Cape Town Harmonies
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Introduction

The present volume represents the outcome of many years of investigation into Cape Town’s New Year festival, and in particular into the musical repertoires performed by the two most important organisations that enliven them: the Kaapse Klopse and the Malay Choirs.

Origins and methods

Denis-Constant Martin has been conducting research on Cape Town’s New Year festivals since the early 1990s and has studied, among other aspects of these festivals, the particular forms of choral singing that feature in the Klopse carnival and the Malay Choirs competitions. Armelle Gaulier, following fieldwork she carried out in 2006 and 2008, dedicated two Masters dissertations to original repertoires sung by Klopse and Malay Choirs: the moppies or comic songs and the nederlandsliedjies.¹ Their works were mostly written and published in French, which made them quite inaccessible to an English-speaking readership and especially for South Africans interested in these singing practices or involved in them. Generally speaking, little has been published in English on Klopse singing, Malay Choirs and their repertoires. Desmond Desai highlighted, as early as 1983, the social importance of what he then called “Cape Malay music” and included serious musical analysis in his ethnographical and sociological studies of ratiep² and nederlandsliedjies (Desai 1983, 1986, 1993, 2004, 2005).³ However, the results of the greatest part of his research were presented in unpublished dissertations or in publications which were not easily available. The late Gerald L Stone, a linguist and psychologist, wrote what was probably the first academic study of the Klopse carnival (Stone 1971), a paper which was, as far as we know, never published. His work on the Afrikaans spoken by members of the coloured working class (Stone 1991, 1995) also shed an interesting light on the New Year festivals. In addition to Desmond Desai’s and Gerald L Stone’s pioneering works, a few papers and dissertations have subsequently been written, adding new dimensions to the knowledge of nederlandsliedjies and moppies (Nel 2012; Van der Wal 2009) or analysing the history and recent evolutions of the Klopse carnival (Baxter 1996; Inglese 2014; Oliphant 2013; Rahman 2001; Wentzel 2011). All in all, the number of publications in English on these aspects of Cape Town’s culture remains extremely limited. We thought therefore that we could contribute to the understanding of the social and musical specificities of these songs and singing practices by making our own research available in English and
adding it to the extant literature. The present volume is based on texts which have been written in French, either as academic dissertations or as articles published in Francophone journals. The core chapters dealing with *nederlandsliedjies* and *moppies* are not translations of the original texts, but result from an amalgamation of writings by Armelle Gaulier and Denis-Constant Martin; they may therefore be considered as original English texts. The two chapters in Part I (“Memory and Processes of Musical Appropriation”) are adaptations of articles originally published in French by Denis-Constant Martin.

Armelle Gaulier and Denis-Constant Martin worked according to the same methods: close observation of musical practices during rehearsals, singing competitions and concerts; interviews with musicians (singers, coaches and composers), experts and organisers; and collections of musical material, namely audio and video recordings produced by carnival and Malay Choirs competition organisers or original recordings made during rehearsals (Armelle Gaulier). Based on this composite material we conducted sociological (Armelle Gaulier and Denis-Constant Martin) and musicological (Armelle Gaulier) analyses in order to produce sociological interpretations based, on the one hand, on solid musical analyses and, on the other, on information and opinions conveyed by musicians and experts. Armelle Gaulier made two field trips to Cape Town. From July to October 2006, while working on *moppies*, she was accommodated by a family in Mitchells Plain, from where she visited *klopskamers*, observed rehearsals and went to interview captains, coaches and singers. She came back to Cape Town in 2008 and, from January to March, she resided first in the Bo-Kaap and then in Mitchells Plain; she conducted the same type of investigation as in 2006, but this time she focused on *nederlandsliedjies*. Denis-Constant Martin, who had for a long time been interested in South African music, began researching Cape Town’s New Year festivals in 1992. Between 1992 and 2015, he visited Cape Town and Stellenbosch frequently; he had the opportunity to observe the 1994 *Klopse* Carnival, as well as Malay Choirs competitions in 1994, 2013 and 2015. In the course of his sojourns in Cape Town and Stellenbosch, he spent time at the National Library of South Africa in Cape Town, perusing newspaper and academic articles containing information on *Klopse* and Malay Choirs; he also taped interviews with captains, coaches and singers and gathered a collection of CDs, VHS cassettes and DVDs of the carnival and of the Malay Choirs competitions. Interviews taped by Armelle Gaulier and Denis-Constant Martin were in most cases either semi-directive or non-directive; they were complemented by other interviews aimed at obtaining information on particular aspects of the topics under study, which were more of the question-and-answer type. All interviews were conducted in English. Although English was the mother tongue of none of the interlocutors, fluency in that language on both sides was sufficient enough to allow serious dialogues and afterwards to analyse the discourse of musicians, coaches and experts. Interviews were transcribed as literally as possible; in the quotations included in this book we have tried to render as faithfully as possible the manner in which the interviewees spoke.
*Nederlands* and *moppies*: From the “Cauldron of Coloured Experience”

Individuals involved in the Klopse carnival and the Malay Choirs belong almost exclusively to the coloured group. According to the latest census available, coloureds represent 42.4% of Cape Town’s population and constitute the largest group, before black Africans (38.6%). Although there have been variations in their share of Cape Town’s population, they have always occupied an important place in Cape Town’s economic, social and cultural life. Contemporary coloureds are the descendants of people of extremely diverse origins, among whom were a great number of slaves. Between 1658 and 1808, 63,000 slaves were brought to the Cape from the African continent (26.4%), India and Sri Lanka (25.9%), Madagascar (25.1%) and Indonesia (22.7%) (Shell 1994: 41). For almost the entire period of slavery, slaves outnumbered burgher residents at the Cape (Mountain 2004: 21). Intensive intermixture took place, between slaves of various origins, and between slaves, Europeans and Khoikhoi. This resulted in an important demographic growth and in the emergence of a group of locally born slaves who constituted more than half the slave population after the 1760s (Shell 1994: 47). Processes of cultural exchange took place within groups of slaves, as well as between slaves and European masters. Historian Mohamed Adhikari noted that: “Interaction between master and slave clearly entailed a degree of cultural exchange between the two especially since they often lived and worked in close physical proximity to each other” (Adhikari 1992: 100–101). These interactions did not lead to the slaves’ adoption of their masters’ culture, but triggered the creation of original cultural practices. Songs were invented in the process from the combination of elements of Dutch folk songs with elements of musics from the slaves’ regions or origin. When slavery was abolished, a substantial number of emancipated slaves or free blacks already existed, who were competent musicians and music teachers; they were among the most dynamic actors of Cape Town’s musical life during the second half of the 19th century (Martin 1999: chap. 3).

**Appropriation of blackface minstrelsy**

English and, later, American influences entered in the mix and brought new material to enrich Cape Town innovations. Troupes from the United States, sometimes also from Great Britain, staged a new conception of entertainment, the blackface minstrel show, which was almost immediately appropriated by coloured musicians and revellers celebrating the New Year. Their songs, skits, costumes, ways of speaking and instruments (especially the banjo) symbolised a modernity that could be construed as *mestiza*, “non-white”, although it was embodied, at least in its first South African performances, by white comedians and musicians made up in blackface. After an initial phase which saw South Africans, and in particular coloureds, reproduce the ritual and style of the minstrel show,
appropriation again produced original practices. From the stage, the codes of minstrelsy reached the streets of Cape Town where they were fully integrated in the celebrations of the New Year, and especially in the spontaneous carnival that was taking shape at the end of the 19th century. New elements were introduced in the 1890s by African-American minstrels, Orpheus McAdoo’s Virginia Jubilee Singers; some of their members remained in Cape Town and performed with local outfits when the group, faced with financial troubles, disbanded (Erlmann 1991; Martin 1999: chap. 5).

Islamic inputs
Other influences that played a decisive role in fashioning Klopse and Malay Choirs’ repertoires and styles of singing came from the Muslim world. The first Muslims arrived at the Cape in 1658 as slaves or free servants of the Dutch (Baderoon 2014: 8). A group of political exiles from Macassar, including an important dignitary, Sheykh Yusuf — the leader of the local Khalwatiyyah Sufi order and an opponent to the Dutch conquest — contributed to sowing the seeds of Islam in South Africa (Dangor 2014). Before 1804, Muslims enjoyed limited religious freedom in Cape Town; they could practice their religion privately, but were strictly forbidden to proselytise: “Islam was tolerated — never encouraged, yet rarely seriously repressed” (Mason 2002: 9). A Muslim school was nevertheless founded in 1793 in Cape Town by Imam Qadi Abdul Salaam, known as “Tuan Guru” (Jappie 2011: 375-376). The first South African mosque was probably opened sometime between 1795 and 1804 and by the end of 1824 there were two large mosques in Cape Town and five smaller ones. The number of Muslims developed steadily: from less than 1 000 in 1800, Cape Town’s Muslim population grew to around 6 400 in 1842, about 8 000 in 1854 and in 1867 nearly half of the City’s population was Muslim (Jeppie 1996a: 151); most of this growth was due to conversions (Mason 2002: 13). Islam gave slaves — and in general all human beings who were marginalised by slavery and the colonial system — a sense of personhood and self-dignity. Pumla Dineo Gqola, in a perceptive study of the role of slave women, explained that: “It is only Islam that allowed the slaves to be fully spiritual beings inside an institutional religion. For slaves, Islam offered entry into recognition of their humanity with all the ensuing associations” (Gqola 2007: 36). Islam provided both a sense of community and the inscription in the worldwide family of believers; it planted deep local roots which were inseparable from global networks. Islam in Cape Town was permeated with Sufism. Even if Sufism “did not constitute the dominant religious tendency among Muslims and their leaders” (Jeppie 1996a: 157), “Sufi Islam, with its esoteric teachings and psychological and physical cures was particularly appealing to the Muslims at the Cape, as it offered power and a haven for them to deal with the hostile social environment they faced” (Jappie 2011: 377). Consequently, Sufi brotherhoods attracted believers; Sufi rituals were widely practised (Mason 1999, 2002) and opened up an intense
field of musical activities. At the beginning of the 21st century, Muslims accounted for 9.7% of Cape Town’s total population, and represented 17.4% of Cape Town’s coloureds. Muslims have always been in a minority, but their cultural influence has been much more important than their share in the local population. Cape Town Muslims have never been isolated from followers of other religions: “The communal nature of township living has allowed for close friendships to be forged across religious lines. Muslims in townships do not lead a drastically different life from their non-Muslim neighbours” (Motala 2013: 188). Marriages between Muslims and non-Muslims are not infrequent. This situation allowed for traits particular to Muslim musical practices to percolate into Cape Town coloured musics; furthermore, Muslims developed, just as other people, a taste for international and American pop songs. Orthodox Muslim authorities have from time to time attempted to warn against music and dance, especially in the context of the New Year festivals. In 1893, they condemned “the going about the streets singing and the jollification. It is all against our belief and religion” (quoted in Bickford-Smith 1996: 27). More recently, the Muslim Judicial Council again decried the Klopse: “the coons dancing through our streets are under no circumstances fitting expression of thanksgiving to Allah for emancipation in this day and age”. And its Fatwa Committee decreed that “It is not permissible for a Muslim to belong to them neither to participate in it neither to pay a fee to see the carnival nor to watch it.” However, Achmat Davids, who was a respected voice on both religious and cultural matters, clearly expressed his views in a contribution on “Music and Islam” presented at a symposium on ethnomusicology in 1984: “I conclude therefore that neither music nor musical instruments are forbidden in Islam” (Davids 1985: 38). Most coloured Muslims inhabiting Cape Town certainly support this opinion and this is why large numbers of Muslims participate in the Klopse carnival and why Malay Choirs comprise a majority of Muslims.

The development of Kaapse Klopse and Malay Choirs

In the 18th and 19th centuries, processes of mixing and blending musical features originating in very many diverse cultures set in motion creative dynamics, which produced original ways of conceiving and making music. The emergence of creole forms became especially manifest during the New Year celebrations. Groups of singers, often inhabiting the same building or the same block, took this opportunity to perform and parade in the streets; they donned costumes in styles and colours which made them distinguishable from other similar groups and hung streamers in their colours across the streets they walked. These singing groups were very often linked to clubs which organised social and sports activities; therefore they also became known as Klopse (clubs).
The formalisation of Klopse competitions
Historian Vivian Bickford-Smith dated the creation of the first choirs from the 1870s, and noted that a Star of Independence Malay Club was then already in existence (Bickford-Smith 1995: 37). For his part, the president of the Cape Malay Choir Board, Shafick April contended that Malay Choirs have been in existence since 1887.16 He probably considered that the first clubs who marched and sang in the streets during the New Year festivities in the 1880s17 were the originators of Malay Choirs, although they did not carry that name. In neighbourhoods such as District Six, Harfield Village and the Bo-Kaap, informal competitions between these singing clubs began to take place. In 1907, the contests were institutionalised and took place at the Green Point Cycle Track. The “Coloured Carnival”18 was discontinued after a few years, but was revived in 1920 under the auspices of Dr Abdurahman’s African Political Organisation (APO). In the following years, various entertainment entrepreneurs organised rival competitions at various venues (Martin 1999: chap. 6). At first it appears that there was no clear distinction between the organisations that are today called Klopse and Malay Choirs. Abduraghman Morris, the current president of The Young Men Sporting Club, one of the most successful Malay Choirs at the beginning of the 21st century, thinks that the very first Malay Choir was the forerunner of the choir over which he now presides: this was Die Jonge Mense Kultuur Club (The Young People’s Culture Club). Several members of the Silver Tree Rugby Club participated in this choir, which was founded in 1938 and was based in an area known as the Dry Docks in District Six. Its name was later changed to the Young Men Sporting Club.19

The creation of the Cape Malay Choir Board
The following year, in 1939, an organisation was launched to gather various choirs active in the Cape Peninsula and formalise their competitions: the Cape Malay Choir Board (CMCB). It was founded at the initiative of ID du Plessis, a white academic and poet interested in “malay culture”, who was to become an official of the apartheid regime, and Benny Osler, a famous white rugby fly-half. Members of the Dante family, Edross Isaacs and Achmat Hadji Levy played an important role in its early developments. The idea probably came from ID du Plessis and other Afrikaner self-appointed “experts” of coloured culture. They were disappointed by the fact that very little Afrikaans was heard during the Klopse carnival, and that Klopse sang mostly songs inspired by American jazz and varieties. In their idea, Afrikaans was an evidence of the links that tied coloureds to whites and to the “West”,20 albeit in a subordinate position:

The fact that the Coloured coons sang imported songs was lamented both by Dr I.D. du Plessis of “Die Moleier en die Afrikaans Volkslied” fame, and Professor Kirby, who wrote “The Musical Instruments of the Native Races of South Africa.” At one of the coon concerts last week Dr du Plessis and Professor Kirby suggest-
ed that the coons should combine, and get back to the melodies of the country and its people. The Cape Argus, strangely enough, in a sub-leader applauds the suggestion, and expresses its regret that the indigenous song and music as preserved by the Malay Choirs should be overwhelmed by foreign importations.

ID du Plessis was fascinated by what he considered a “malay culture”. On the one hand, he entertained an exotic vision of the Malays as custodians of a special culture; on the other, relying on stereotypes about slaves of Asian origin — especially about the “Buginese” — fashioned during the times of slavery, he considered them as an “elite” among coloureds (Bangstad 2006: 39–40). He attempted to construct an imaginary model of the “original” malay and, in that perspective, endeavoured to find the roots of a “pure” malay civilisation in Cape Town (Jeppie 2001: 84–86). His vision of “the malay” was not just an idiosyncratic figment of his imagination; it was inscribed within a particular political and cultural context and eventually served a political agenda. ID du Plessis emerged at the moment of mobilization of Afrikaans-speakers and he was both mobilized and acted in a mobilizing capacity. Du Plessis answered the “calling” of nationalism in the early years as a journalist, poet and teacher. At the same time, he generated a cultural niche for Afrikaner poets and writers, yet he was attached to expressions of liberalism. Du Plessis’ social and intellectual role was deployed through the categories of Romanticism and Social Darwinism stressing the “individual” and his release from social constraints, the obsession with the exotic (and sometimes erotic) and the “protection” of “weaker peoples” and their gradual evolution. (Jeppie 1987: 21)

Eventually: “The purpose for which ‘malay otherness’ operated was to maintain a divide et impera policy in a local setting. The specific setting was white racial domination” (Jeppie 1987: 51). It is therefore no surprise that ID du Plessis ended up as Commissioner and later Secretary and Adviser for Coloured Affairs from 1953 to 1963. He did not, however, impose the creation of the CMCB upon reluctant choirs. His conception of Malays as an elite, whose exclusive culture and places of dwelling (the Bo-Kaap) were to be preserved, resonated with self-conceptions which were rampant among educated and well-off coloured Muslims in Cape Town. The “reinvention of the malay” by ID du Plessis strengthened a sense of respectability and distinction that was adhered to by, for instance, the Cape Imams (Baderoon 2014: 15; Jeppie 1996a: 157) and is still shared by several Malay Choirs’ leaders, who insist on not being confused with Coons. In any case, the creation of the CMCB caused a new distribution of repertoires between Klopse and Malay Choirs. Klopse would sing adaptations of imported songs, coming largely from the United States;
Malay Choirs would exclusively use Afrikaans and interpret the most traditional repertoires, *moppies* and *nederlandsliedjies* (until the late 1950s sung as combine chorus), as well as original creations prepared for the solo and combine chorus competitions. In 1949, Afrikaans *moppies* were introduced in Coon competitions, again probably following ID du Plessis’ recommendations and in about 1957 *nederlandsliedjies* became a full-fledged “item” in the Malay Choirs competitions, as suggested by ID du Plessis and Dutch musicologist Willem van Warmelo (Desai 2004; Van der Wal 2009: 59). Since 1950, *Klopse* have been singing arrangements of imported songs as well as Afrikaans *moppies* and Malay Choirs’ competitions have featured four main “items”: the two most important creole repertoires, Afrikaans *moppies* or comic songs and *nederlandsliedjies*, as well as solo and combine chorus, consisting mostly of original tunes, some of them modelled after foreign types.

The New Year Carnival

The format of the New Year festivals as they unfold today was fashioned in the 1950s and 1960s. The celebration opens with a parade of the Malay Choirs, known on this occasion as *Nagtroepe* (troupes of the night), which takes place in the Bo-Kaap and lasts from midnight till the wee hours of the morning. Choirs, including several that do not participate in the official competitions, march the streets in tracksuits, stopping in front of friendly houses where they sing and are treated to soft drinks, snacks and sweets. On the following morning, *Klopse* members gather at the *Klopskamer* (rehearsal place and headquarters of the troupe) and ready themselves for the competitions which will start in the afternoon; they dress in the particular “uniform” the captain has chosen for the year and make their faces up in bright and glittering colours. Several carnivals take place at different venues: Vygieskraal stadium in Belgravia for the Kaapse Klopse Karnaval Association; the Athlone stadium for the Cape Town Minstrel Association (Oliphant 2013). The proceedings are more or less the same. There are about twenty categories of competitions (marches, songs, dances, orchestras, costumes, decorated boards, skits); they start on 1 January and continue for two or three weekends until the end of January. Competitions are judged by a panel of experts who, in total, award something like sixty trophies or more. Chanell Oliphant noted that: “The singing categories are judged based on pronunciation, the quality of the voices, and with regards to the choirs includes the harmonizing quality of the different voices. This in turn led to the reason behind hiring professional choirs and singers, which is reflected in the choice of bands as well” (Oliphant 2013: 81). Apart from competitions organised at stadia before paying audiences, the main event of the New Year festivals is the *Tweede Nuwe Jaar* (2 January) parade. All *Klopse* congregate on Keizergracht, the former entry into District Six, and march along a traditional itinerary which takes them through the town centre via Darling Street, Adderley Street and Wale Street.
The customary proceedings of the festivals have been upset several times in the past. Apartheid caused important disruptions: the destruction of District Six and the forced removal of its inhabitants to distant townships (Jeppie & Soudien 1990) created severe difficulties for Klopse and Malay Choirs. Members no longer lived in the same areas; they had to drive, when they could afford it, or board taxis to go to the Klopskamers; buses had to be organised to bring them to the points where the parades started, which of course increased the costs of participating. In addition to that, various restrictions were imposed on the itineraries, on the right to march in town and on the stadia in which Klopse could perform. In 1968, Green Point having been declared a “white area” according to the Group Areas Act, 1950, carnival troupes were forbidden to use the stadium and to walk in its direction. In 1976, a total ban on parades was decreed by virtue of the 1956 Riotous Assemblies Act. It was not before 1989 that Klopse were again allowed to parade in the centre of Cape Town and perform both at the new Green Point Stadium and at the old Cycle Track.

The City of Cape Town’s apprehension about carnivals

Automobile traffic had always been an excuse for the City administration to throw a spanner in the works of the carnival. This did not stop with the collapse of apartheid. Relationships between carnival organisers and the City Council have remained difficult. Negotiations have to be organised almost every year to try and find compromises allowing for the smooth proceeding of the parades. However new obstacles arise regularly. For instance, the preparation for and proceedings of the 2010 FIFA World Cup created unforeseen problems. Access to the new Green Point Stadium was refused to Klopse and even other stadia where Carnival competitions usually took place, such as the Athlone Stadium, were forbidden because the City was worried about the grass on the pitch being damaged by revellers’ takkies (tennis shoes) (Wentzel 2011: 10). The gentrification of the Bo-Kaap meant the arrival of new inhabitants who resented “noisy” parades. In 2015, the manager of the Taj Hotel, located at the corner of Wale Street and St Georges Mall, expressed reluctance about choirs singing in front of his establishment. Also in 2015, the Tweede Nuwe Jaar parade had to be postponed until 17 January because of a succession of Muslim festivals and a party organised for the African National Congress.

The City would like to have one, and one only, interlocutor, which proves very difficult, given the rivalry that has always existed between carnival organisers. Regularly, a fusion of carnival organisations is announced, but it usually does not last long. In 2007, for instance, a memorandum of agreement was entered into between the two main carnival organisers, the Cape Town Minstrel Carnival Association and the Kaapse Klopse Karnaval Association.
This made provision for the appointment of a Road March Committee, in which both organisations would be represented. The committee should have been the sole partner of the City of Cape Town and should have become responsible for organising all aspects of the Tweede Nuwe Jaar Road March. However, eventually the two organisations clashed and went their own ways, although both still participated separately in the Tweede Nuwe Jaar march.

Hoping to bypass the carnival boards and avoid tedious discussions with them, the civic authorities also tried in 2012 to entrust the organisation of the festival to an event management company, a move which was obviously rejected by carnival organisers (Inglese 2014). However, in spite of all the hiccups in the relationships between carnival organisers and the City Council, the latter now heavily funds the event. It provides fencing, security, traffic control, organises the presence of the South African Police Service and of medical personnel. In 2013, the council contributed ZAR 3.5 million to the carnival budget, to which must be added ZAR 350 000 for competitions and grants in support of Klopse from the National Department of Arts and Culture, corporate sponsors and the provincial government. Whichever political party rules Cape Town, civil authorities remain suspicious of a carnival in which working-class coloureds participate; carnivals are sometimes considered as a bit too unruly, and street parades are a cause for concern. However, while trying to secure better control of the event, the party in power supports the event because it attracts a large number of voters and is also a potential tourist attraction. Francesca Inglese, a graduate student in the ethnomusicology programme of the Brown College Music Department, accurately synthesised the attitude of the City authorities towards the New Year Carnival: “Together, these actions have created a general sense that city officials and culture brokers are using the Minstrel Carnival to present an image of Cape Town as diverse and inclusive, solely for touristic purposes, while marginalizing the needs and goals of the actual resident-participants themselves” (Inglese 2014: 140). Tazneem Wentzel, then a student at the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology of the University of Stellenbosch, noted that “the Minstrel Carnival will remain the recurring logistical nightmare that annually walks both politically and poetically to haunt the city with a particular Minstrel form of discipline and disorder” (Wentzel 2011: 3).

Carnival boards and Klopse

In the post-apartheid period, after a few years during which the Klopse Carnival seemed a bit subdued, it gained new momentum in the 2000s and 2010s. In 2014, over 60 troupes, comprising in total about 40 000 revellers, paraded through Cape Town (Inglese 2014: 128). There are today two main carnival organisations. The Kaapse Klopse Karnival Association (KKKA), whose chief executive officer
is Melvyn Matthews, launched in October 2004. The KKKA is a non-profit organisation (NPO)\(^{35}\) (former section 21 company) and is governed by 10 elected directors, who are selected from captains of “long-standing troupes”. It consists of 30 troupes, comprising 300 to 3 000 members. The KKKA carnival is organised in two sections, the second one being reserved for larger troupes. Musical competitions are adjudicated by musically trained judges; marches and best-dress contests are assessed by experts drawn from the military. The KKKA entertains close ties with the Western Cape Street Bands, an association which trains young musicians who can later play for the \textit{Klops}.\(^{36}\) The other major carnival organisation is the Cape Town Minstrel Carnival Association (CTMCA), headed by Richard “Pot” Stemmet and Kevin Momberg. CTMCA competitions are also divided in categories according to the troupes’ size. \textit{Klops} in the “super league” comprise between 800 and 1 500 participants; the “premier league” troupes have 300 to 600, while “first-division” troupes comprise only between 100 and 300 members. Rivalry between these two organisations is intense, the more so since the management of public funds allocated for running the New Year Carnival has become a crucial issue.\(^{37}\) The situation is made even more intricate because of links between certain \textit{Klops} and drug dealers,\(^{38}\) and also because of political attempts to use the carnival to influence voters.\(^{39}\)

All \textit{Klops} are structured in a more or less similar fashion. They consist of an executive board, coaches and captains. For instance, the executive board of the Fabulous Las Vegas, based in Lentegeur, includes several persons in charge of different aspects of the club’s life: a director, a president, a vice-president, a vice-chairman, a treasurer, a public relations officer, a coordinator, several trustees, a captain and a secretary. The Fabulous Las Vegas has specialised divisions: a Brass Band, adult and juvenile Choirs,\(^{40}\) Drum Majors and the rank and file (Oliphant 2013). Another \textit{Klops}, the All Stars from Mitchells Plain, is run by an executive committee (chairman, vice-chairman, two secretaries, two trustees, treasurer, and managers), who make the decisions about uniforms, various activities and the repertoire. The executive committee is assisted by a working committee, run by women, and captains selected by the team members. Its leader, Anwar Gambeno, decides on the songs to be performed during the carnival and coaches the singers. The \textit{Klops} organise their own sponsorships; the All Stars have been, for instance, supported by Nokia for several years.\(^{41}\) Most \textit{Klops} attract members who come from all over greater Cape Town. The Fabulous Woodstock Starlites, established in 1973, one of the founding teams of the KKKA, and a regular winner of the Section Two competitions, counted about 650 participants who came from areas such as Valhalla Park, Mitchells Plain, Bonteheuwel, and even Strand.\(^{42}\) Francesca Inglese, who worked with this \textit{Klops}, drew a map showing the places where members dwell in relation to the location of the \textit{klopkamer} (Inglese 2014: 130).

The map shows how removed from each other members are and indicates that some of them have to travel more than 35 km between the neighbourhood where they live and the \textit{klopkamer}. 
A map of Cape Town showing where members live in relation to the location of the klopskamer (Francesca Inglese)
Malay Choirs

Several Klopse are closely related to Malay Choirs; these links show that opposition between them does not always exist. The Pennsylvanian Crooning Minstrels are linked to the Shoprite Jonge Studente; the Heideveld Entertainers to the Young Men Sporting Club; and the All Stars to the Tulips; to give but a few examples. Malay Choirs hold their competitions after the Klopse carnival, usually between February and April. The dates may be moved in case they conflict with Muslim festivals; no competitions can take place during the month of Ramadan. Choirs perform four or five song repertoires: Nederlandsliedjies, Afrikaans Moppies or Comic Songs, Combine Chorus, Senior Solo and Junior Solo, which is optional. Singing competitions are held in a hall which used to be the Good Hope Centre, although in 2016 they took place in the Cape Town City Hall.

Malay Choir boards

The first board, the Cape Malay Choir Board (CMCB), was launched in 1939 and organised its first competitions in 1940 at the Cape Town City Hall with six participating choirs (Nel 2012: 37; Van der Wal 2009: 51). A new board, the Suid-Afrikaanse Koorraad (SAK, Council of South African Choirs) was formed in 1952 by dissident choirs that split from the CMCB because they refused to participate in events celebrating the tercentenary of the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck at the Cape. They said they could not accept the segregated organisation of the festivities and rejected the apology of apartheid which underlay them. Two further splits later affected the CMCB. First, in 1982, a few choirs launched the Tafelberg Mannekoor Raad (TMR, Council of Table Mountain Male Choirs). Secondly, in 2010, a successful businessman, the late Al-Hajj Mogamat Naziem Benjamin founded the Keep the Dream Malay Choir Forum (KTD MCF) with the support of his father, Al-Hajj MZ Benjamin (better known as “Hadji Bucks”), leader of the Starlites Malay Choir. A large number of choirs decided to leave the CMCB and join the KTD MCF over disagreements about the financial management of the organisation and the centralisation of power in the hands of its chairperson. It is also said that several small choirs, who could not financially compete with the largest ones, considered themselves to be at a disadvantage and no longer stood a chance of reaching the highest levels of competitions; this caused discouragement among the singers and motivated them to join the new board. In 2013, the KTD MCF claimed 45 choirs (Keep the Dream Male Choir Board 2013) and 22 choirs participated in the preliminary sections of the CMCB competition. In 2015, the SAK was still alive, although its activities were very low key and it had only nine affiliated choirs. The TMR no longer exists.
Boards are non-profit organisations in terms of the Companies Act. Choirs are affiliated to a board; they participate in its competitions and can also apply for funds or sponsorships under the aegis of the board; they must include with their application a certificate from the board showing its NPO number.\textsuperscript{46} Decisions in the CMCB are formally made at general meetings held every two or three weeks, to which each affiliated choir sends two or three representatives. The general meeting discusses all the rules and regulations, as well as the competition dates. Before competitions, the Cape Malay Choir Board issues each choir with a certain number of tickets, usually 200 or 300, which they have to sell; this is called the “Board share”. The choirs may keep 50–60\% of the profits, which are used, in addition to their own resources, to meet their organisational expenses. The KTDMCB is a subsidiary of the Keep the Dream Malay Choir Forum, a non-profit organisation. The KTDMCB is run by a 15-person executive; the most important decisions are made by a general council, in which all affiliated choirs are represented and an annual general meeting (AGM) assesses the activities of the board.

Malay Choirs

Most Malay Choirs have adopted a democratic type of organisation, which does not preclude the fact that some individuals (president, captain, coach) may play a prominent role when decisions are made. The Young Men Sporting Club, which is affiliated to the CMCB, for instance, is governed by its AGM, which gathers about 100 members; it elects officials and discusses the uniforms. The day-to-day affairs of the club (including the choice of uniforms) are run by an executive committee comprising a president, a vice-president, a secretary, two trustees, two managers and three additional members; they meet once a month. The president, who is also the coach of the choir, decides on the repertoire; he writes the combine and the comic song. The singer of the solo (Niel Rademan, a professional popular Afrikaans singer, who is hired for the competition) decides on what he is going to sing, in agreement with the president. In addition to monies the club can get from the board, it organises functions and karaoke at which collections are made. The Young Men also sing for the Heideveld Entertainers *Klops* and get paid for their services.\textsuperscript{47} In the Shoprite Jonge Studente, also a member of the CMCB, the chairperson procures and appoints specialised music directors for each item in the competition. Since they aspire to become “more professional”, they hire “professional people and academically qualified people […] that can really give [the choir] the standard of the competition, makes us one of the best choirs, whether we do the singing, whether we do the marching”.\textsuperscript{48} They pride in having Kurt Haupt, the University of Cape Town choir conductor as coach for the combine chorus and the *nederlandsliedjies*, and Arlene Jephta\textsuperscript{49} as voice-training supervisor. Comic songs are coached by an experienced musician, Ismail Jackson, who composes them and
sings the solo part, although the choral accompaniment is also arranged by Kurt Haupt. In order to train the marching squad that competes in the Grand March Past and the Exhibition March Past categories performed during the Grand Finale, the Shoprite Jonge Studente have even gone to the extent of bringing out a retired admiral from Holland, Kos Peeters. The Young Tulips Sangkoor, affiliated with the KTDIMCB, is managed by a twelve-person executive committee that meets every two weeks. They have only one coach for the five “items”, who chooses the songs and writes the comic and the combine.

In spite of being called Malay Choirs, all choir members are not Muslims. It is estimated that about one-third of the singers belong to other faiths, mostly Christian. However no singer is allowed to indulge in liquor or drugs. Choirs must have new uniforms (suit, shirt, tie, shoes and socks, sports jacket and trousers for the New Year Eve’s parade) made every year and risk losing points if they show in competition with a costume they have already worn. It was customary for choir members to pay for their uniforms. Nowadays, however, given the dire conditions in which many singers find themselves, members can no longer afford to spend more than ZAR 1 000 to buy the choir’s outfits and receive them free of charge. This weighs heavily on a choir’s finances: members of the Young Men Sporting Club are supposed to pay for their uniforms, but the young and the poor get them for free. In the Young Tulips Sangkoor, uniforms are given for free; and 90% of the Shoprite Jonge Studente singers cannot pay for their uniforms. All singers and musicians must wear a fez. The champion of champions, at the end of competitions, wins the “Silver Fez”.

The competitions

At CMCB competitions, choirs may comprise from 18 to about 100 singers; they are accompanied by instrumental ensembles composed exclusively of string instruments (including a piano), except for a ghoema drum used when moppies are sung. The best choirs now hire professional musicians or students from the music departments of the Cape Town and Stellenbosch universities. If women are not allowed to sing in the choirs during competitions, they can play instruments, but must then wear a head scarf. The demand for musicians has become so high that the amount they ask for has increased tremendously, making it difficult for small (and less well-endowed) choirs to hire them. Abduraghman Morris, President of the Young Men Sporting Club, explained:

For the Malay Choir, we have the pianist during rehearsals […] Up until a week or two before the competition day, I employ a guy who is in contact with the string quartet, I give him the music and he writes out the parts for each instrument of the string quartet and
then in the last week we all come together: the string quartet, because when we do our combine it usually consists of the string quartet with the piano, and then we rehearse like that. In competition we have the string quartet and a piano, plus guitar mandolin, banjo and double bass. For the combine, we only use the string quartet and the piano. For the other items, the nederlands and the comic, we use the full ensemble, plus the ghoema for the comic.  

The bursting in of backtracks

In the 1990s, sequencers began to be available in South Africa. Coupled with MIDI keyboards and computers, they gave access to immense sound banks and could reproduce the sounds of all instruments and even create original electronic sounds. Their arrival in the Malay Choirs and Klopse worlds disrupted the relationship between musicians and singers. It made it possible to rehearse a song to the background of a pre-recorded backtrack, which has been specially conceived, will never vary (and will never be late or stand the choir up), and is paid for once and for all, whereas musicians have to be remunerated every time they are needed. Many coaches complain about the cost of musicians. The size of the orchestras that accompany the singers in competition has significantly increased over the past thirty years. The orchestras now comprise up to forty instrumentalists and the cost of hiring such an ensemble amounts to several tens of thousands of Rands.

In competition, Klopse have for several decades resorted to backtracks. The CMCB still forbids the use of pre-recorded music and demands that choirs be accompanied by an instrumental ensemble, whose performance is marked on the evaluation reports. But choirs affiliated to the KTDMCB have decided to sing with backtracks, even nederlandsliedjies. Many choirs could not afford to pay the high prices musicians were demanding and they realised that it was cheaper to have backtracks made — which they could use both during the rehearsals and the competitions — than to hire a live orchestra. The decision to use backtracks allowed small choirs, with a limited financial capacity, to continue participating in competitions, thereby keeping their singers and maintaining their morale. However, the debate is still going on within the Keep the Dream Malay Choir Board and a few choirs’ representatives would like to go back to having a band on stage during the competitions. Anwar Gambeno, President of the KTDMCB, recounted how it happened:

We debated this thing for a full year. What are we gonna do? There were for and against. At the end of the day, a majority voted in favour of the backtrack. There was an argument: let’s do the ned-
Shawn Petersen, who coached the Kenfacs, agreed that backtracks help solve the problem of musicians who behave as mercenaries. He added that, as far as Klopse are concerned, since they perform outdoors, the sound of backtracks is often better — more balanced and clearer — than the sound of poorly amplified musicians. Moreover, it gives the coaches greater freedom in the choice of the instruments they want to associate with the voices. However, Ismail Bey, a backtrack composer, affirmed that there must always be a banjo — “that identifies the moppie” says he — even a synthetic one, even if the timbre coming out of the backtrack is not as nice as that produced by a “real” instrument. But one must be cautious not to get carried away by the potentialities of synthesisers and add instrument upon instrument, to the point when the characteristics of a moppie are no longer audible. To Shawn Petersen, the main problem with backtracks is that they cannot adjust in real time to what is happening on stage: modification of intonation or change of tempo. Even during practices, backtracks do not make allowances for trial and error, to improve the melody or the arrangement; they induce an imperative of formal perfection that must be attained before the backing CD is burnt. The composer must have in mind all the details of his tune, of the orchestral arrangement and of the combination between the two before he orders the backtrack from a specialist. Waseef Piekaan, a moppie composer, coach and singer, explained the difficulties faced by artists who do not write music:

But if you, as the moppie writer, the person who makes or writes the moppie, if you can’t make that tune go together before you
come to this guy that is only gonna make the music, that is only gonna press sounds, if you can’t do that, then you are still not gonna have [...] it’s not gonna work. So that comes from you first, and he just puts it together [...] You have to sing the tune to him a cappella and he has to hear it from your mouth and you have to sing it so right also, because [...] some of the tunes that I use are original tunes [...] so he doesn’t know this tune, so you have to sing it so perfect to him, because if you’re gonna sing it wrong and the backtrack is wrong, now you’re gonna come to the choir and now the judges is going to hear, now musically it is not right, so you have to sing it note for note from your mouth for this guy so that he has to be able to program it right.

Moreover, added Tape Jacobs, captain of the Beystart Klops, the consequences for the future of the music must not be underestimated: “Like a guy, if he doesn’t see a man playing with the guitar, he won’t be interested in learning [...] because he doesn’t see the instrument. [Before] if you did see the guy was playing a certain instrument, you got the passion, man. But today you don’t see the man, you just hear backtracks. Where is your passion now?” The late Ismail Dante, musician, composer and former coach, also lamented that they “take the culture away” and do not encourage young people to learn music.

Choirs in competition

Malay Choirs’ core members practise regularly all year round. A few months before the competitions begin, they are joined by other singers who beef up the group and give more depth to the singing; rehearsals then become more frequent, longer and more intense. When contests used to take place at the Good Hope Centre one could see people congregate outside, under the trees surrounding it. Singers, with their family, greeted each other, discussed and tried to guess which choirs could win. Then singers and listeners entered the hall, where the heat was sometimes suffocating, in spite of huge fans located on each side of the stage. Inside, the atmosphere was at the same time tense and good natured. However, even at the City Hall, competitions remain a very enjoyable entertainment and the audience takes great pleasure in listening to the choirs, in admiring the talent of a nederlands singer who can produce beautiful karienkels, in watching the antics of the comic soloist and relishing in the vocal timbre of the solo singer. But most listeners are also supporters: they entertain friendly or family links with one particular choir and expect it to win several prizes, if not the Silver Fez. They usually sit together on the same stand, they loudly applaud their favourite choir and often dispute the decisions of the
judges when their champions are not given good marks. In the corridors and at the underground level, stalls are set up where typical Malay dishes (curries, biryanis, samosas) and soft drinks can be bought.

Competitions may last for several hours, till after midnight and are interrupted for Muslim prayers. A stage is prepared for the singers, with a space reserved in front for the musicians, and an upright piano to one side. At the same level as the audience, an enclosure is set apart for the adjudicators. They must remain isolated and are forbidden to communicate with the singers, the listeners, and even the sound engineers; they can only talk to the board’s officials. A Master of Ceremonies, alternating between English and Afrikaans, announces the choir that is going to perform, and gives the titles of the songs they will sing.

Each choir is allowed to remain on stage for no longer than 26 minutes “from the first strum or beat.” The competitions are organised like a championship. First, after a random draw, choirs are grouped in sections; according to their ranking in the sections, choirs are then allowed to participate in one of the three competitions: Premier Cup (CMCB) or Naziem Benjamin Cultural Cup (KTDMCB), those with a smaller number of points; the President’s Cup (CMCB) or the Silver Plate Competition (KTDMCB), the intermediates; or the Top 8 (CMCB) or the Nedbank Super 12 (KTDMCB), the best. All will finally participate in a Grand Finale which takes place at a stadium and consists in competitions for: Drum Major, Best Dress, Float, Grand March Past and Exhibition March Past. The end of the competition season is marked by the Champ of Champs, in which five choirs from the CMCB Top 8, two choirs from the President’s Cup, and two choirs from the Premier Cup compete for the last time of the year.

Competitions are judged by a panel of “adjudicators” selected by the Board among people who have formal musical training (music teachers or music students at a university) or are considered as “experts” of moppies and nederlandsliedjes.

Freedom and conventions

The rank and file of the Klopse and Malay Choirs are amateurs; they even have to, or are supposed to, pay for their uniforms, and audiences at stadia or halls where choir competitions take place must buy entry tickets. However, the festivals make it possible for a small number of people to earn a living or at least to draw part of their income from their involvement with Klopse and choirs: professional artists (singers, coaches, musicians); carnival organisers; tailors; importers of material and accessories, such as hats and umbrellas. The dominant discourse among participants nevertheless emphasises a love for music, a passion for the Cape culture and the determination to keep it alive.
Adam Samodien, a famous composer and coach, strongly asserts that he creates songs “for the love of the sport.” “Sport” is a word which is frequently used when discussing the New Year festivals. It underlines both the joy of playing carnival or singing in a choir and the omnipresent competitive spirit. “To me, it’s just fun” concurred Ismail Dante, whose family has been involved in the festivals since the end of the 19th century. To him, money is not what matters:

That’s why these guys they can’t understand, they come to me, they ask me “How much do you charge?” I just laugh at it, I say “now look, I won’t give you a price, but what I can do, I can coach, I play four instruments, put me in that category and you think of yourself what you can give me. Whatever you give me, I will say thank you, I appreciate it. Because at least, you came to me and asked me.” Because, I say I don’t want to know what the other guys are getting, that’s not my business, but this is actually my pleasure, I enjoy myself with this thing.

Other musicians, soloists or coaches are obviously less disinterested, but they nonetheless always insist on their passion for the “sport” and the culture. Paraders, singers, coaches, organisers, leaders and audiences form a small world, which could be likened to what sociologist Howard S Becker called an “art world” (Becker 1982), crisscrossed by networks of social relations underlain by tensions between respectability (ordentlikheid) and lawlessness, regulations and organised disorder (Salo 2004, 2005a, 2005b). The festivals are the “big days” in the year; the time when revellers can feel free, whatever the tribulations and the humiliations they have to endure the rest of the year.

Many people feel a compulsion to participate in the festivals, even just as spectators in the streets or at a stadium. But participants experience something stronger: a mixture of extreme pleasure and freedom; the sensation that they become different, because they then live on another plane, in another universe. Two words express that: deurmekaar and tariek. Deurmekaar rhymes with Nuwe Jaar, just as in the West Indies, “bacchanal” echoes “Carnival”. In Cape Town’s songs, Nuwe Jaar is traditionally answered by deurmekaar. As an adjective it usually means confused or disorganised; it connotes disorder, chaos and even danger. Applied to the New Year, however, it acquires the much more positive meanings of fun and excitement, of pleasure and liberation from the constraints of ordinary life. Tariek explains even more precisely what the festivals are about. The word comes from the Arabic and is related to tariqa (brotherhood). In the language of Islam, more specifically of Sufi Islam, tariqa means the way, that is the journey leading to God, and the spiritual techniques which allow one to accomplish this journey. One of
these techniques is the chanting of dhikr (literally the “memory of God”) in order to glorify God and to reach spiritual perfection, a collective experience which often leads to a state of trance. As a matter of fact, tariek is used to describe the state of trance reached by participants during ratiep. According to the late Gerald L Stone, tariek means excitement, being carried away, being in a trance-like state (Stone 1971, 1991, 1995). Tariek is closely related to deurmekaar and consequently also connotes being mixed up, a state of social chaos, anomy. This word definitely has two sides; it means confusion and fun; it can be both positive and negative. This interpretation is confirmed by members of Malay Choirs well versed in Muslim theology. They explain tariek in terms of the union of the positive and the negative, the difference and the complementarity of the physical and the spiritual, and the capacity of the latter to activate the former. To the revellers themselves, pleasures and impressions of freedom experienced during the New Year festivals are similar to the state of trance reached by dancers who perform the ratiep. Melvyn Matthews, who has been participating in the carnival in various capacities since he was a very young child, reflected on this particular sensation:

There must be some madness in this thing [...] DIE TARIEK [...] The tariek, this thing you put yourself in, in another frame of mind. You’re now at another level [...] You’re going to another level, you’re getting to something else [...] I’ll walk and I’ll start to run and I’m getting to this fever now, that tariek [...] it’s at the other level [...] You’re now overflowing, you’re now overflowing and not everyone can feel it because why, it goes deeper than what a lot of people can perceive.

The place of women

In her masters dissertation on the “changing faces of the Klopse”, Chanell Oliphant observed that “writings on the klopse seem to have gendered the performance to one of the masculine. This is embodied and stylized in the gears and the designs, which are what one would associate with male attire. The only visible sign of femininity and a stylization in design of clothes, and feminine behaviour were the moffie” (Oliphant 2013: 86). As a matter of fact, a spectator watching the performances of Klopse and Malay Choirs can gain the impression that the New Year festivals are undoubtedly a man’s world. Yet, women have always played an important role in the celebrations and their preparation, and their place is steadily increasing.

As we have seen, during the competitions women cannot sing in a Malay Choir; they can only play instruments (usually strings, including double bass and
piano), provided they cover their head. However, girls and women join the male singers for practices and concerts outside official contests. They also sit in large numbers in the audience. Before competitions were formally organised by the Cape Malay Choir Board, some women were known as *nederlandsliedjies* soloists and could be heard at birthday parties or weddings. Mariam Leeman, a school teacher and amateur singer in her sixties at the time of the interview, recalled that in her youth she heard women singing in the choir, backing a male soloist, at weddings. Ismail Morris, then coach of the Morning Glories, confirmed that women sang at weddings:

> You may find some women who are able to sing because their brother or husband used to be in a choir but there is no places where women could take part of the Ned. At wedding people don’t sing anymore. Before it used to be fantastic, the brides’ maids they had to sing, there were certain women that went to weddings that could sing lovely, but that has all died out now people don’t sing, they hire a choir to come and sing or they play music.

In private situations, women whose family is involved in the Malay Choirs, who have an uncle or a brother who sing solo can learn the *nederlands* repertoire and the art of *karienkel*, but they do not perform in public.

Women are present in the *Klopse*. Usually, they are not very conspicuous since they wear the same gear as the men. Their numbers have definitely increased since the early 1990s and women now also participate in the organisation and functioning of the troupes. In 1988, two women organised a carnival, and one troupe, the Famous New Blue Girls, was captained by a woman (Oliphant 2013: 87). More recently, the Heideveld Entertainers were “owned” by a woman and the Hangberg Troupe was also captained by a woman (Oliphant 2013: 88). Women sit on the Las Vegas’ Executive Board (Oliphant 2013: 88) and they form the core of the All Stars’ Working Committee. In the course of her field work with the Las Vegas in 2012, Chanell Oliphant “came across women participating in different roles, as ‘soldiers’, ordinary members, as supporters and as cooks in the stalls. Women came with their children, walked with their children and pushed their younger children who wore miniature gears in strollers” (Oliphant 2013: 88). Chanell Oliphant also noted that women in the *Klopse* were beginning to wear clothes or accessories that could distinguish them from the men: wigs, pearls, earrings; some even put on dresses instead of the customary pair of pants. She concluded “Thus here one sees a growing performativity of the female gender taking place by women” (Oliphant 2013: 88). In the same year, a troupe participating in the *Kaapse Klopse Karnaval* featured a woman singer; before there had only been a few occasions when women sang the “special item”. KKKKA’s chief executive officer, Melvyn Matthews, explained that this illustrated the “stance of non-sexism” adopted in the carnival he organises (Oliphant 2013: 87).
In addition to their visible presence, women also play important supportive roles in the *Klopse* and the Malay Choirs. They prepare food and drinks served at rehearsals; many tailors who cut and sew the uniforms worn in competition are women; and they cater for singers and spectators at the competition venues. These roles are traditionally assigned to women in many male-dominated societies, including Cape Town coloured communities. The attractiveness of a woman because of her physical features and domestic abilities, in particular cooking, was described—tongue-in-cheek—in an old *moppie*, quoted by Shamil Jeppie in one of the first serious articles devoted to the Coon Carnival: “*Die Nonnie van Waastraat*” (The Lady from Wale Street), which caricatures a woman assigned to the role of cook, who is at the same time perceived to be attractive. The song concludes “Let others say what they want/My heart is so glad/Where in the whole world/Will you get such a girlfriend!/I can’t contain myself anymore/Must be at her side all day/O, she is a lovely thing/When she moves her little backside” (Jeppie 1990). While recognising that the place of women in the New Year festivals is mostly subordinate (although it is currently changing), one should not, however, underestimate its social and symbolical importance. Anthropologist Elaine Salo highlighted the fact that women actually occupied a pivotal position in coloured underprivileged townships where they acted both as guardians of moral values and respectability, and as protectors of young men, even when they infringed the law (Salo 2004, 2005a, 2005b). More generally, Pumla Dineo Gqola underlined the fact that food can be a vehicle for memory and that: “The preparation, selection and sharing of food becomes a space for sustenance of cultural memories in diaspora. When food is this vehicle, or one of them, the burden often falls on women” (Gqola 2010: 171). Among coloureds, whose history has largely been moulded by the experience of slavery, the feeling of belonging to a diaspora is rather weak, but the transmission of culinary traditions is definitely a means to establish roots in an ancient past, and a way of putting forward a creativity that contributed to giving Cape Town cuisine its originality. In this perspective, cooking runs parallel to making music and singing and may be seen as a practice that empowers women in situations of disempowerment. Gabeba Baderoon, a professor of women’s studies and African studies, explained: “Even though implicated in patriarchal power structures, the ability to cook and to teach cooking is the locus of enormous power” (Baderoon 2002: 8). She added that cooking is “a concrete and immediate kind of artistry” and that food has the “power to shape place, time and social interaction” (Baderoon 2002: 4). She concluded that, within the framework of a male-dominated society, “food gave women power” (Baderoon 2002: 9) and “allowed young ones to display their creativity and capacity of innovation” (Baderoon 2002: 11). These remarks imply that even though men may be in the forefront, the “culture and traditions” they perform in competition could not be transmitted and perpetuated without the active participation of women, a participation that is apparently increasing, making access to new roles easier. This evolution may eventually make them more visible and bring them to the foreground.
The meanings of musical competitions

In every society, whatever the era, it seems that there have been musical competitions. Experimenting with music is a source of pleasure: pleasure of making music, and making it well, pleasure of listening, and of listening to nice-sounding music. Consequently, musicians strive not only to play well, but to play better, for their own satisfaction, and also for the enjoyment of their fellow musicians and of their audiences. They endeavour to play better than before, better than other musicians; they hope to be recognised in their time, if not to leave their mark in history (Helmlinger 2011). In order to be acknowledged and assessed, their efforts “to do better” demand that they be evaluated and compared with those of other musicians (Molino 2007: 1180; Nattiez 2009: 59). Such comparisons may be informal and based on vague impressions; they may also be institutionalised in the form of contests, in which judges apply precise criteria. Judgements passed at the conclusion of a competition are based on particular conceptions of the good and the beautiful, which vary according to time and place and therefore “have only a strictly contextual and pragmatic value” (Lortat-Jacob 1998: 193): they are incessantly debated and adapted. Musical competitions can therefore be approached as situations in which aesthetic values are affirmed, as circumstances when criteria defining “beauty” — the greatest beauty — are put in play, at the same time applied and contested. To put it in a nutshell: competitions are moments when conventions encapsulating aesthetics, ethics and social norms appear in full light (Molino 2009: 374–375), the more so since human beings’ propensity to discuss music and to theorise it (Nattiez 2009: 52) seems to be stimulated by the spirit of competition (Erlmann 1996: 35; Rohlehr 1985).

Beauty, tradition and identity

Discussions arising from the need to evaluate, to compare and to justify judgements passed on the qualities and defects of a piece of music or of its interpretation, are linked to questions pertaining to established forms and techniques which have furnished, for some time, the ideals of quality and beauty. Such discussions lead to an appreciation of changes and innovations, to the recognition, or not, of their capacity to open new fields of creativeness and invent beauties unheard of. Confronted with innovation, many actors of the music world resort to arguments based on a certain idea of “tradition”. Discourses in terms of tradition usually link aesthetic conceptions to visions of society and in particular to social representations of the groups to which musicians and aficionados belong. What is at stake in these cases is the identity of a group confronted with new notions of modernity. Defined by Georges
Balandier as “movement plus uncertainty” (Balandier 1988: 161), the advent of a “new modernity” combines transformations in social and political structures, mutations in value systems and changes in behaviour. It awakens a sense of unpredictability, underpinned by a confrontation between, on the one hand, danger and degradation, and on the other hand, progress and improvement.

In the musical domain, competitions circumscribe space-times of introduction and trial of innovation: they are occasions which allow musicians to propose innovations, which can then be accepted or condemned, but which in every instance arouse discussions. Competitions provide occasions for assessing the intrinsic properties of what is new against the background of a debate on the validity of current canons, which implies questioning their relevance in a changing world. This shows that there is no rupture between tradition and innovation: reference to tradition, be it in discourse or act, clears the way for transformations (Schlanger 1995; Waterman 1990: 8). As suggested by folklore historian Charles W Joyner “innovation without tradition is no more satisfactory an explanation of folklore performance than tradition without innovation” (Joyner 1975: 261), a statement from which David B Coplan inferred that tradition offers “established structures of creativity” (Coplan 2001: 113). It has been empirically observed, for instance in North-Amerindian powwows (Scales 2007: 24) and Hawaiian hula dances (Stillman 1996: 372–374). Competitions are an excellent occasion to stretch tradition towards modernity, since they invite musicians to try and distinguish themselves from their rivals. In order to do so, they can “sing better, louder and longer than the others” (Lortat-Jacob 1998: 67); they can also introduce original traits in their performances to attract the listeners’ or the judges’ attention, hoping that novelty will seduce them (Avorgbedor 2001). Ethnomusicologist, George Worlasi Kwasi Dor, explained that, among the Ewe, innovation was not only accepted but expected:

Indeed, despite stereotypes about the antiquity and traditionalism of African culture, the Ewe generally measure the creative potency of a social dance group by the rate at which it introduces newly-composed songs to its repertoire. Just as the Ewe assess affluence in part by how often one changes one’s clothes, the “richness” of a group similarly resides in its performance of new songs, dance movements, and drum motifs. (Dor 2004: 30)

Aesthetic changes and social change

When an innovation is successfully introduced in competition, it tends to be adopted and to become a new aesthetic norm. Awarding a prize to a musician or a piece that displays originality has at least two consequences: it legitimates
the changes that have been presented; it encourages participants to adopt in subsequent competitions what has been endorsed by the judges, because they expect that it will help them to be successful (Helmlinger 2008, 2011; Henry 1989: 91–92). This happens even in fields in which it is generally considered that nothing can be changed, such as Qur’anic cantillation (al Fārūqī 1987). Aesthetic evolutions are tightly linked to other mutations, related not only to identity but also to ethics (Averill 2003: 91–98). This is one of the reasons why debates on the definition of musical beauty are so passionate and often lead to contesting the judges’ decisions (Weintraub 2001: 97–98). Musical competitions are not only about musical quality, but also about values shared within a social ensemble; musicians, organisers and listeners together strengthen or renew social values. During competitions a “spiritual communitas” (Gunderson 2000: 16) is formed and participants abiding by its accepted rules assert that they belong to it (Scales 2007: 24). This does not imply that communities staged during competitions are homogeneous and unified. Competitions are arenas in which ideas and forces clash, in which various forms of power are at stake. State authorities can try and use them to impose their ideology, as was the case in Suharto’s Indonesia (Weintraub 2001: 87–88). Victims of domination and oppression can attempt to take advantage of competitive rituals and festivities to create an autonomous universe governed by rules and hierarchies markedly different from those of the dominant order. Veit Erlmann showed, for instance, how isicathamiya Choirs gained a relative independence through the particular organisation of their contests (Erlmann 1996: 134). These few examples confirm Jean Molino’s contention that: “Aesthetic experience and aesthetic judgement result from two kinds of mixing: they combine the formal properties of the musical object with the affective and concerned reactions of the subject; they graft ‘external’ factors, that set in motion the intricacy of human relationships within a community, onto ‘internal’ factors” (Molino 2007: 1189). This is one of the reasons why musical competitions — institutionalised situations in which judgements are passed and motivated, taking into account aesthetic, moral and social values — may be considered as objects of research likely to: “reveal ‘emic’ oppositions underlying what participants in a culture recognise as ‘good’ or ‘beautiful’ musical experiences” (Molino 2007: 1173). In this perspective, musical experiences acquire the dimensions of total social phenomena and the debates and controversies surrounding them become “a privileged place where common references, perceptual schema, axiological frames are made explicit”; they offer “reliable indicators about value systems that are vying with each other in a given society” (Heinich 1998: 41).

* * *

It is from these premises that we have approached Cape Town’s nederlandsliedjies and comic songs. We consider them as musical objects, whose intrinsic characteristics displayed in situations of competition may shed some light on
mutations which are underway in coloured communities, affecting notions of history (including memory and understandings of tradition), culture and identity, and consequently the position of coloured communities within and their attitudes towards South African society at large. The first part will continue to present the theoretical grounds on which our analyses are based, focusing on questions of memory and meanings of musical appropriations. The next two parts will deal with the most original repertoires sung by Klopse and Malay Choirs: nederlandsliedjies and comic songs; they will propose sociological interpretations grounded in musicological analysis. In the conclusion we shall come back to some of the most important issues raised by the study of these two repertoires: the role of memory in creating senses of identity and community, the affirmation of resilience through music and the relevance of theories of creolisation for an understanding of dynamics at work in contemporary South African society.
Notes


2. The *ratiep*, also known as *khalifa*, is defined by Achmat Davids as “a sword game that is characterised by the hitting of a sharp sword across the arms or body or by driving sharp skewers through the thick flesh of the face without causing any blood to flow. The exercise is accompanied by drum-beating and an almost hypnotic chanting in Arabic” (Davids 1994a: 63). The *ratiep* is meant to demonstrate the strength of the spirit compared to that of the body. Although it is not considered orthodox by many religious authorities, it is encountered under different names in several Muslim societies from Morocco to India. Its existence in Cape Town has been noted since the beginning of the 19th century and it is probable that it was practised before then.


5. Thanks to fellowships granted by the Stellenbosch Institute of Advanced Studies (2007, 2013, 2015), to which Denis-Constant Martin wishes to express his gratitude.

6. This phrase was frequently used by the late Capetonian, ex-librarian and historian Vincent Kolbe to underline that, although all people classified coloured under apartheid were affected by racist laws, the way they lived through segregation and discrimination was not uniform: their experiences were diverse, although they were stirred in the same cauldron.

7. There have recently been notable efforts to open up the New Year festivals and include as non-competing participants ensembles drawn from other musical traditions. In the 2013 CMCB competitions, preliminary sections 3, 4 and 5 were introduced by “Guest Choirs”: the Simon Estes Alumni Choir from Wynberg (Section 3), the Cape Town Welsh Choir (Section 4) and the Kensington Girls’ Choir (Section 5), a fairly representative sample of Cape Town’s population and of the various styles of choral singing that are practised in the “Mother City”. According to Chanell Oliphant, who participated in and observed the 2012 Klopse carnival, Klopse are becoming increasingly inclusive. For instance, an outfit from Gugulethu, the Vulindlela Cultural Group, took part in the exhibition of the Woodstock Starlites: they played the drums and danced. It seems that black African artists are now regularly hired by troupes (Oliphant 2013: 91–92).


9. For a long time they were outnumbered by whites, whose proportion has drastically
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10. Patric Tariq Mellet, for instance, after thoroughly investigating his ancestry, concluded: “My genealogical roots, as they emerged were a wonderful mix of peoples. There were 17 slave personalities including West African slaves, Indonesian slaves from Macassar and Indian slaves from the coast of Malabar, and locally born Cape Creole slaves. There were two Khoe personalities of Goringhaiqua heritage and another of probable Hessequa lineage. Then there were also a range of Europeans of French, Dutch, German, Swiss, Norwegian, English and Scots heritage” (Mellet 2010: 29).


12. Sufism is a mystical trend within Islam. “The word ‘Sufi’ can be translated by ‘mystic’. At first it was used to denote the habit of wearing clothes made of wool (suf in Arabic), a symbol of poverty at the time […] In the 11th century the word tariqa (a path, a way) appeared, to denote all the recommended rites to be practiced by the Sufis during the halaqat [literally circle or meeting]. In musical terms, the meetings took the form of sama’ or listening to songs of praise to the Prophet, together with the recitation of verses from the Koran, both designed to heighten the adept’s concentration and spiritual awareness. Between the 9th and 14th centuries other religious exercises and practices were instigated, amongst them the dhikr, which has a double meaning, one limited, the other much broader. Its original meaning in Arabic was remembrance, the act of remembering. By extension it came to be applied to the oral account of the thing remembered, its repetition and the technique used for the repetition. Its usage in Sufism refers to the repetition of one of the names of God or the oral profession of the Islamic faith by the initiates, against a background of sacred poems recited by a hymnodist. This is a technique to be practiced in a group, accompanied by breathing exercises which increase the supply of oxygen to the brain, producing a state of trance or dizziness, or even total blackout” (Moussali 1999: 3). Sufism insists on the purification of the heart and the intensification of spiritual life in order to strengthen the connection with God. It is organised in orders or brotherhoods. During dhikr, music (vocal and instrumental) plays an important role. This implies that for Sufi Muslims music is not haram (forbidden).


15. Achmat Davids examined what the Qur’an and the jurisprudence of the Hadith say about music, and referred to Imam Gazzali (Hujjatu-l-Islam Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, 1056–1111), a Persian philosopher and theologian, who wrote, in his Alchemy of Happiness: “The heart of man has been so constituted by the Almighty that, like a flint, it contains a hidden fire which is evoked by music and harmony, and renders man beside himself with ecstasy. These harmonies are echoes of that higher world of beauty which we call the world of spirits; they remind man of his relationship to that world, and produce in him an emotion so deep and strange that he himself is powerless to explain it. The effect of music and dancing
is deeper in proportion as the natures on which they act are simple and prone to motion; they fan into a flame whatever love is already dormant in the heart, whether it be earthly and sensual, or divine and spiritual.” Available at http://www.amislam.com/alchemy.htm [accessed 15 March 2011].


17. *Cape Times*, Monday, January 4, 1886. “The frivolous coloured inhabitants of Cape Town, who take a holiday on the slightest pretext, indulged their peculiar notions in regard thereto by going about in large bodies dressed most fantastically, carrying ‘guys’, and headed by blowers of wind and players of stringed instruments, who evoked from their horrible monsters the most discordant and blatant noises that ever deafened human ears. At night time these people added further inflictions upon the suffering citizens of Cape Town in the shape of vocalisation, singing selections from their weird music with variations taken from ‘Rule Britannia’ and the ‘Old Hundredth’. They also carried Chinese lanterns and banners as they proceeded through the streets playing their discords, beating the drum, singing and shouting, and the strange glinting of the combined light from the street lamps and the Chinese lanterns fell upon their dark faces, they seemed like so many uncanny spirits broken loose from — say the adamantine chains of the Nether World. But it was their mode of enjoyment and strange as it is that such noises should be regarded as pleasant, it showed at least the desire on their part to celebrate the birth of a new year”.

18. *Cape Times*, 1 January 1907.


20. ID du Plessis explained that his work at the head of the Department of Coloured Affairs “although done on a basis of separation […] did not push the coloured man away but clasped him, as a Westerner, even more strongly, to the West” (Coloured people belong to the West, *Cape Times*, 26 August 1960).


22. The combine chorus is a choral piece sung with instrumental accompaniment but without soloist; the words are original and the music is based on a combination of snippets of melody borrowed from old or recent popular songs.

23. The solo is usually a popular song, a jazz standard or a “classical” aria; it is interpreted by a soloist backed by an instrumental ensemble, without any intervention from the choir.

24. “There are regrettably at New Year too many songs from Tin Pan Alley and too few from Schotsche Kloof [meaning here the Malay Quarter]. The individual troupes, particularly the juveniles among them, love the slow crooning songs which Bing Crosby can put over so well but which the Cape Town Gentlemen Jazz Singers or the Young Dahomey Crooning Minstrels, try as they wish, simply turn into something like a melting chocolate mould at a kids’ party. Fortunately, in recent years, largely through the influence of Dr I.D. du Plessis, both the Malay Choirs and the troupes of Coons have been paying more attention to the songs of the Cape. Thus, they are giving the New Year Carnivals a more truly Cape flavour than they had before”. Aschman, George (1948, 29 December) Cape’s unique New Year Carnival of music. *Argus*. “A feature of the coon song competitions at the Green Point Track yesterday were the Afrikaans ‘moppies’ or ‘liedjies’. The troupes were congratulated by Dr I.D. du Plessis, one of the judges, on bringing this innovation into their carnivals.” (1949, 4 January) Thousands see Coon Carnivals. ‘Moppies’ a new feature. *Argus*.

25. It was during the period spanning the late 1980s to the early 1990s that the style of make-up changed and colours tended to replace black and white. This means that from the late 19th century to the 1980s, the dominant style of make-up was black and white.
26. Troupes are now bussed from their *klopkamer* to Keizergracht and from the junction of Wale Street and Bree Street, or of Wale Street with Rose Street or Chiappini Street back to their *klopkamer*. The parade draws more than 60,000 spectators into the central business district (CBD).

27. “Due to complaints in 2008, the city banned troupes from marching in the Bo-Kaap, apart from a few resident troupes that were allowed to march back home after the Carnival. In 2011, Carnival organizations banded together and took the city to court. The city drafted an official agreement stipulating that it would permit troupes to march in the Bo-Kaap only with the promise that they would immediately board buses and depart the city center after the parade” (Inglese 2014: 139).

28. Where, according to their website, a single room at this hotel costs between ZAR 3,205 and ZAR 8,750.

29. He wrote to the mayoral committee member for tourism requesting that the choirs “should just march past and into Adderley St without music […] This really is critical as I have a 100% full Hotel with very high-rate paying visitors, whom will SERIOUSLY complain if they cannot sleep due to this event.” Quoted in: Wim Pretorius (2015, 31 December) Taj Hotel apologises for asking that Cape Malay Choirs not play music outside hotel. *News24*. Available at http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/taj-hotel-apologises-for-asking-that-cape-malay-choirs-not-play-music-outside-hotel-20151231 [accessed 4 January 2016]. The manager later apologised and promised to inform his guests about Cape Town culture and the New Year festivals.


31. According to Melvyn Matthews, chief executive officer of the Kaapse Klopse Karnaval Association: “It was not until 2012 that the city’s Democratic Alliance (DA) government officially recognized the Carnival as an annual event and set aside a budget for it. Until then, Carnival associations were expected to apply for permission to parade and financial support from the city and provincial governments each year revealing the contingency and marginality of the practice.” (Interview with Francesca Inglese, quoted in Inglese 2014: 138).


33. Since 1996, the successive mayors of Cape Town have come from the ranks of: the National Party, then New National Party, the African National Congress and, since March 2006, the Democratic Alliance.

34. This is probably the reason why in 2010 another “carnival” was inaugurated: “a Rio-inspired parade in March invented by a media company as a way to create social cohesion and showcase South Africa’s diversity for tourists” (Inglese 2014: 140). This Cape Town Carnival is but a show, devoid of social substratum, lacking people’s participation, meant to display a particular conception of South Africa’s diverse cultures for the satisfaction of tourists (Wentzel 2011).

35. “An NPO is defined, in terms of section 1 of the NPO Act, as a trust, company or other association of persons established for a public purpose and of which its income and property are not distributable to its members or office bearers except as reasonable compensation for services rendered. Nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and community based organisations (CBOs) are collectively known as non-profit organisations (NPOs). In some instance, NPOs are also referred to as Civil Society Organisations (CSO).” Available at http://www.dsd.gov.za/npo/ [accessed 29 June 2015]. These organisations can access funding from the National Lotteries Trust, NDA [National Development Agency] and other agencies and apply for tax exemption status from SARS [South African Revenue Service]. Available at
“The Kaapse Klopse Carnival Association has started a project they hope will give young people an appreciation for music, art and life skills, while encouraging greater interest in the minstrels. The project, The Western Cape Street Bands Association, hopes to establish resource centres in various neighbourhoods where young people will be taught these skills. Venues have already been identified in Woodstock, Factreton and Athlone. Director of the Kaapse Klopse Karnival Association, Melvyn Matthews, came up with the idea after realising that the Minstrel Carnival was no longer considered a fun event. ‘Our carnival has been around for a long time and it has been many things to many people. It has survived slavery, politics and poverty. This is our way of giving back, and the project is the first step to developing the carnival and helping to empower the city’ said Matthews. The project has the support of various people, including Ed Backhouse’s band and The Dixie Swingers, who host workshops every Saturday to teach people to read sheet music and play instruments. ‘Opportunities to play with and enjoy other music groups are non-existent as the Coon players are effectively (musically) dyslexic. They are unable to read normal music’ said Backhouse. Matthews and colleague Vic Wilkinson have committed themselves to teaching the minstrels, both young and old. Classes started in July and are held at the Ex-Serviceman’s Club in Petunia Street, Parktown, Athlone. ‘We are telling the stories of local Cape communities, and Coon classics are being harmonised to create richer sounds to accompany the enthusiastic colourful dancers and singers’ said Backhouse. These classes are only the start, but are already an opportunity for the association to get young people off the streets. ‘If we can take every kid off the street, put an instrument in his hands and teach him to play - then we have achieved our goal’” said Matthews (Mathy, Cindy (2005, 12 September) Cape minstrels to get music lessons. IOL.) Available at http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/cape-minstrels-to-get-music-lessons-1.253241?ot=inmsa.ArticlePrintPageLayout.ot [accessed 26 June 2015]. The project, initiated by The Western Cape Street Bands Association, also aims at offsetting the effects of the professionalisation of musicians playing in bands backing Klopse and Malay Choirs. Melvyn Matthews deplored the fact that young people no longer have the opportunity of learning to play instruments during choir practices (Melvyn Matthews, interview with Armelle Gaulier, Mitchells Plain, 11 October 2006).

“Alderman JP Smith, City of Cape Town Mayoral Committee Member for Safety and Security, has handed in an official complaint to the Public Protector, calling for the investigation of more than R50m that has allegedly gone missing from the Cape Town Minstrel Carnival Association over the past 3 years. The complaint, lodged on Monday, 16 February, was made against the Cape Town Minstrel Carnival Association (CTMCA), specifically naming the association’s chairperson Richard Stemmet and its chief executive, Kevin Momberg. The City believes that the CTMCA received money from various sources, including the City of Cape Town under false pretences, and large amounts of funds ‘were misspent severely’. Smith says that donations of R57m, over the past three years, from the National Lottery have ‘gone under the radar and remain unaccounted for’. The City of Cape Town also gave the Cape Minstrel Carnival Association an amount of R6m, under the impression that the Minstrel Association was under immense financial pressure and that they had no additional funds, other than those provided by the City of Cape Town. When questioned about the usage of the money, Kevin Momberg told Carte Blanche [an investigative TV programme broadcast on the private network M-Net] that the funds were used – and are going to be used – for an official Minstrels Museum, among other things. According to the investigative television report, the Cape Minstrels and their representatives, for example Shahieda Dolly Thole from the Cape Minstrel District Board, know nothing of
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40. The adult choir used to be drawn from the Lavender Hill (Malay) Choir; in the early 2010s, the Las Vegas asked another Malay Choir, the Young Ideas, to help them improve their singing.

41. Anwar Gambeno, interview with Denis-Constant Martin, Mitchells Plain, 13 April 2015.


43. A third type of organisation, the Christmas Choirs or Christmas Bands, also hold their competitions after the Klopse carnival; since this volume is dedicated to choirs and choral singing, we shall not deal with them here. These Christian bands have been thoroughly studied by Sylvia Bruinders (2006/2007, 2012).

44. In July 2015, the Good Hope Centre was turned into a cinema studio; it will no longer be available for community events or concerts; consequently, the CMCB and the KTDMCB decided to use the Cape Town City Hall for their 2016 competitions. See: Lewis, Anel (2015, 10 February) Good Hope Centre to become film studio. IOL. Available at http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/good-hope-centre-to-become-film-studio-1.1815637#.VeBmUpdKYXg [accessed 28 August 2015].


46. Since Klopse and Malay Choirs are considered as organisations involved in socio-economic development, sponsors are able to get socio-economic development score card points for their Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) certificates, which improves their BEE rating. In addition to that, sums allocated to socio-economic development organisations are tax deductible.

47. Abduraghman Morris, interview with Denis-Constant Martin, Colorado Park, 21 April 2015.


49. An opera singer who performed, among other roles, Annina (Violetta’s maid) in the 2011 production of Verdi’s La Traviata, at Artscape, Cape Town.


52. Singers trained in Pentecostal or Sanctified churches are sought after because of their vocal qualities. For instance, more than half the members of the Calypso Malay Choir are said to
come from an Apostolic Church; André Rix, 25 February 2013, Malay Choirs Open Group, Facebook. Available at http://www.facebook.com/pages/Malay-Choirs/100634199977978#!/groups/98713196428/?fref=ts [accessed 17 May 2013].

53. See for instance: Nokia All Stars, Minstrels Rules and Regulations; and CMCB rules: “ANY MEMBER/S UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF LIQUOR OR DRUGS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE WITH HIS/THEIR CHOIR IS AUTOMATICALLY UNDER SUSPENSION”, rule No. 8; “LIQUOR, DRUGS AND FIREARMS IS PROHIBITED AT ALL COMPETITIONS OF THE BOARD”, Rule No. 9 (“Cape Malay Choir Board competition rules and regulations”, included in the Cape Malay Choir Board programme for the Top 8 and Grand Finale, 2011, p. 6).

54. “All affiliated choir members including MUSICIANS shall wear a FEZ as a headgear in all competitions. A choir contravening this rule will be disqualified of an item.” (Rule No. 3, “Cape Malay Choir Board competition rules and regulations”, included in the Cape Malay Choir Board programme for the Top 8 and Grand Finale, 2011, p. 6). ID du Plessis contended that the fez was brought to the Cape by exiles from Indonesia. However, according to historian Robert CH Shell, Abubakr Effendi, a Kurdish Islamic scholar sent to Cape Town in the 1860s by the Ottoman Empire at the request of Queen Victoria, “was responsible for the Ottoman fez replacing the turban, toering and the head handkerchief as the distinctive Cape Muslim garb” (Shell 2006: 109).

55. A few choirs include girls and women when they practise or perform outside competitions.


57. Anwar Gambeno, interview with Denis-Constant Martin, Mitchells Plain, 13 April 2015.


63. Melismatic ornaments; see “Karienkels”, chapter 3, pp. 92–95.

64. Rule No. 26, “Cape Malay Choir Board competition rules and regulations”, included in the Cape Malay Choir Board programme for the Top 8 and Grand Finale, 2011, p. 6.

65. Originally, large floats were carried on lorries or trailers; their size was later reduced so that they could be presented on tables and became known as “mini-floats”.


68. Ismail Dante passed away in 2012, aged more than 70.

69. Ismail Dante, in Ismail and Gamja Dante, interview with Denis-Constant Martin, Hanover Park, 20 October 2011.


71. Gerald L Stone, personal communication to Denis-Constant Martin.


74. In South African popular parlance, moffie designates a man who dresses and acts like a woman. It does not necessarily mean a homosexual, although it frequently does, but rather a male who acts out female characters, i.e. drag queens, cross-dressers etc. It originally carried derogatory connotations, which is still very often the case today. Moffies are put in the
limelight by *Klopse* during carnival parades and are a recurrent topic in *moppie* lyrics. See “*Moffies*”, chapter 6, pp. 188–191.

77. Ismail Morris, interview with Armelle Gaulier, Athlone, 26 February 2008.
79. Anwar Gambeno, interview with Denis-Constant Martin, Mitchells Plain, 13 April 2015.
80. Examples of such contests abound. Among the Anlo Ewe (Ghana), listeners choose the winner (Avorgbedor 2001; Dor 2004). Similarly, at the end of Brazilian *desafios* or of Chilean *controversias*, the audience designates the most creative *repentista* or *payador*. But in Trinidad, it is a jury applying a strict scoring scale that ranks the best steel bands in the *Panorama* (Helmlinger 2011) and in Tanzania judges who must fill adjudication forms award the prizes at the end of *Kwaya* (choirs) championships (Barz 2000: 385). In the field of Western “classical” music there are indeed innumerable competitions: the Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition in Brussels, the China International Piano Competition in Xiamen; the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition in Australia, to name but a few. And pop music hit-parades not only record, but sometimes contribute to making, successful songs (Parker 1991). Awards obtained in these competitions may be just symbolic and grant only prestige (Stillman 1996: 365); in most cases they mean large amounts of money and/or the promotion of winning artists (Weintraub 2001: 91).
81. An *a capella* genre of choral singing created by Zulu migrant workers in industrial centres and mining compounds; isicathamiya choirs regularly enter in competitions. See: Erlmann 1996.
Jereme Trumpeter & Johaar “Hadji” Kenny, moppie soloists, Cape Traditional Singers, 2016