Illustrations
Lefifi Tladi

Interviews compiled by
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Edited by
Bridget Thompson

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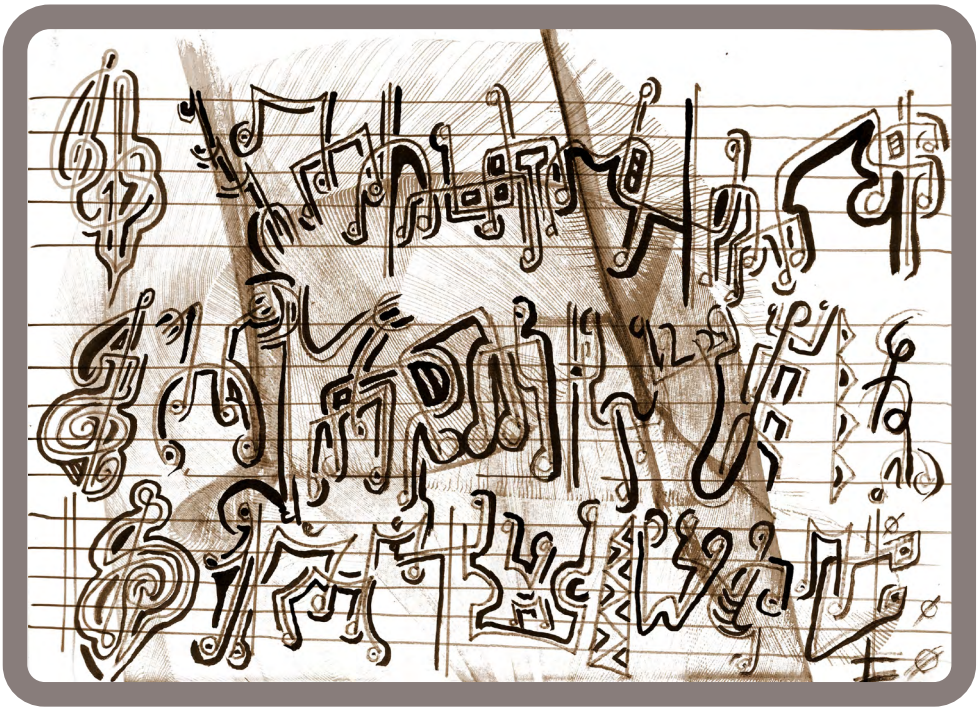


Fig. 1 Lefifi Tladi Untitled (2023) ink on paper 42.0 x 29.7 cm

FOREWORD
MUSIC OF THE SPIRITS

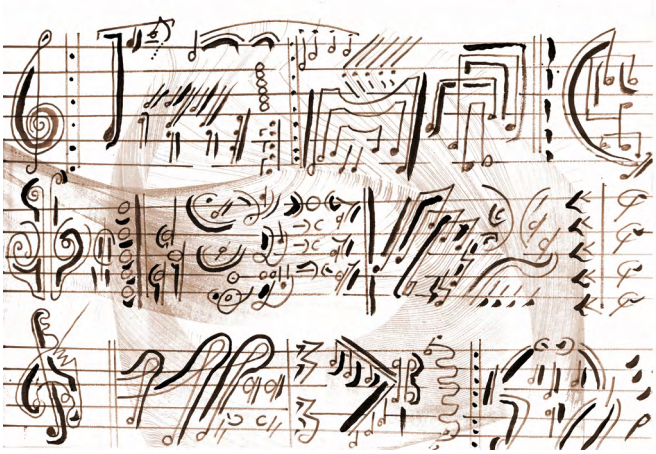


Fig. 2 Lefifi Tladi Untitled (2023) ink on paper 42.0 x 29.7 cm

Spirits are *Malombo* (in Tsavenda) or *Malopo* (in Sepedi) , the essence essential of the life force commonly called cosmic energy. Malombo is composed of all that is perceivable outside the five senses where the mystics dwell and reign in peace, that fear-free-zone. *Music of the Spirits* is our organ for perceiving the ethereal. The element that manifests your sixth sense, the essence essential of your isness. *Music of the Spirits* is the nature of nature as a healing force, the pulse of the ocean, the heaving of seashells, the sneezing of breezes, that sooth the sooth-sayer's visions.

Malombo manifests the power of sanity as force. That element that informs our consciousness at the zenith of its cognisance, the apex of what is human and humane. And that's the oomph of what Music of the Spirits is all about the seasons of life unfolding the importance of living.

Malopo informs the renaissance of sound consciousness and enlightenment manifested through this holy-trinity of malomboists, a sound bound troika art-vancing a cultural aesthetic revolution. *Malombo*[1] informed our evolutionary alertness. What we call applied consciousness. They were the first to change the regalia of performance.

1 Julien Bahula Philip Tabane and Abey Cindi formed *Malombo*, the group

In retrospect I would not be surprised nor shocked to realise that they even inspired our sangomas to use the Swazi traditional uniform. Most if not all the bands that played in the Malombo vein had that Afrocentric look, You can just imagine that boon that became a boom for seamstresses.

Dashiki, Bazooka, Zuzuma Jazz Makers, Sakhile, Katanga Jazz Men, Batsumi, Medumo, Tlou, Harari etc. The Jazz Zionist had a unique dress-code. From this perspective you begin to understand how Malombo influenced the Black Consciousness Movement naming trends. We moved from those Eurocentric names like *Beaters, Jazz Clan, Jazz Dazzlers, Jazz Profets, Jazz Giants, Soul Jazz Men, Drive, Four Sounds + 1*, etc. We gave our bands their Malombo names thanks to the Afrocentric spirit of *Malombo*. Inspired consciousness. The Black Consciousness Movement became a *Lelopo* (a spirit).

We as conscious artists changed our names and used our *Malopo* names. We became the vehicles of our collective cultural renaissance, a single collective voice swinging as a unit of those songs found in a swarm of bees. Buzzing in a minor B-flat and C major, displaying nature's musical skills.

The *Music of the Spirits* instills sanity in the veins of your consciousness and that's why that trend of sound became very important in the manifestation of sound consciousness. The *Music of the Spirits* is a manifestation of an Afrocentric sound manifesto, the genesis of a sound bound revolution. A sound energy that gave us a directive and direction. The spiritual bell-curve as to what should be done.

Malombo engages the nations forcefield in a spiritual resurrection. *Malombo* manifested the purpose of our singularity, our strength as a unit structured core. Listen to these *ingomas* (songs) these are not just songs found on some Eurocentric aesthetics but spiritually engaged and engaging dialogues. This trinity is a three-dimensional manifestation of soul power[1].

Malombo ke koma (Malombo is an initiation centre) the epitome of our culture, a sound academy of the spirits. Those and only those who are anchored to Africa's womb of consciousness.

2 Again referring to Malombo the group

In retrospect I would not be surprised nor shocked to realise that they even *Malombo* and the visual arts were intrinsically united and we the artists used this music as a medium of our expression. The pulse of the drums infused the *Malopo* in our creative vision and we became optic sangomas that could see deep into the future and interpret the past

Our art was not only revelatory, it was prophetic through *Ubumgoma* (a calling). Our horizons were elevated to the status of clairvoyancy, we became cultural-optic-medium-mystics and laid a new aesthetic consciousness. That is why *Malombo* is a foundation for all forms of cultural sanity.

South Africa has lost its *Lelopo* what a shame.

I hope in the future we can elaborate on these creative ventures so that our art can have a healing force *Music of the Spirits* is one of those umbilical cords that nourishes that pure energy in the you in you. It enriches, enhances, consumes and revamps your inner element: pure sound, holy magic.

- LEFIFI TLADI

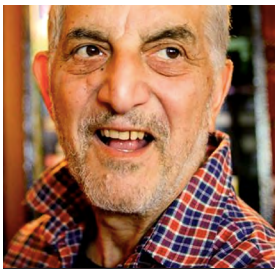
This is a book of interview extracts with South African jazz musicians and music aficionados who describe some foundational South African musical forms: African music, Marabi, Kwela, Mbaqanga, Ghoema, South African Jazz and Free Jazz.

ANDREW TRACEY

DAVID COPLAN

GLEN UJEBE MASOKOANE

JONAS GWANGWA


VINCENT KOLBE

ALVIN PETERSEN

ERROL DYERS

ROBBIE JANSEN

GWEN ANSELL

LOUIS MOHOLO

BHEKI KHOZA

DINGA SIKWEBU

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INTRODUCTION

Lefifi Tladi's foreword provides the framework for the spiritual basis of music in all South African music. As a young person he founded the musical group, *Dashiki* which influenced the cultural dimensions of the Black Consciousness Movement. Today he calls for an African consciousness. We are proud to include some of his art, which explores an exploration of a visual African musical language

The material for this book was drawn from interviews done for two documentary series on music during the past two decades:

Rhythms from Africa, a four part series released by Tomas films in the early 2000s and 5 short educational films on music produced by the same team for the Art and Ubuntu Trust in 2018, as part of the *South African Arts, Past and Present Project.*

While making these documentary films the production team[1] travelled South Africa interviewing musicians and aficionados of music as well as filming performances and discussions which revealed a rich seam of knowledge held in the musicians memories.

Repeatedly South African musical terms, (*marabi, mbaqanga, kwela* and so on) tripped off their tongues but it was not possible to find handy published definitions of these musical forms. We felt it was worth excavating the interviews to publish the ways in which musicians defined these terms.

We share these extracts from interviews with South African jazz musicians and music aficionados as a contribution and incentive towards a larger intellectual and documentary project, which could fill the holes in the historical records and understanding of our extraordinary musical heritage.

Despite the differences between musical forms there is a profound seam underlying South African jazz and Tladi's understanding of it resonates with the concept for another documentary series called the *Spiritual Connection* developed by the late Dingan Thomas Kapa (1966-2016). Kapa had hoped, through this series, to highlight the spiritual commonalities across all South Africa's indigenous music.

We remember our friend and fellow filmmaker, Dingan's vision, and hope that somebody else will do what he intended to.

Whilst definitions of these foundational South African musical sounds are still under discussion music has moved on to create new sounds.

1 The production team included myself and Abdulcadir Ahmed as procedures/directors and Dingan Thomas Kapa

In 2019 just before screening some of the films from the *South African Arts, Past and Present* series in Limpopo and Mpumalanga the Sunday Times published a map of South African musical forms: astonished we realised it did not feature even one of the forms described in this book. It focussed on forms popular with youth, *amapiano, gqom, kwaito and house*. So, when confronted with an audience of young people in Polokwane we were a little afraid that the series wouldn't touch base with them.

Fig. 3 Lefifi Tladi Untitled (2023) ink on paper 42.0 x 29.7 cm

Yet one episode in the series captivated the young audience. It featured Big Voice Jack's (Aaron Jack Lerule) brilliant musical storytelling. Dexterously playing not only one, but sometimes two pennywhistles, he demonstrates *Marabi, Mbaqanga, Tsaba Tsaba and Kwela*, interspersing his performances with tales of youthful aspirations, adventures and witty manipulations of police under apartheid.

Alerted by the *Sunday Times* article we realised that the film presented an entirely unknown set of musical lexicons for this generation and at question time explored the young audience's opinions about this. Enthused by Jack's personality and musicality they conceded that there was value in getting to understand this musical history.

Encouraged by the young *amapiano* aficionado's ability to appreciate musical heritage when it is presented in an appealing and accessible way we take pleasure in sharing the words of musicians, who speak such a profound language, but whose insightful opinions are rarely heard

BRIDGET THOMPSON
Series Editor.

AFRICAN MUSIC

There is no question in my mind that African music is a unity in the deepest levels, and that includes African Music made by people of African heritage in the Americas, and that even goes through to modern pop music, which is so heavily based on black music.

There is a unity behind it and it's built on such things as human relationships. -

ANDREW TRACEY

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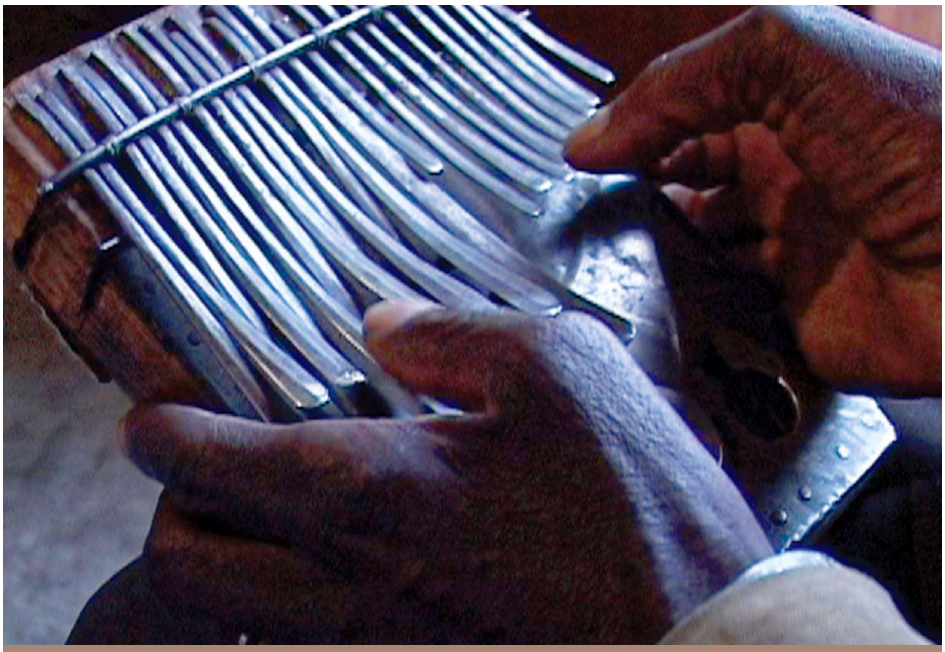
There is no question in my mind that African music is a unity in the deepest levels, and that includes African Music made by people of African heritage in the Americas, and that even goes through to modern pop music, which is so heavily based on black music.

There is a unity behind it and it's built on such things as human relationships

I lay a great stress on the relationships in between music as in life. Human relationships are expressed I expect primarily by rhythmic relationships, not entirely rhythm, in fact when one starts using western terms, such as rhythm you get a bit limited. But what you can call rhythm is one of the main ways of relating to people and difference in between parts. It tends to be co-operation in music, but co-operation with different things that have to cooperate together is a basic African element



Zimbabwean marabi player in Johannesburg

If you take a western piece of music it doesn't have that strength of co-operation, but if you introduce something that brings in the co-operation in an African way, that's when an African musician lights up "ah, that is African" and it could be something simple, like a common African rhythm which is its two against three beats at the same time or it could be using the right speech tones of the language, it could be the use of certain harmonic patterns or melodic patterns, but mainly it would be in the rhythm.

Like in western music you may be clapping a certain clap, which means nothing on its own, but if you clap against some rhythm then that clap shows what that clap is actually doing it shows what the structure of my clap is and also my regular clap will also show the structure of an irregular clap that might be going with it.

That's an African factor. That's something at the deepest level.

I think there are other levels too which is African music is very spiritual relates to the ancestors, and I think that all African music does that.

One could discuss in more detail, but I think that once you get that smile of recognition a certain smile, which actually I learnt to think about this from one of my heroes in African music, which was Father Jones, who was an English missionary in Zambia, and later on he lectured at the Oriental and African studies university in London, a great guy. He was one of the first people who could actually write African music down, correctly because he could do it himself. It wasn't like Herskovists, who was another early ethnicmusicologist who gave up when it came to writing African music down, he said it was impossible to write down, but it isn't, its very possible to write down because African rhythm is constructed on very clear principles that are now being better understood in the last forty years should we say.

Then if you listen to all different types of, all the African music you might think that there is so much variety how can they all be linked, but they are all linked by this uh, African smile of recognition it's one of the things that I have been looking at. What is it that Africans recognise when something sounds African?

In regards to change in African music, there is change happening all the time, but you have to think where it is happening, where traditional cultures are still strong the music remains strong, the music is very strongly linked to events, customs, things that happen in life, so where those are still happening like initiation for instance, initiation has been banned in many parts of Africa by the colonial powers and then those who followed and still retained colonial values, but in some cases it has survived and the music that goes with initiation has survived, traditional weddings, many aspects of tradition have survived and the music has survived with them.

But when those things have changed and the major social changes that are happening right through Africa, and South Africa too of course has meant that a lot of music has disappeared, because it goes with society, other things that have made music disappear are where it's been replaced by modern music for instance entertainment music, which didn't have a deep social function, is often replaced by modern entertainment music on the media, to transistor radio, modern instruments like guitars and so on.

When people go to town they are not living a rural traditional life, they want to make music, which reflects their status in time, they make urban music, which, there are so many varieties of that

Ngqoqo performers, Eastern Cape

DAVID COPLAN

So all of the groups from South Africa, of course – you can't name a group that did not derive its influences from African music including even of course the area of Kimberley.

– DAVID COPLAN

Well, I don't know if it is remarkable or not, but the regional language music traditions have survived very strongly, even though there is a common base. All of the African language musical cultures of South Africa have a certain similarity of structure, then a great difference in melody, harmony, rhythm, uh, part structure, male and female, the way they blend and diverge.

So all of the groups from South Africa, of course – you can't name a group that did not derive its influences from African music including even of course the area of Kimberley.

Kimberley attracted a strong Cape influence because the Northern Cape, near the Free State, the people who lived there traditionally are Tswana and, of course, Khoi and San. And of course the Khoi and San heritage is part of the Cape Town (People called coloured) heritage and so there is a kind of continuity there.

I mean there is a continuity of culture from Cape Town all the way up through the West of the Cape up into the Northern Cape where Kimberley is. You would find people of whom today we would say have Khoisan heritage continuously up through there.

To some extent, people in Cape Town who had a Khoi and San heritage would not have felt particularly out of place in Kimberley, in the sense that still there are a lot of people up there who have that similar kind of background.

But of course from the Cape they had been educated in the music of America and the British musical and Cape *Ghoemaliedjies*, (little Ghoema song), the Afrikaans Cape tradition and all those things and they brought that to Kimberley with them.

There they met mostly Tswana people. But when you come to Joburg, everybody is here and they were able to appreciate one another's music because the structure is similar but you can hear, I mean, if a piece of music is Zulu, you can tell immediately or as it would be Xhosa or Sotho or Tsonga/ Shangaan or Tswana.

GLEN UJEBE MASOKOANE

Johannesburg, as a cultural centre, received many native sons and daughters from all corners of this country and this is where innovation has taken place.

– GLEN UJEBE MASOKOANE

I think you've got to understand Johannesburg in the 1800s, Johannesburg has been a place of innovation. You find very typical African music living side by side with European music. And in that context you find African music developing new expressions of its own - largely borrowed from its own musical idioms and root structures. And Johannesburg by its nature brings a confluence of African people in southern Africa. Actually, you could even say as far - people have travelled to come to Johannesburg as miners as far as the old Katanga, Tanganyika.

So you get influences of music as far as Angola, the Congo, Zambia. And inside South Africa all kinds of music finding a confluence a very strong Basotho music, Xhosa music, especially Pondo music has influenced a lot of what you'd call urban sounds.

But the influence of Pondo music you see more especially in Jazz formations and Dudu Pukwana, the late, and Mongezi Feza were great exponents of this Pondo influenced Jazz music.

Johannesburg, as a cultural centre, received many native sons and daughters from all corners of this country and this is where innovation has taken place.

Mcoy Mrubata, a musician from Cape Town, who has made Johannesburg his home

MARABI

So everything from Tanganyika and Malawian dancing and so forth through all of the ones known in South Africa: Sotho, Xhosa, Zulu, Tsonga and so forth arrived here (Johannesburg) in fairly short order – that is to say certainly by 1910. They wanted labour and they recruited in large numbers form every country south of the Equator.

– DAVID COPLAN

DAVID COPLAN

Even today it influences South African band instrumental music. The old Marabi sound is still there. Dollar Brand (Abdullah Ibrahim) and his kind of Manenberg sound has a lot of that Marabi in it

– DAVID COPLAN

Johannesburg has various groups and sorts of people who came here. It's a peculiar city in that it mushroomed all at once. There's no organic growth of Johannesburg. It never had any reason to exist except for the gold under our feet. So in 1886 it was a few tents and in 1887 it was 100,000 people and they came from all over. With regard to its own musical culture, of course, it does not really have any until around the turn of the century, I suppose, or perhaps just after.

People brought their music from all corners of the earth. I suppose the largest number of people come from the various African cultures. They wanted labour and they recruited in large numbers from every country south of the Equator. So everything from Tanganyika and Malawian dancing and so forth through all of the ones known in South Africa: Sotho, Xhosa, Zulu, Tsonga and so forth arrived here in fairly short order – that is to say certainly by 1910.

Tanzanian bass player

And in the – you can call them shack areas, these kind of little mushrooming areas, where mine compounds and shacklands, where people found a place to live, they mixed and matched the music they brought with them from the countryside with that of the other people they found here.

So in a way, I suppose, the original Jo'burg music is the white dance hall – after the sort of British model you know – comedy and dance hall music with people singing the sort of light classics of the day and performing burlesques (variety show) and so forth.

The influence of America - the popular music of the day in America spread throughout Europe and so there was a lot of what we call music hall kind of thing and then on the African or black side, there are versions of this kind of thing because they found themselves in the city. So you had native kind of dance halls and there were areas where coloured people who had learnt how to play piano in the Cape performed. And so these little dance halls and *shebeens* (informal pubs) and so forth as we call them now grew up where people began to listen to the urban musics of the western world that were floating through the air and combined with their own music.

The other thing, of course, was simply singing and dancing that was done in the mine compounds and in the streets and neighbourhoods.

Early commentators who wrote, you know, from Europe and so forth about how outside the African workers hostels they would find these groups doing their Zulu dancing or doing their Xhosa or Sotho forms and this and that and the church groups, of course, every Saturday and Sunday doing their hymns that had been created for them by missionaries.

The missions were very active on the Witwatersrand which they considered to be a den of sin where workers should be rescued you know, from the vices of the city. And everything that Africa and even East and West had to offer at the time kind of combined. Ragtime came in from America and was very popular in some ways with both black and white because it was music hall in its own way and some of the earliest instrumental music that black people would have played had strong ragtime influences brought from the Cape. Visiting minstrels and this kind of thing.

South Africa has always been, in African terms, a very mobile society because the trains and the transport were there, and some people walked but I mean the trains were there and they brought people from all over and to all over.

I suppose the famous Marabi dance is the first – now of course you say Jo'burg, it was also in Pretoria and there might even be a bit of competition as to whether it first sprang up in African locations in Jo'burg or Pretoria. But, of course, they're not very far away. I tend to favour Jo'burg because of the tremendous different mix of people from all over to the place who had to come here to the mines. But I might be found to be wrong.

But in any case, people brought their music from the countryside and they began to hear the American kind of ragtime and Jazz and the early phonograph records and in the music halls and so forth. Piano players from the Cape who had been exposed. [In] Cape Town, the mother city, the port city, influences from contemporary popular music floated through Cape Town and right up through into Transvaal, via the trains.

Zulu people, Sotho, Tswana, Xhosa, Pedi with their brass bands from the missions and their singing groups and their shebeens and dance halls began to hear these American influences and blended the two.

I suppose the early Marabi dance is a kind of African way of doing what they thought ragtime and Jazz was all about in their own languages. If you listen to it, musically, it is not particularly Jazzy either in its form, or in its improvisations or its rhythms. It has very local rhythms and very local harmony and part structure and the way in which the voices blend and so forth and uh the part structure is all very local and very South African, but it had that bouncy rhythm from the piano players from the Cape and a bit of that brass band from the Salvation Army and the Pedi brass bands and the shebeens on Saturday kind of thing.

So, it blended that form in the kind of way in which was done in New Orleans, you know, with the earliest Jazz. Although we often say it was Joburg's first Jazz because it came about in a similar way, in fact it wasn't very much like Jazz in a musical way, but Jazz influences were certainly coming in. I think in the early Marabi bands that played in the neighbourhoods, some coloured, some African that was Joburg's first music.

There were early recordings of it; very few and even today it influences South African band instrumental music. The old Marabi sound is still there. Dollar Brand (Abdullah Ibrahim) and his kind of Manenberg sound has a lot of that Marabi in it. All the piano playing in South Africa, South African Jazz piano playing has that Marabi feel with the vamp in the left hand and the little aab, the little repetitive melodic sounds that come in at different points either with the right hand, is very Marabi like and you still hear that in the classic Johannesburg Jazz. African Jazz Pioneers.

There's a good example and all that kind of fifties thing – still derives back from the 20s and 30s when piano players would play in shebeens and dance halls and people would dance and shake cool drink cans full of stones to keep the rhythm going. Very characteristic kind of South African sound. You still hear a little bit when Bongo Maffin or Jo Nina revive a Jazzy old vocal, old evergreen South African song – it will have a bit of that Marabi feel to it.

Marabi is common to all of the groups but they would put their own influence into it. Once you get to Marabi, you're looking at an urban Jazz form that has blended all these things.

You see, Marabi did not have a group, it had a single piano player and then it had a band, all right, like Rhythm Kings or Sonny Grunewald's Jazz Revellers or whatever. And the vocals were very simple, just a few lines to kind of keep it going. It could be in any language, and it did not matter much. The underlying part structure was common to all of the people.

But once you get things like guitars, - I'm not so sure how far back that goes - concertinas, the trade store instruments, the pedal organ, all this kind of thing, you can hear differences. And the people who came from the countryside – the reason it happened this way is that some people came to be in Johannesburg and they took one look at the place and said "I am not leaving." Right.

The people who had acquired a little bit of English and Afrikaans and some skills they were teachers, they were clerks, messengers for businesses, they had that little bit of worldly approach: they weren't going back to the countryside where jobs with manual labour and things were poor. So they were going to stay here.

But other people came here only with the intention of earning some money and going back to their homestead and those migrant workers whom you still have today in such large numbers: their idea is "I will work in Joburg, but I will not participate – it is not me or in so far as it is me, it is me and my people in something and making our way of life there". But to go to the marabi, to go to the dance hall – that was not their interest.

There were very great class differences.

Those who went to the Inscape Palais de Dance at the Bantu Men's Social Centre and were domestic servants and dressed beautifully in suits and polished shoes and evening dresses and so on were people who said: "I am the Johannesburger. And I am going to show the powers that be and this racist place that we can acquire any cultural repertoire they may have".

Whereas the people from KwaZulu Natal or Transkei or from Lesotho: well they said: "I am here and I need to be here and have to adjust but this is not my cultural identity" and they brought many urban influences back to the countryside.

St Cyprian's Langa congregation

St Cyprian's Langa choir conducted by Duke Ngcukana

GLEN UJEBE MASOKOANE

After Marabi we get Kwela. But again you see, Marabi doesn't die, I think Marabi continues to be the golden thread...

– GLEN UJEBE MASOKOANE

You see for me, Marabi is not only a musical expression.

I see Marabi as a social and cultural movement, because in Marabi there's dance formations and marabi also is an epoch.

We are talking about really late 30s middle 40s.

Towards the Second World War, Johannesburg really becomes the centre post world war, actually. New formations take place. But Marabi I think becomes much more distinctive because not only does it connote a particular deep rooted African sound, but I think we have to understand that also music becomes more recorded.

So with the *platter* (record) music then travels backwards and forwards. And that's how you could actually begin to encapsulate and understand the sound because then it becomes a consumer product.

The same way, Mbaqanga originates, because of the recording industry's interest in turning African music into a commodity.

And that's how it then begins to be measured or begin to be quantified as social or musical moments in the history of the evolution of South African music.

I think we have to really understand the evolution of South African music because much as it comes out of the social movement, we have to understand how music gets to be appreciated, how music gets to travel within a society because the gramophone was an instrument, or rather a purveyor of South African music towards the countryside or within the urban centres. The gramophone was the "Hi Fi set" in those days. So anybody who was travelling outside Johannesburg would have his pack of 78s, to go to Bloemfontein or wherever they came from. So you have to understand *you cannot purely look at music as a social expression. It has to link to a product that was, you know recorded.*

Aaron " Big voice Jack" Lerole

FROM MARABI TO KWELA

After Marabi we get Kwela.

But again you see, Marabi doesn't die, I think Marabi continues to be the golden thread...

– GLEN UJEBE MASOKOANE

GLEN UJEBE MASOKOANE

After Marabi we get Kwela.

But again you see, Marabi doesn't die, I think Marabi continues to be the golden thread, becomes the cement that actually, as as musical styles evolve, they become dynamic, Marabi grew, continues, embodies this music, becomes the actual real mother of this music.

Mind you, Kwela also. That's why I say it is very important to understand the role of the recording industry. As African people you know become consumers of items of modernity, industry produces records in mass, so Kwela then finds itself as an expression inside Johannesburg.

Alan Kwela wants to claim, to say actually he is the father of Kwela. The exponents of Kwela are many and varied. Alan Kwela wants to believe he put the actual rubber stamp on Kwela. But the difference between – I'm not a musician by any chance I'm an advanced listener but really the difference between Kwela and Marabi - you really have to sit back and listen hard to say.

Kwela was more driven by the pennywhistle, that was the key instrument and the soprano saxophone and the electric guitar becomes also a new entrée into South African music. But don't forget that in Johannesburg there is the big band sound of Marabi - yes, the Elite Swingsters and a whole lot of others.

Kwela music comes at the real height of apartheid repression especially in the middle fifties when the Nationalist Party government actually it is embarking on perfecting its apartheid vision in very broad cultural and political terms. But it is much more insidious than that, because what's happening within the entertainment or cultural expression – there was a need of nationalist expression and you find this tendency within the much more educated musicians in people like Gideon Nxumalo who actually was a very important person within African cultural circles.

He is the founder of the *African Music and Dramatic Association* that then actually was the forerunner to the *Union of South African Artists.*

The *Kwela* would represent in many ways the South African police van, which would terrorise not only shebeen queens, but also everybody, was loaded into this van and I think the ditties of Miriam Makeba, especially her song '*Kauleza Mama*' meaning that the cops are around the corner, bury your brew or else we're all going to be loaded into the kwela-kwela van.

We have to understand *Kwela* it is a very terrifying concept because then the apartheid machinery was loading Africans onto this big van, was loading political dissent, into this van, then *Kwela*, the music originates, typically as African people, will coin tendencies around something that's happening around them.

Then Kwela has to be understood, in that context - it becomes a social and political and cultural statement. Without Jack Lerole and Lemmy Special there is no Kwela. That's true, Lemmy was the prince, as Jack Lerole was the King .

Also, amongst all the proponents of this musical tendency, there is one other outstanding saxophonist: Kippie Moeketsi, because Kippie you know, traverses all these generations you know, forties, fifties, sixties the seventies and eighties.

Aaron "Big voice Jack" Lerole

MBAQANGA

Even today it influences South African band instrumental music. The old Marabi sound is still there. Dollar Brand (Abdullah Ibrahim) and his kind of Manenberg sound has a lot of that Marabi in it.

– DAVID COPLAN

GLEN UJEBE MASOKOANE

The rise of Mbaqanga has to be understood with the role of the recording, industry, especially companies like Gallo, Troubadour. They were producing fast produced mass music, musicians were actually recording a single *platter (record)* in two hours. So Mbaqanga actually, as the word, connotes, means a mish-mash of sound quickly produced, no real time to produce, quality of content.

I think this then irks the refined Marabi generation of musicians and people are also involved in the big band, because then they don't get recognised. But then this very quick mass product then becomes highly distributed.

Well the exponents of Mbaqanga – that's a very huge and big movement. But even Jack Lerole comes out of that generation and Spokes Mashiyane, a fantastic saxophonist.

But I will not really deride and say Mbaqanga has no significant, momentous meaning in South African music. But this is not only a South African question.

Even in the US, within the recording industry you find this tendency of producing quick buck musicians in order to sell records.

What's in authentic music that's well composed suffers non recording, but I think it is the political messages that would be coming out of the music of Marabi and Kwela especially because then apartheid begins to find its way into the social fabric of South Africa. They begin to really especially use Radio Bantu to produce tribal Zulu music, Xhosa music, Sepedi music etc.

JONAS GWANGWA

In Orlando we were kind of fortunate in a sense: we could rent what was called Radio Fusion, which was just a speaker of volume control, for on off, soft or loud. And it played music. I would say fortunate in the sense that we got to hear a lot of our music – African music, you know. Otherwise one would not have been that exposed because you did not get that much of our music in the radios, you see. South African. We were not exposed to Southern African music. That has never been.

We got a lot of South African music, all the bands and traditional music, stories, you know. This was traditional music that had been recorded, people in the rural areas. You know, people like Hugh Tracey had gone around and collected that kind of music and then you get, you got music from the workers, people working on the roads, they had their music, the *shosholozas*, (work song), they come from there and then of course the regular township bands, you know, and singers.

People like Miriam Makeba we heard over the radio, you know, during that Radio Fusion time. Uh, so we got a kind of exposure. One was too young to be going to these concerts, you know and they were kind of rough. They used to have concerts in the community halls, where we had concerts and dance. There had to be concerts and dance from eight to four. So like from eight o clock till twelve it was the concert part and then there's a break and the people move the chairs and then at one (pm) the band comes in and it is dance now, you know.

One was too young to be going to these concerts, you know and they were kind of rough. They used to have concerts in the community halls, where, where we had concerts and dance. There had to be concerts and dance from eight to four. So like from eight o clock till twelve it was the concert part and then there's a break and the people move the chairs and then at one the band comes in and it is dance now, you know. And that will go on till four a.m., four thirty a.m. That was to beat the curfew and that was also to beat the rough rogues, *tsotsis*, (petty criminals), people coming from the show could get molested and things. So eight to four, having a good time, you see.

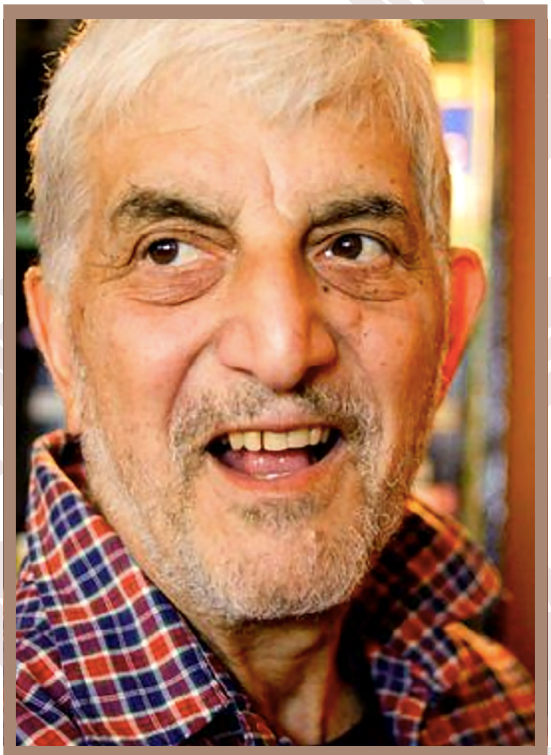
Klopse brass practising for the Cape Carnival

36| *Christmas Choir - Mitchell's Plain*

GHOEMA

Ghoema It's a rhythm that can make you drunk,
without having had a single drink.

- ALVIN PETERSEN



VINCENT KOLBE

When the Europeans came to settle here in the Western Cape they needed labor, so they imported slave labor from the other colonies all over the world, especially the Dutch, they went to Java, they went to Indonesia, they went to India and brought back people, and these people actually had their language and their culture and their religion, and they had to, had to fit into this Dutch world.

Therefore, a kind of a creole sort of music, a kind of creole language, a kind of creole cooking culture, lifestyle developed here, that is pretty unique, that today for instance in the choral groups that we have you'll have people who are dressed in suits, in western suits, Savile row suits, but who wear fezzes, which is very much [from]the Ottoman empire. Who sing a kind of a corrupt Dutch, which developed in this part of the world as a, I suppose in places like Surinam you'd find a similar kind of patois.

Who would play banjoes that were brought here by minstrels from the States, who played guitars, who were brought here by the Europeans Spaniards etcetera etcetera. Who would sing Dutch sailor songs that the Dutch sailors sing. Who'd sing songs from the American movies and so on.

And we have annual choral competitions which, they call Malay choirs, but if you go to Malaysia you won't find an equivalent. And this is the trouble with labeling.

This is the kind of natural culture that developed here, in this part of the world, just that. The way the language did, the way the music did. The same with instrumentation.

And rhythms, people would dance, bringing their life rhythms with them, whether it's a drum, whether it's a tambourine, whether it's clapping the rhythms of their hands, but they'd find European instruments here as well. And very often in Dutch households the house slaves would become musicians, because they had the gift. They would have to play European music for their Dutch masters and their visitors and they would also probably get very nostalgic and play some of the old songs their grandparents taught them. And so again, an interesting, mix, a musical mix developed in this town.

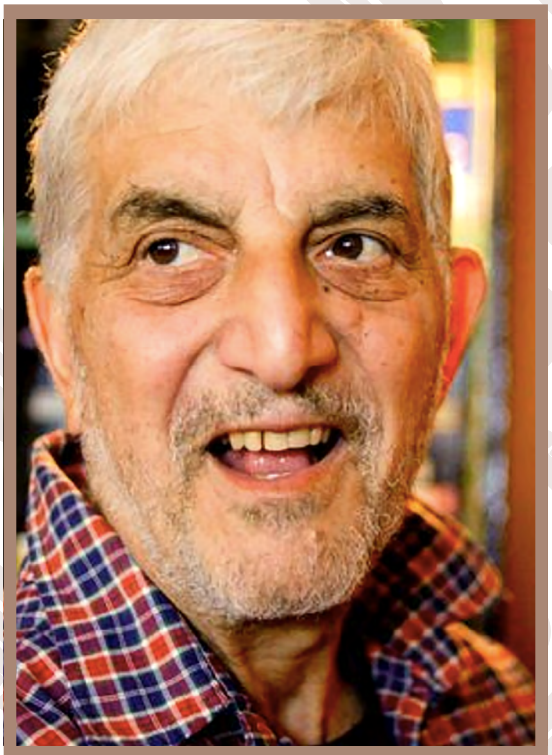
Malay choir practising

ALVIN PETERSEN

I think, if you listen to the Ghoema rhythm, you know this ostinato, stubborn beat if you listen to it strongly enough it also has that effect to intoxicate.

– ALVIN PETERSEN

My grandfather had his own band it was a string band, wind instruments were not involved at that time because we are talking here about twenties, thirties, and the Germans used to enjoy these bands coming up playing for them because they could sing you know the tunes of the Germans. They once played "*Deutschland Uber Alles*". I don't know what that sounds like but you know the German farmers in Manenberg were very fond of inviting them because they knew their entire repertoire of German you know, folk music. Um and so they must have had a wide array or selection of work from which they could choose



VINCENT KOLBE

These slaves might have performed for their masters today, but tomorrow they might all go into the mountains or they might all go to the beach and have their own weddings and their own cultural occasions and where they'd have traditionally their own songs: their own wedding songs and their own party songs and their own instrumentation.

One of the instruments that developed in this town, uh, and it's a drum, called the Ghoema.

Now there's all kinds of stories how it originated, but if one takes into consideration that water and wine barrels are very much, like the steel drums of Trinidad, was very much available in this part of the port. And that all you had to do was put an animal skin over it and you had a drum.

But this drum accompanied people on all occasions, I mean the drum is as old as mankind, whether it's, leading an army into battle or for religious ceremonies.

Lentegeur Entertainers from Mitchell's Plain

So the Ghoema, which is an instrument that has developed here, people used for walks, long walks and, uh, you know if you had to walk a long distance to the accompaniment of the drum, or as an accompaniment to dance, or even in religious ceremonies, there's a religious ceremony ritual called ratiep, khalifa, whereby you prove your, the strength of your faith, by stabbing yourself with sharp objects and you won't bleed.

But in the meantime this mesmeric drum is playing in the back. So that drum has got a central sort of role in, in our culture and it's not a European drum and it's very much a working class thing

ALVIN PETERSEN

[Ghoema] It's a rhythm that can make you drunk, without having had a single drink.

I think, if you listen to the Ghoema rhythm, you know this ostinato, stubborn beat if you listen to it strongly enough it also has that effect to intoxicate. I suppose the closest that you can get to that experience in in Western music must be the Vivaldi Bolero which has a stubborn beat going, going on from the beginning to the end, building up to a to a climax that really intoxicated me.

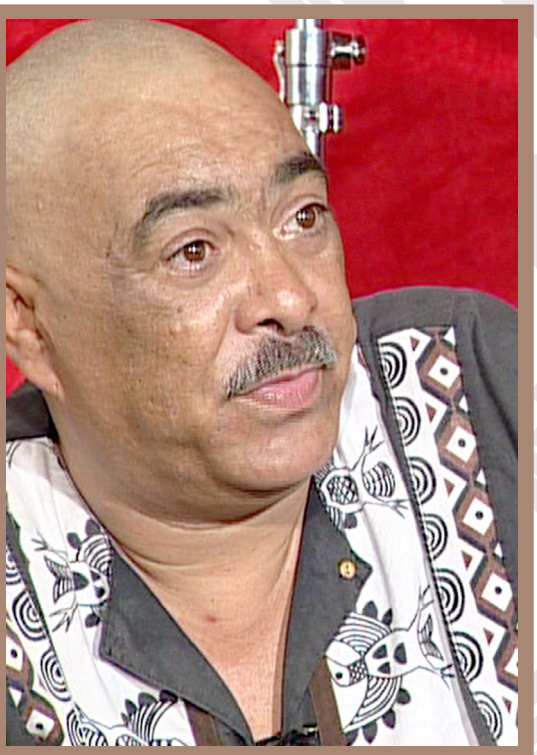
And freedom is everything I suppose to human beings and to have our little place in the sun, you know.
– Errol Dyers

ERROL DYERS

You look at the, the Ghoema beat, it's a party rhythm you know, it's like the Calypso of the West Indies, or it's what reggae is to Jamaicans, or R and B and Jazz and stuff to the Americans. In essence we, we are basically the same people, I mean, you know it's you look at, Afrikaans. The Afrikaans that I speak is a Creole Afrikaans, you know basically Coloured people in the Western Cape are Creole people in essence but I'm glad that its different, that, that I can make a different noise to somebody else, if not in South Africa, in the world, you know, and I think we do. Otherwise we have to pay royalties to whoever comes in, comes in to town and we have to play their songs.

First and foremost, it comes from the slaves, setting free of slaves, 1830, to be well almost precise, and I think from then on, people just of course, had a party, they were free. But, you know, free to a certain extent, I mean, I'm very much part of those people.

And freedom is everything I suppose to human beings and to have our little place in the sun, you know.



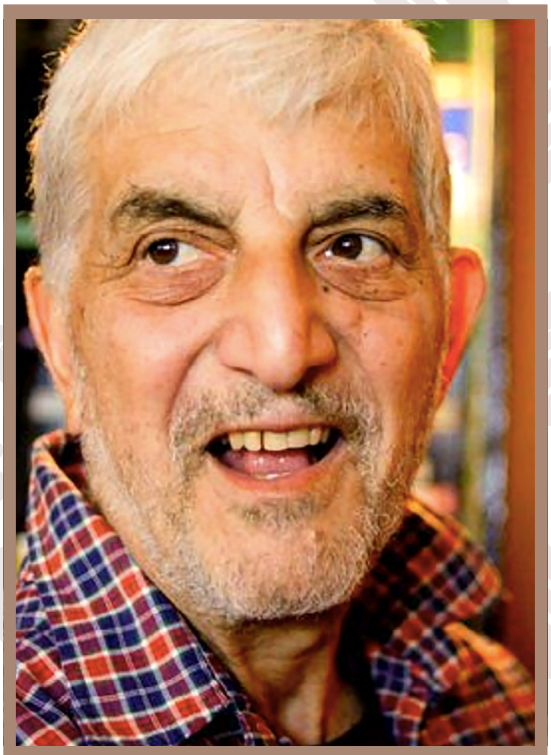
ROBBIE JANSEN

In the Coloured community the other music that we had was like the Coon music, the Carnival music, but those musicians only took out their instruments once a year. You know, come, come end of the year they work during the day, come end of the year they take their banjo out from under the bed or of the wardrobe and dust it off and get it organised so they can play for the carnival time.

And that is very much like a Coloured thing, come basically from District Six namely a city, town thing you know. I mean Coons are from all over Woodstock, Claremont, all that but, you, as far as I'm concerned it was mainly like a Cape Town, you wouldn't find so many Coon troops in Elsies River or Athlone at that time it was mainly, mainly from Cape Town.

And that music is different to the African music, that is also cover versions but then they play all those cover songs in Ghoema fashion.

Ghoema rhythm being like a Brazilian Samba, you know, only, that it's played very rough and high energy



VINCENT KOLBE

I can see this band with a tailcoat and the bow tie and very much in the British ballroom tradition. Well can you imagine the guys who come from a hard day's work in the factory or on the fishing boats, he hasn't got tailcoats and they can't dance on smooth floors. So obviously their movements are going to be different, they're going to have their own way of doing it.

And there's a kind of a swagger about it, which is like all wrong, they don't ever win any ballroom championships with that style.

This Ghoema beat is what we are calling it today, it was called other things in the past. But because today we are using the word Ghoema beat, and because it's associated with the carnival, it's been used for Jazz, it's been put into politics.

I think culture can be used to assist in the transformation process, in a more creative way than in the past. In the past all this culture was used to divide people, to categorise people. I think today it's being used to bring people together, and it should not be seen as a class thing, or as a race thing but as a people thing. That any human being has got a heartbeat, any human being has got two feet and can drag them, and pull, and it should be endemic to all human beings.

I hope that our young musicians will take pride in rediscovering something and do what Abdullah Ibrahim did, and make it their own.

And the music will have to follow this, like, you know because it's like playing in the cracks. The guys, they play the saxophones, they play off the note, off the beat. Sound of the carnival comes into it.
Suddenly he's not playing ballroom any more. And it's, somewhere in the middle, things happen.

Lentegeur entertainers marching past City Hall

48| *Robbie Jansen*

SOUTH AFRICAN JAZZ

South African Jazz is probably that Jazz that has an accent, when we're playing Jazz with a South African accent, you know.

– JONAS GWANGWA

Some people will say jazz was born in Africa, but it happened in America

- BHEKI KHOZA

BEKI KHOZA

Some people will say Jazz was born in Africa but it happened in America because people moved, when they moved they were singing and they were not singing the American language, They went with the songs that they were singing but because of slavery and how they were forced apart the language was cut so that the person who is African-American cannot really tell when their forefathers, who were slaves, what language they were talking because there was a systematical way to cut the language but since the music, the sound is something that they couldn't cut even whether they were talking in a different language.

They learnt English there but …they had carried the songs so they started to sing. They started spiritual songs, the songs of lamentations, and then came the Blues……

At first the Blues did not come as music. The Blues was never a name of a music but it was a state, like saying a person is bluesing. When somebody is blue they are feeling down, they are complaining.
It's a protest. "Why are you blue?" It was a state of how they were feeling. Then later on it became the music because of experiencing that blue.

Once you put the word Jazz it has to do with improvisation. At some point you play and you express yourself and when you express yourself .. it's called improvisation.

That is why we can't call for instance what Michael Jackson played we cannot call it Jazz. Jazz has got to do with more improvisation. Jazz got a history of how it came about and of course the African continent played a very big role.

Jazz happened … it became clear what differentiated it from classical music. In classical music you play something that is written. If you play Bach today you play exactly what Bach played, what Bach wrote on a paper. You can't put on your own phrases and other things, your own ending in the song of Bach but with Jazz you express. When you get the song it is just a reference and then you express yourself.

Bheki Khoza, Lex Futshane, Barney Rachabane and Babes Ndamase

JONAS GWANGWA

I always talk about this internal cultural exchange ... when we got them to sing each other's songs, learn each other's dances, this moves towards nation building

- JONAS GWANGWA

The word Jazz in South Africa is like a generic name, you know, because they will, they will take uh Jonas Gwanga with Khaya Mahlangu and put Bongo Maffin and Brenda and say it's all Jazz, you know. When actually you are talking about Jazz, you're talking about a kind of music that is structured in a certain fashion, you know, it, it's … got certain uh, uh harmonic structures and even melody, you know – I know some people just go against some things and say this is freedom but even when you say freedom, you know, it's not the same as classical music. It is not the same as *Mbaqanga*, you know.

There are certain confines: We can't take gospel and throw it in as Jazz: it is gospel, you see. But like I say, in South Africa it's just a name we use very loosely. As long as you can play a solo in there it's Jazz or as long as it is not classical music or church music, it's Jazz. That's why I am saying the word is generic because you say *Mbaqanga* is South African Jazz. *Mbaqanga* is mbaqanga, you know.

What does Jazz mean then. You know? We are killing *mbaqanga*.

Mbaqanga is Mbaqanga. Because I mean new kinds of music came in: Bossa Nova. Bossa nova came out and it was Bossa Nova. It was played in Jazz concerts. But we say: We're playing Bossa Nova, you see. Because like I said earlier on – it had that backing: you knew where it came from. It was a music from this country, played by this people, you see. You don't say it is South American Jazz.

Why is Mbaqanga African Jazz, when Jazz is from Africa?

We should give things their right names and leave them with their names and not try to compromise them, to say well it will sell better. It is all this marketing thing. It will sell better if you say it is African Jazz. It is not African Jazz, it is African music, South African music. It is a music style from South Africa. Just like I say, you have the Samba out there, you have *Mbaqanga*, Bossa Nova: these have retained their names: this is *Mbaqanga*, you see, from South Africa. It is not South African Jazz – The people who sell, they will sell.

What we would be calling South African Jazz, South African music, you know is really our traditional music played with western instruments.

You know, I was playing with Freddy Hubbard and we're doing this Jazz thing and then he comes to me and says: "Don't you ever play Jazz, man?" I say "I'm cooking, I'm in a Jazz idiom". I say "Yeah, I do Freddy, but I'm South African. Just like when you speak English, you speak with an American accent and I speak with a South African accent and we are both speaking English. We have accents – in music too it is the same. You know I am playing Jazz with a South African accent, you know."

South African Jazz is probably that Jazz that has an accent, when we're playing Jazz with a South African accent, you know. Playing Jazz you see, now's the time for Charlie Parker and then I take my solo and then play Jazz, but I have an accent – because my South Africanness comes out.

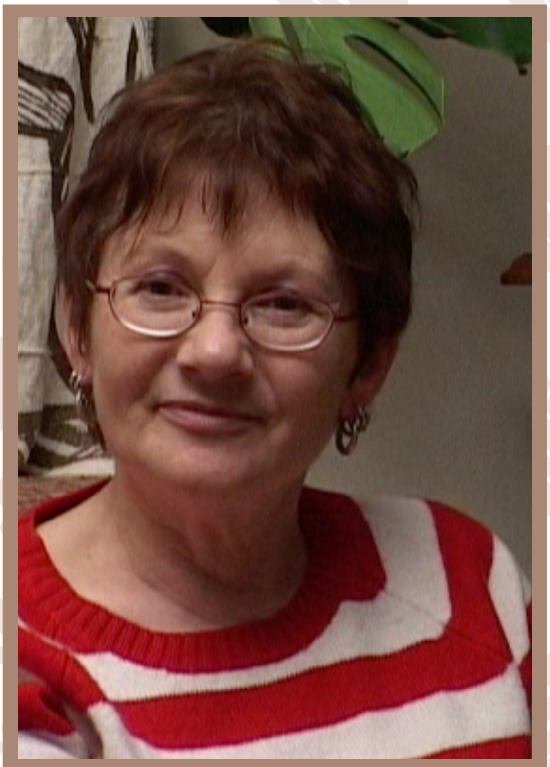
In the forties and fifties, we were watching 'The Cabin in the Sky' – you know and all those things, 'Cape Galaway' – you know all the movies that were coming here were from America, and that's when we see black Americans, you know, coming in with their music and their tap dancing, you know and then people copied that.

We have been copying for a long time, importing. Now it is time for us to export- and say, "Hey, this is what we have, now that we have a chance to do so". You know because we had been blocked before.

We didn't even get music from Africa here, from Malawi, from Zambia, from West Africa. Our people don't know African music, you know. It's only now that things are coming up a little bit. Nice music from here Zimbabwe, next door. We had a little bit, and then it was stopped, you know, when we had *skokiaan* – *skokiaan* is from Zimbabwe, you know, Rhodesia. *Skokiaan*, you know it came from right next door. Ja, they have affected our music, you know, the *Skokiaans* did affect our music, you know. And Mozambique. Some time there was a certain kind of rhythm that came from Mozambique, South Africans picked it up and you know and South Africanised it, you know.

Ja, there was, there was this interaction, you know. And then apartheid came and stopped all of that, you see, divided the people, you see.

That's what it is. We have to come back together and exchange. I always talk about this internal cultural exchange, internal culture. Because you take somebody right from the Eastern Cape, he doesn't know how the Pedi's dance and sing. The Tsongas don't know how the Khoi dance and sing. And when we got them to sing each other's songs, learn each other's dances, this moves towards nation building, because the people have been divided.



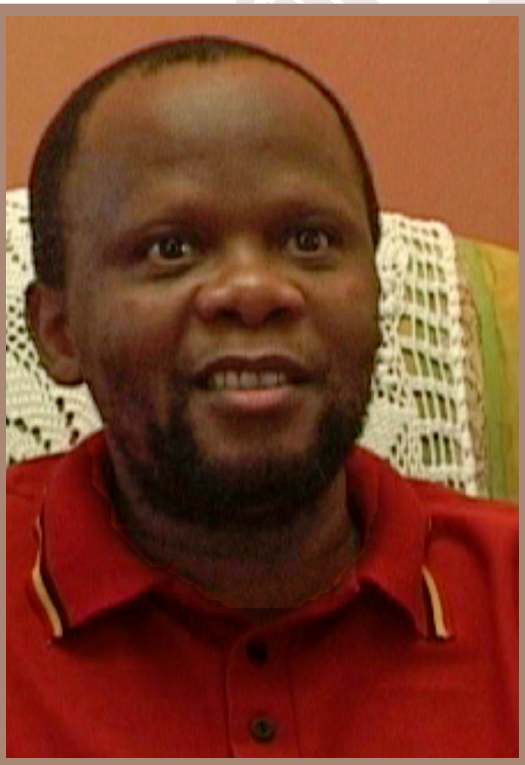
GWEN ANSELL

There is nothing that I love about South AFrican Jazz that I don't love about all other kinds fo music.

- GWEN ANSELL

There's nothing that I love about South African Jazz that I don't love about all other kinds of music. I like music which is inventive, which is creative, which is diverse in the influences it draws on, and which actually speaks genuinely about the experience of the community that produced it and I think South African Jazz fits all the criteria. But as I say, so do many other kinds of music.

The first thing to realise is that Jo'burg is possibly the only real city in South Africa - in the sense that it has been both urbanised and mixed, ethnically community mixed for far longer than almost any other city. I know, that Cape Town has a very unique and a very beautiful tradition but in fact even today if you go to Cape Town, the centre of the city and the nicer seaside resorts remain predominantly white and the Cape Flats is still the locus that everyone else was pushed out to where creativity happens.



DINGA SIKWEBU

you get a mix of ghoema, a mix of Xhosa traditional music and you also get jazz. That gives the thing a distinctive Cape Sound

- DINGA SIKWEBU

Cape Town has something called 'jazzy' - a Latin-American Brazilian dance. And people on the other side of the railway line call that jazzy - it links to how you move on the dance floor: if you can spin the woman it's called jazzy - that's what's called jazz in Cape Town.

You can, you can, you can find that flavour in McCoy Mrubata's, music. And one of the things people call Cape jazz, because some of the African people came from the Eastern Cape and they held dearly to some of to their traditional songs but they also interacted with other, people. So you get a mix of ghoema, a mix of Xhosa traditional music and you also get jazz. That gives the thing a distinctive Cape sound. And they are here in Johannesburg and in many ways they are cutting edge musicians in Johannesburg.

Ezra Ngcukana |57

JONAS GWANGWA

The church – the Community of the Resurrection Section of the Anglican Church, told Father Huddlestone, later Bishop, that he should leave because he was living dangerously – he was really active, you know. The whole anti-apartheid thing: uh, Sophiatown, forced removals and various other township projects. So there were Huddleston Farewell shows.

When we went there, the bands performed at the Bantu Men's Social Centre. That's when the people came down on us. The other professional musicians said: "Boys, you must go to school. You must leave these things. Eh, they must play these things well before they can perform." And uh we played at BMSC (the Bantu Men's Social Centre), we played in Daveyton and there we met with the professional musicians: Mackay Davashe, Kippie Moeketsi, General Duse and all those people and they threw us in the deep end. We went to this show in Daveyton - one of the farewell shows for Huddleston. And the professionals, the Mackay Davashes all those other gentlemen, they threw us in the deep end.

Because they did the concert part, and of course they were really amazed at what we were doing because, especially for me because I was a trombone player and I think trombone players had always just been playing baselines, you know. But I had been listening to JJ Johnston and I had been listening to various other Jazz trombonists and my slide moved. I remember Mackay Davashe looking at Hugh playing and at this other saxophone player playing.

After the big band, of course we had a small combo bebop and so when it was my turn to take the solo, he put his hands over his ears and he only took out his finger when he saw the slide move.

He said: He must be doing something" you know. And they were really enthralled by that, but the deep end was that when the dance part came: they all left, and we had to take care of the dance part and play that. And that was a rough time: a lot of people died there from knives and things you know because gangsters were there shouting: Sophiatown one side, Alexander that side, East Rand this way, you know and they had these knife fights. And we were so afraid. We start to stop them – they come in with drawn knives and say, "Play!" They were taking us like a sound track to what they were doing – they had to have music, you know. But we survived that.

GWEN ANSELL

I like music which is inventive, which is creative, which is diverse in the influences it draws on, and which actually speaks genuinely about the experience of the community that produced it and I think South African Jazz fits all the criteria.

- GWEN ANSELL

Now in Jo'burg, right through from the 1930s, the Marabi era right through into the 1960s when people were using white friends to get flats in the city centre, that mixing, that urbanisation, that feel of concrete and pavements in the music has been there.

I think that's one of the things that characterises Jo'burg - it has edge, it probably has more edge than any other place in this country. And that's characterised in the Jazz scene and in the popular music scene.

As far as Jazz goes - Jazz never died in Jo'burg and this is something I discovered when I was doing research for my radio series. There is a myth that when the SABC started categorising and excluding various types of what they considered overly mixed or modern music, that Jazz died, that it went into hibernation in the 1970s. That's always cited. In fact, it isn't the case.

If you talk to musicians who were working in Jo'burg, there were corners, they were small corners and they were unprofitable corners and in fact the other pressure they were under at that time was that record producers far more preferred the formats of modern pop music, in other words, the guitar led quartet because it was simply cheaper. That wasn't a political move, that was an economic move.

The musicians were squeezed in two ways - they were squeezed by an apartheid which did not like their music because their music represented the cultural speech of a non-racial urban working class. And, in fact more specifically than non-racial, a non-tribal urban working class. So that was one pressure, but on the other hand, you had all the things that were happening in the late sixties and seventies, where the music industry world-wide and down here was leading to the small guitar led group at a time when Jazz was still dominated by larger big bands. Because the guitar led group - the Beatles format was cheaper. And so the musicians were squeezed, but they didn't die.

And if you look at what was happening in the 1960s, the late sixties through the seventies, you find musicians, and specifically Jazz musicians involved in a whole range of contexts, both finding odd little corners, and a lot of people spoke to me about the coffee bars in Hillbrow as a place where they could still get gigs, when there were no other gigs around. You also found them making music for, for white musicians essentially. Vusi Khumalo tells the story of how he and his brother, Bakithi, the bassist, used to realise that the only way they could get work was in a sense to deny their identity.

They used to come into town from Soweto very early in the morning, go camp out at various recording studios and play rhythm backing on anything from country and western to, I don't know, to *boeremusiek*

- anything they could find, simply as a way of getting gigs. And Vusi tells the amusing story of various white rock musicians coming in and looking at these guys and saying, "But these okes, these okes can they play our music?" and yes, they could.

So, the music survived and of course on that very, very fragile and precarious economic base, people then were able to sit in their own houses and make their own music as well.

Well, crucially, the end of the sixties was the period when a lot of people left, but you find that, for example, after the debacle of his time in England, Kippie Mokoetsi was working. He had his saxophone confiscated on a trip to Zimbabwe, but people who worked with him like the bass player, Victor Ntoni, said that he was still working, he was still composing, he was still mentoring younger musicians.

Of course Dorkay House continued, which was an institution that provided training for a whole range of musicians and if you talk to the musicians around Dorkay House, you will find them telling stories of the classical guys learning from uh Sibongile Khumalo's father on one floor and the Jazz musicians gigging on the other floor and a gospel choir rehearsing somewhere at top and everybody coming out to have a smoke together. So that musical syncretism which has characterised Jazz generally and South African Jazz specifically was going on right through the seventies, right through the eighties.

In the eighties what started happening was a movement to reconnect with the rest of Africa and this dates from 1977 from *FESTAC* (*Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture in Nigeria*) and in fact a lot of politically active cultural workers in this country found ways to get the hell out of the country and make their way to FESTAC in various underground ways.

And at that point you had - and if you talked to Sipho Mabuse, he I'm sure he will have told you about this. You had the development of bands like *'Harare' and the Betas* which were actually sounding to modern ears a bit the same as *Osibisa* sounded but essentially trying to build African rhythms into pop/rock/Jazz formats.

And of course, most famously, through the 1970s you had the various musicians who were to form Sakhile, working in a range of formats, working at the only black Jazz club to have survived during that period which was the Pelican run by Lucky Michaels. Not necessarily then Sakhile, they came together a bit later, but all developing their skills.

So there was a helluva lot going on but what happened was that it lost visibility. Because this was the period when the SABC specifically was enforcing musical apartheid at its tightest and musicians tell tragic stories of the denial and annihilation of self in that their music was played, but if it sounded too smart or too cosmopolitan they were given a white name.

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FREE JAZZ - The South African Impact

The Blue Notes were making heaven in hell and they were so gifted these guys

- LOUIS MOHOLO

You know God gave us Dudu Pukwana, Jonny Dyani, Nikele Moyake, Mongezi Feza and Chris Mcgregor

- LOUIS MOHOLO

LOUIS MOHOLO

The Blue Notes were making heaven in hell and they were so gifted these guys, you know. It just shows you how South Africa is talented. There's a lot of talent in South Africa but it is suppressed but we are not going to go there… It was a beautiful band. You know God gave us Dudu Pukwana, Jonny Dyani, Nikele Moyake, Mongezi Feza and Chris Mcgregor.

So we came to England at the right time, when Coltrane was the chief, and we came from South Africa. They could not believe the flavours, the ingredients we had in that band. They couldn't believe it even people like Ben Webster. Ben Webster thought that we were some underground American players calling each other Dudu and Mongezi. That's the time when Americans were changing their names and there was a lot of this underground music and of course the Avant garde was beginning. Ben Webster thought no we just messing around, you know we are Americans, how can we play like that? Some other musicians from the states did not believe us that we are that good. I mean like we influenced a lot of people, like we influenced the Art Ensemble of Chicago and we dished out this beautiful exuberant music you know into Europe and as I said South Africa is full of talent. Music is absolutely ridiculously beautiful.

INTERVIEWEES

DR ALVIN PETERSEN
served as Head of Music at the University of the Western Cape and previously held a similar position at the University of Fort Hare in Alice, Eastern Cape. He is currently a Senior Lecturer in Music at North-West University (NWU) in Potchefstroom, specialising in African music, ethnomusicology of the Southern African region and music education. He is also a member of the International Council for Traditional Music. Dr. Petersen is an esteemed scholar within the School of Music, with a particular focus on the origins of modern South African music.

ANDREW TRACEY (1936 – 2024)
is a South African ethnomusicologist, promoter of African Music, composer, folk singer, band leader, and actor. His father, Hugh Tracey (1903 –1977), pioneered the study of traditional African music in the 1920s – 1970s, created the *International Library of African Music* (ILAM) in 1954, which Andrew later directed.

BHEKISISA KHOZA
left handed guitarist from Umlazi, Durban studied music in America at the University of Hartford, Connecticut, with the great Jackie McClean, one of the few living legends. While in America, Bheki was resident with Larry Ridley's Jazz legacy playing the whole spectrum of African American music. The band was headed by Larry Ridley himself, who played with Wes Montgomery, Sonny Rollin, Miles Davis, Horace Silver, Kenny Burell, George z Dexter Gordon and far too many other musicians to mention. Bheki recorded an album entitles "*Asambe*" in 1995, which is often aired on Radio Metro and SAfm. The album is comprised of original compositions, some of which used to be *Shonilanga*. Bheki also composed the African Jazz Pioneers hit "*Sgaxa Mabhande*". His recordings include guitar for Mike Makhalemela's last "*Searching*". Bheki was musical director of the Sophiatown Documentary, released in July 2003 and for the South African film production of "*Drum*". Bheki released "*Getting to Heaven Alive*" at the end of 2006.

DAVID B. COPLAN
is Professor Emeritus in Social Anthropology at the University of The Witwatersrand. He has been researching and writing about South African performing arts and media since 1976. He is the author of numerous publications, including most notably '*In Township Tonight! South Africa's Black City Music and Theatre*' (1986) - revised, enlarged and published in a second edition in 2007

ERROL DYERS (1952 – 2017)
was a South African musician, composer and guitarist and pioneer of Cape Jazz/goema. He taught himself music playing on the streets of Cape Town, and became known for his pioneering fusion of Cape Jazz and goema. He performed alongside numerous other musicians, including Abdullah Ibrahim, Basil 'Manenberg' Coetzee, Robbie Jansen and Winston Mankunku.

GWEN ANSELL,
is a freelance writer, researcher, and trainer. She authored the books "*Soweto Blues: Jazz, Politics, and Popular Music in South Africa*" and "*Introduction to Journalism*," along with various book chapters and journal articles. As a Research Associate at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, she has conducted research and published on jazz and music policy within the creative and cultural industries. Additionally, she served as a *Louis Armstrong Visiting Professor* at the Center for Jazz Studies at Columbia University.

GLEN UJEBE MASOKOANE
is a cultural activist, film director and producer known for *Birthrights* (1991), *The Peoples Account* (1986) and *Steve Biko: Journey of the Spirit* (1997).

LOUIS TEBOGO MOHOLO (1940-2025)
is a South African Jazz drummer who was a member of several notable bands, including *The Blue Notes*, *the Brotherhood of Breath* and *Assagai*. Born in Cape Town, Moholo formed *The Blue Notes* with Chris McGregor, Johnny Dyani, Nikele Moyake, Mongezi Feza and Dudu Pukwana, and emigrated to Europe with them in 1964. His first album under his own name, *Spirits Rejoice* on Ogun Records, is considered a classic example of the combination of British and South African players. In the early 1970s, Moholo was also a member of the afro-rock band *Assagai*. He has played with many musicians, including Derek Bailey, Steve Lacy, Evan Parker, Enrico Rava, Roswell Rudd, Irène Schweizer, Cecil Taylor, John Tchicai, Archie Shepp, Peter Brötzmann, Mike Osborne, Keith Tippett, Elton Deanand Harry Miller. Moholo returned to South Africa in September 2005.

ROBBIE JANSEN (1949 –2010)
was a South African singer, flautist and saxophonist. His work with Abdullah Ibrahim (formerly *Dollar Brand*) and Basil Coetzee in the 1970s introduced him to Jazz audiences internationally, and he became a leading figure in Cape Jazz. He played significant tours in Angola and Cuba and always searched to find commonalities with other South African musicians. In 2006 his album *Nomad Jez* was a finalist for a South African Music Award (SAMA) as best Jazz album of the year. He recorded three other solo albums: *Vastrap Island, The Cape Doctor* and *Praises.*

VINCENT KOLBE (1933-2010)
was a highly talented Jazz pianist at the heart of Cape Town's vibrant multiracial Jazz tradition of the '50s and '60s before it was snuffed out by apartheid. He was also an inspiring and influential librarian who fought for public libraries in the coloured townships of the Cape Flats to remain open during the worst days of the "unrest" in the '70s and '80s.

ABDULCADIR AHMED SAID (Compiler)
is a Somali/South African filmmaker resident in Cape Town renowned for his innovative short films. He was co-director and co-producer of the internationally prize-winning series, *Rhythms from Africa* and series director of the short educational films produced by the *South African Arts, Past and Present* project, produced by the Art and Ubuntu Trust.

Documentary series from which interviews and still images drawn:

Rhythms from Africa (2003):
Taarab, an Ocean of Melodies
Our Language, our Music, Our City?
Gold, Tears and Music
Scratch, Mix and ?

South African Arts Past and Present *(2018) :*
Jazz Conversations
Robert Edward Jansen"ROBBIE JANSEN" 1949-2010
LOUIS MOHOLO Free Jazz Drummer
GHOEMA Rhythms
Aaron Jack Lerole " BIG VOICE JACK" 1940-2003

Both series available on VIMEO

The South African Arts, Past and Present Project (SAAPPP) seeks to deepen understanding of the indigenous sources of South African aesthetics and address the dire need for teaching materials on South African Arts. It is a multi-media project designed to support Arts and Culture teachers work in the classroom and the work of arts educationists at community art centres.

There are three books in this **Indigenous Knowledge In The Arts Series***:*

Volume 1: Listening to Literature - Towards a South African canon
Volume 2: Defining South African Music - Musicians and Aficionados speak
Volume 3: The Hidden Thread in South African Visual Heritage

and 15 short educational films which have been introduced via ArtSAT

www.artubuntu.org

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It's music is absolutely ridiculously beautiful"
Louis Moholo

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