Cape Town Harmonies

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CHAPTER 4

The meanings of blending

In the previous chapter we attempted to provide a detailed description of nederlandsliedjies, introducing as much as possible the vocabulary used by performers and listeners. In the following chapter, we focus on the quality of nederlands performance in competitions, as it is understood by specialised judges, but also by singers, coaches and audiences. To that effect, we shall summarily analyse adjudication reports filled by judges sitting in the juries who evaluated the eight best choirs participating in the “Top Eight” (the highest league) nederlands competitions of the Cape Malay Choir Board in 2011 and 2013. This analysis will be complemented by information collected in the course of interviews with experts, judges, singers and coaches, and opinions expressed on a dedicated Facebook forum.

The juries

Until 2015, Malay Choirs competitions took place at the Good Hope Centre, a concrete structure erected in 1976 at the place where the morning market was held before the destruction of District Six. Its main hall could accommodate up to 7,000 spectators, but had poor acoustics. The organisation of space is not radically different in the City Hall, where competitions took place in 2016. Not very far from the stage, in the front-centre, several judges (also called adjudicators) sit in a box which is supposed to isolate them from the audience, the officials of the board and the singers: their attention must be focused on the choir who is performing, and no one must influence their decisions. They can only communicate with a designated member of the organising committee, and they may not talk to singers, coaches, sound system engineers or members of the audience. The judges should not under any circumstances disclose decisions made by the jury before they are officially proclaimed from the stage. Every judge marks the performances; the marks are then aggregated by the chief adjudicator and the averages are copied on an adjudication report, accompanied by commentaries. Each participating choir is ranked in the individual category they have participated in, and also ranked within the group they were part of, according to the overall average mark (the addition of marks attributed
in the various categories) they have obtained. Adjudication forms are handed over to representatives of the organising committee. The judges then climb on stage to proclaim the results and the Master of Ceremonies warns: “The judges’ decision will be final [...] There will be no insulting of the judges and no assaulting of them.” The judges then leave the building, protected by about thirty bodyguards. This is a worthwhile measure, since, in the past, a few judges have been threatened or assaulted, so intense is the passion triggered by these competitions.

Composition of juries

In the past, CMCB judges, who are selected by the President of the Board, used to be chosen from white music specialists, who were considered “neutral”. They were, it was assumed, less likely to be included in friendship networks existing in the Malay Choirs world, and more competent, because academically trained. However, this was also the reason why their expertise was regularly questioned, and their decisions criticised. Their competence in European “art” music was no guarantee that they could assess the quality of the Choirs’ performances, especially in the repertoire deemed the most “traditional”, the nederlandsliedjies, whose technicalities and aesthetics they were not familiar with. Today, this is no longer the case and most judges are coloured. Yet, many among them are still music teachers, trained in European music, which remains a case for arguing that they do not possess the insight necessary to evaluate Malay Choirs and, in particular, the nederlands. To try and render this argument void, CMCB authorities now often appoint experts (former singers or coaches) from the Malay Choirs’ world, as judges or advisers to the judges.

Until 2012, juries were changed at every step of the CMCB competitions but, starting in 2013, the same persons must now sit through the whole championship. The nederlandsliedjies category is adjudicated by a separate panel, headed by a chief adjudicator, and advised by an expert, who does not vote, but explains to the other judges the specificities of the repertoire and what they should take into account in their ranking of performances. The chief adjudicator and the adviser have to make sure that judges do not apply criteria to nederlands, based on the rules of “art” music. In addition to that, judges are invited to attend seminars, where they are told about the particularities of the repertoire. On the spot advice and training sessions are far from unnecessary, since many adjudicators, in particular white music students, are not at all familiar with the intricacies of a nederlands interpretation. Some of them occasionally express the perplexity they feel when they have to evaluate and mark the rendition of a form of choral singing which is new to them, and is based on rules which are markedly different from those they have been taught. One of the students, who is an experienced choir conductor,
confessed: “When I first heard a *nederlandslied*, I was very very excited because I
did not know that it existed […] I am, for example, not allowed to deduct marks
for what my conductors have always called ‘scooping’, or approaching the note
from below.”

Juries contested

Despite efforts to train the adjudicators and to give them advice regarding the most
important aspects of a *nederlands* interpretation, and even though information
about the criteria used to assess the choirs is circulated among captains, coaches
and singers, many participants still consider that a certain fuzziness continues
to enshroud the rules they are supposed to follow. Abduraghman Morris, for
instance, thinks that *nederlandsliedjies* are more and more appraised according
to musical criteria conceived for combine choruses and borrowed from European
“classical” music. In his view, *nederlands* are different:

> Yeah it’s something you sing from inside, you sing from your heart. If you do a combine chorus you are very restricted you
don’t sing too loud, you don’t sing too soft, sometimes you
.must sing fast, sometimes you sing slow, you’ve got movement,
you’ve got crescendo, you’ve got decrescendo, you’ve got all
of those things, that is combine chorus. You are controlled,
*Nederlands* is no control. Nederlands you sing from your heart
and you sing loud, you actually express yourself and that
unfortunately with some of the adjudicators is not taken in
the way that they should […] Now lot of people feels like that
the *nederlands* shouldn’t be judged on the same criteria of the
combine chorus, right?

Arguments about the judges’ decisions and the comments they write on
adjudication reports are recurrent. After the Tulips’ interpretation of “*Treade
Jongsman*”, Anwar Gambeno commented on a judge’s remark, underlining that,
since there are many variants of the same song, a particular individual, even a
judge, does not necessarily know them all, and should not blame a choir for
singing a variant he ignores:

> He says that that *kop* belongs to another *ned* but this other *ned*
is totally different to what he is talking about. But now it was
maybe changed two generations before us, so our forefathers
gave it down to us the way we know it now. But now he goes
into the original roots and he finds that no, no, no that is not the
way he was taught. Now different areas sung the nederlandslieds differently, so he was most probably taught by somebody in Salt River, who sang the kop that way. And other people was taught like “Maan” [coach of the nederlandsliedjies for the Tulips] was taught from somebody in Cape Town who sang the kop that way, in District Six. But now if I go to another guy in Claremont who is also a top man in ned, he will teach it to me in a different way. You see when things get spread by word of mouth, oral tradition, it will always differ.\(^5\)

Changes due to oral transmission and the diversity of variants peculiar to different parts of Cape Town make judgements on their legitimacy and the quality of their execution delicate and the quality of their execution delicate and induce coaches to be careful; they sometimes try to get “clearance” beforehand from the judges regarding the version they intend to sing in competition. Rules are less rigid in the SAK, and also it seems in the KTDMCB. After a choir has performed in a SAK competition, the judge issues a written report to explain the mark he has given them. In 2008, after the Woodstock Royals sang “Ek Hep Daar Op Diese Dag”, Ismail Morris commented: “A very good opening. Good tempo for this song. Good band. Diction good. Excellent karienkels. Choir and lead singer connect beautifully. Good harmony, a very good ending.”\(^6\) What transpires from this report, and from many others we have been able to look at, is the subjectivity of the judges’ appreciation. The boards attempt to circumvent the problem by appointing several judges and providing them with an expert, which oftentimes makes it difficult to assemble a jury. The pressures which the adjudicators have to face are an additional factor. Ismail Morris, who for many years adjudicated the nederlandsliedjies in the SAK competitions, underlines the reluctance expressed by people who are asked to judge Malay Choirs competitions: “You see they can’t find the right people because the people are a bit worried; because they get abuses from the audience, because they get threatening letters and threatening phone calls, it’s out of hand you know.”\(^7\)

Some choirs also hunt down “forgotten” songs, which judges are not likely to know, in order to sound more original and have the originality of the song taken into account, more than the quality of its interpretations. The choice of a particular song is sometimes surrounded by secrecy, and family and friends are used to obtain “rare” nederlands from people knowledgeable about the repertoire. Ismail Leeman explains:

Certain choirs don’t know liedjies and certain choirs know a lot so when they would sing a liedjie they would now prefer to sing an uncommon liedjie, and to keep it secret until the day they’re gonna do the competition. It would stay amongst either you or the choir and you will never distribute it amongst friends […]

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Certain choirs don’t know liedjies and certain choirs know a lot so when they would sing a liedjie they would now prefer to sing an uncommon liedjie, and to keep it secret until the day they’re gonna do the competition. It would stay amongst either you or the choir and you will never distribute it amongst friends […]
They are singing maybe thirty to fifty different liedjies each year and you need to wait three years before doing it again. But it’s like a repetition of the same thing which is not really the problem, the tradition is there. But there were only three or maybe five choirs out of the lot who will come with a special blend and, unfortunately, they are not ready to help any other choir. So you’ll come to the same opinion I would actually prefer to keep my liedjie and for fifty years I will take a new one because I need to win and be special. I am not contributing to the tradition, I’m useless in this tradition, I might be useful in my choir but I’m not doing great things into the community and that is the main point.  

It is the meaning of “tradition” that is, once more, at stake in this instance. The behaviour of choirs trying to exhume forgotten songs is motivated by the belief that by presenting “old” songs they will benefit from a favourable bias because they will appear as carriers of the “tradition”. However, this conception is countered by those who argue that the priority is to allow the repertoire to evolve, and to improve the quality of the singing. Discussions about nederlandsliedjies have been dominated for several years now by a tension between “heritagisation” and revitalisation, which overflows the banks of music and generates symbolic meanings about coloured identity and South African society at large.

The criteria of a “good” interpretation

In the CMCB, rules governing the assessment of choirs are adopted during meetings in which the leaders of the board, experts and representatives of the choirs participate. As a result, they enjoy strong legitimacy, which does not prevent their being hotly discussed. They have not radically changed over the past thirty years, but have been slightly adjusted at times. The most important modifications were the introduction of a new criterion, “balancing” (relationship between the voices within the pak) in 2004 and the increase of the percentage attributed to the voorsinger, which went from 10% to 15% in 2013, then from 15% to 20% in 2015.

The 2007 seminar

During the 2007 seminar organised by the CMCB, adjudicators were first warned: “The privilege of adjudicating is a sacred trust and a great responsibility.” Their
role was defined as: “Lifting the standard by communicating clearly, honestly, tactfully, and professionally”; to this end, they were requested to “be committed to the development of the sport [...]” and “provide objectivity”. In short, they must adopt a “Triple C approach”:

- **COMPLIMENT**
- Provide CRITICISM
- Conclude with COURSE OF ACTION to inspire choirs to improve.

Adjudicators have to form their opinion only from “what is presented during those few minutes choir is on stage” and “cannot evaluate a choir based on previous renditions or reputation, whether good or bad”.

Coaches were advised to take heed of the following advice regarding the main criteria:

- tempo: some *liedere* to be sung within a specific tempo range and must suit the lied; tempo must be maintained throughout;
- rhythm: don’t change the rhythm;
- music: no disparity between musicians;
- harmony: can be enhanced by singing the correct key; other aspects of harmonising to consider, such as: intonation & blending to polish harmony part; you need to back off (eliminate) as much vibrato as possible; establish if you want to sing 2, 3 or 4 part harmony; ascertain who sings the melody of the lied (on occasion, baritone can also carry melody);
- the lead singer: don’t sing a lied out of your range; breathing is important; sing in your own voice (so that you are not confused with the choir); the clear voice is more pleasant to listen to; you only have so many notes available to put your parts into to follow the beat, too many “*karienkels*” which the notes/tempo would allow.9

The 2015 guidelines

In order to give more legitimacy to the juries’ decisions, the CMCB instituted in 2015 a “Nederlands Committee”. This body is composed of six or seven experts coming from choirs affiliated to the Board and is in charge of drawing criteria for the adjudicators; usually two of its members sit with the judges and advise them on the quality of *nederlands* interpretations. The decision to create this new committee has been prompted by changes in the composition of the jury and the fact that some new judges were not extremely knowledgeable about *nederlandsliedjes*. For the same reason, new guidelines for coaches, singers and adjudicators were issued:
**The meanings of blending**

*Nederlands criteria, CMCB, 2015*¹⁰

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| 1 | Lead singer | 20% | (a) Does the Lead Singer (LS) sing in tune (on the note)?  
(b) How is the LS’s example of karienkel singing?  
(c) Does the LS’s aangee connect with the choir? There should be no pause or breath before the choir starts to sing the skondeer, except in the case of a wip-draai or chorus line.  
(d) Can the LS handle the key and carry the melody throughout the lied?  
(e) Is the LS’s breathing at the right place? (normal rules of phrasing)  
(f) Is the LS’s voice placing of his melodic line in the right place? Does he decorate the melodic line, and not simply duplicate the first tenor?  
(g) Is the LS’s balance with the choir correct? Not too overpowering?  
(h) Note: the introduction line of the LS is allowed by means of the riffling¹¹ of the music. |
| 2 | Choral Ensemble | 50% | The following four categories form part of this section: |
| 2.1 | Harmony | 15% |   |
| 2.2 | Overall Intonation | 15% | (a) Does the choir sing in tune?  
(b) Does the key of the song suit the choir? |
| 2.3 | Variation | 10% | Is there a degree of variation evident in the song?  
Note: Echo or repeat singing is not allowed in the body of the lied, only at the end or “langdraai” of the song, and not too long. |
| 2.4 | Balancing | 10% | (a) Do the choir voices harmonise well?  
(b) Is the choir balanced — not one individual or voice group overpowering the other? |
| 3 | Music | 10% | (a) Are the instruments in tune, individually, and with each other?  
(b) Do the musicians change chords in sync with each other?  
(c) Is the transition of modulation between the ensemble and the choir correct?  
(d) Is the rhythm and tempo consistent throughout the lied, especially before or after a wip-draai or chorus line?  
(e) Does the pace or tempo of the music do justice to the beauty of the lied?  
(f) Does the quality of the instrumental accompaniment compliment the performance?  
(g) The piano is allowed in the accompaniment, in a secondary capacity, not in the introduction.  
(h) If no banjo is used, marks will be deducted from this category. |
|                  | 10% | (a)  Is the overall tone quality of the choir robust, harmonious and full, not harsh or “shouted”?  
|                  |     | (b)  Is there a balance between the LS and the choir? (the choir should not overpower the LS) |
| 5. General       | 10% | (a)  Does the general presentation adhere to the accepted norm of the Nederlands lied as presented by the choir?  
| Presentation     |     | (b)  Was the lied successfully executed? |

These guidelines clearly complement recommendations made at the 2007 seminar and do not markedly diverge from them; the only important change concerns the percentage allotted to the lead singer. Stresses remain on the good execution of *karienkeis* and *aangee*, precise intonation and cohesion, voice balance and nice harmonies. It is interesting to note that the new guidelines demand of the choirs both “robust and full” tone quality and underline that it should not be “harsh or shouted”: an association of qualities that sounds like a compromise attempting to satisfy both the supporters of tradition and those of modernisation.

Adjudication reports

At the end of each performance, judges have to compile adjudication reports. They give a mark for each of the criteria defined by the Board and add commentaries which may, depending on the year, bear on the overall performance or on specific criteria. The total amounts to a score out of 100. A comparison of forms used in the 2007, 2013 and 2015 Cape Malay Choir Board *nederlands* competitions shows that there have been a few changes.

In 2007, 2011 and 2013, “Rhythm/Tempo” constituted one criterion counting for 10%, whereas in 2015 this was amalgamated into a larger “Music” section, the percentage of which has remained 10%. “Lead Singer” came third in 2007 and 2011, after “Rhythm/Tempo” and “Music”, and counted for 10% in 2007 and 2011. This was brought up to 15% in 2013, and 20% in 2015; and now occupies the first position on the sheet. In 2007 and 2011, “Variation” was worth 15%; this was decreased to 10% in 2013 and did not change in 2015. In contrast, “Harmony” increased from 10% in 2007, to 15% in 2011. “Overall Intonation” has lost its weighting, from 20% in 2007 down to 15% since 2011. “Balancing” counted for 15% in the 2011 reports, but diminished to 10% in 2013 and 2015. Finally, in 2007 the two separate categories, “General Presentation” and “Outstanding Performance”, were respectively worth 10% and 15%; in 2011, they appeared fused and were together awarded 10%, then “Outstanding Performance” disappeared and “General Presentation” was given a weighting of 15% in 2013, and then 10% in 2015.
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CMCB criteria and their weighting

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The most salient modification highlighted by this comparison is the promotion of the lead singer, both in terms of the position he occupies on the form and of his role in securing a good mark for his choir. This clearly signals that his style of singing, in particular his execution of *karienkel* and *aangees*, forms an essential part of what is considered a good rendition of a *nederlands*. This is all the more important, given the fact that he embodies “tradition” and displays an art which cannot be learned and is considered an innate talent: the gift of *karienkeling*. His weight is, however, counterbalanced by the emphasis put on the polyphonic organisation of the *pak*: if “Harmony”, “Variation”, “Balancing” and “Tone Quality of the Choir” are considered together, they amount to 45% of the marks in 2015, whereas “Harmony” and “Variation” alternated between 25% and 30% between 2007 and 2013. One may presume that the introduction of the “Tone Quality of the Choir”
criterion and the number of points the three categories taken together allow the choirs to gain, reflect and endorse the increasing sophistication of the polyphonic organisation of the voices. Furthermore, the small diminution of the percentage allocated to “Overall Intonation” and “General Presentation” testifies to a general improvement of the choirs in terms of intonation, dress and behaviour on stage.

Commentaries written down on the 2007 and 2011 adjudication reports dealt with the choir’s interpretation in general. From 2013 on, the forms gave the judges the possibility to formulate specific remarks regarding each of the criteria. In 2011, they dealt mostly with the cohesion (“consistency”, “togetherness”) and steadiness of the choir, the quality of the harmonies (“clarity of harmony”, “good balance in variation and harmony”) and the balance of voices within the pak. The choice of tempo and its good adaptation to the melody, the relationship between the soloist and the pak (“lead singer and choir must complement each other”), the entertainment quality of the performance (“good performance and very entertaining”) were also sometimes highlighted. When they focused on the voorsinger, judges occasionally questioned the adaptation of the melody to his voice range; they praised fluid and relax phrasing and good voice timbres, noted when breathing was clumsy and deplored poor intonation and lack of microphone control. Comments accompanying the 82.75 % awarded to the Young Men, who won the nederlands Top 8 competition in 2011, gave a fair idea of what is expected of a good choir: “Lead singer was very relaxed, and has a very good tone. Breathing of the lead singer was very good. Choir is well balanced, and managed to keep their posture throughout the lied. Lead singer and choir worked together well from the start of the lied to the very end. A pleasure to the ear.”

Comments on the choirs’ performances were obviously inspired by recommendations made during the 2007 seminar. The 2013 adjudication reports are more detailed, since they provided space for specific comments on each of the criteria. They, again, insist on the steadiness of rhythm and tempo, which should not be hurried (“relaxed pace, not rushed”). Instrumentalists must show regularity and style in their accompaniment (“supportive ensemble”, “strong support”, “effective accompaniment”, “statige ondersteuning” [elegant accompaniment]); the orchestral scores should not be too close-knit (“complex structure”, “interesting harmonies”/“the texture of the orchestration is a bit too dense”). Sometimes the quality of the strings, especially of the banjo and the mandolin, is underlined (“interesting added sixths in banjo”). The soloist is first expected to deliver good karienkels (“karienkels finely articulated”, “karienkels have a spiritual quality to them”, “karienkels fold beautifully into one another”, “karienkels met groot gemak gesing” [karienkels sung with great easiness], “melodically and rhythmically complex karienkels”, “beware of over-karienkelling”); the judges also pay attention to the precision and smoothness of the soloist’s aangees and to the characteristics of his voice (“lovely, clear and
expressive voice”, “spiritual”, “exceptionally bright tone”, “baie goeie tegnik” [very good technique], “moving performance”). The voorsinger must fulfil his responsibilities as lead singer without hesitation; a judge, for instance, advised the Calypsos’ voorsinger: “Sing met meer selfvertroue, jy klink bietjie versigtig” [Sing with more self-confidence, you sound a bit cautious]. Harmonies must be solid (“skondeer mostly solid”), bring momentum to the interpretation (“die koor het mooi momentum gekry” [the choir has got a beautiful momentum]), yet sound natural (“choir is rehearsed to the point of becoming distracted and ploughing on regardless”). The interpretation can be made more interesting by nice variations (“complexities of harmonies and rhythmic changes very effective”) and precisely executed wipdraais (“wipdraai a capella successful, strong”, “wipdraai cleverly brought song back to original time”, “lovely wipdraai in 6/8”). Judges dislike forced tones, rough sounds, vociferous singing: the choir must be careful not to overshadow the lead singer. Comments entered in the “General Presentation” section delineate a somewhat fuzzy interpretation model, which probably indicates hesitation on the part of some judges, if not differences of appreciation. They praise confidence; a robust, but not forced, sound; a correct and becoming (“netjiese”) interpretation, well-rehearsed but not over-practised. Everything must aim at producing an elegant interpretation (“staatige vertolking”), a performance which is both pleasurable (“genotvolle uitvoering”) and moving (“very moving performance”, “very intensely, expressively performed”). A good illustration of the judges’ vacillations is given by the final comment made on the Jonge Studente’s nederlands in 2013: “This Nederlands is extremely refined — perhaps up to the point of losing some of the traditional musical DNA that one associates with the form. A most enjoyable performance. Well done!”

However imprecise they may be, these commentaries bear heavily on the styles of interpretation which the choirs choose to adopt in competition. A coach must see to it that his singers conform as much as possible to the board’s criteria and the judges’ expectations. As one coach put it: “If you sing something that pulls the things from the judges and the people, then you’ve got a winner.” That does not preclude the fact that several coaches and aficionados complain that adjudicators tend to assess nederlandsliedjes as they would combine choruses and ask of the choirs a polyphonic refinement modelled on Western, and especially Welsh, choirs.

Reactions to changes in the choirs’ harmonies

Most Malay Choirs now sing, as do European choirs, in three- or four-part harmony, an evolution which started with the interpretation of combine choruses, a repertoire sung by the whole choir, without a soloist, backed by the
same instrumental ensemble as the *nederlands*. Abduraghman Morris explained how he composes a “combine”, a method followed by most of the coaches we interviewed:

I would listen to a song, for example, if you listen to one in the car then I would memorise [singing] that starts for a combine chorus. So I would take that song and I’ll get a key on the guitar let’s try G it doesn’t work let’s try A, let’s try C, right? [singing] that’s the melody, right? Second tenor that’s what you sing and I say you guys are first tenors and you’ll say [singing higher] you’ll get yours, and then the bass will go [singing] and that’s what you would do. Everybody will listen to the other guys singing and fit your voice in.\(^{17}\)

A few years later, he specified:

Especially now with the internet, I go on the sites of like the Welsh choirs or the international choirs and I listen to pieces that they sing and then I try and get hold of the music that they sing. I get hold of the music and I have somebody to play out all the different voices’ notes and then I write a story judging on the mood of the song and I write all the words and then I put it up on a board and I actually physically teach it to the guys to the different various group voices.\(^{18}\)

The composition process adopted by most combine chorus composers is similar to the one used for *moppies*.\(^{19}\) Some choirs even adapt pieces written by Western “classical” composers and add Afrikaans lyrics. The “Hebrew slaves’ Chorus” from Giuseppe Verdi’s *Nabucco* has been used as a combine, and so has a four-part arrangement of “Nessum Dorma” from Giacomo Puccini’s *Turandot*. Choirs able to give a good rendition of such reworking of “art music’s” famous arias or choruses have been rewarded. This has created a trend which Adburaghman Morris, along with a great number of his colleagues, follows. However, he resents the fact that a small number of very wealthy choirs can afford to hire academically trained coaches:

In my case, I’ve got no formal musical training but for the last five years we have been winning combine chorus and *nederlands*, and we are competing with the people who have got the music degree and our choir is biting them you know? Because again it comes down to our type of competition, you know, you can’t just take a song and sing it like that, it’s got to have that flavour, that malay flavour and that you can only put in by somebody who is in my position. I am not praising myself but somebody
who comes from the roots, who knows what the people like, who knows what the adjudicators like […] When they started doing those types of combine they get music sheets with all your different voices and then they said all right but if they’ve four voices in a combine, first tenor, second tenor, baritone, bass why are we using three voices in the *nederlands*? Surely we could use four voices in the *nederlands*. And then we found a better harmony point, now more choirs are starting to do it. But of the three choirs that I teach, it’s only the Young Men who do the *nederlands* in four-part harmony. Tulips and the other choir that I teach, they haven’t got […] they are not technically at that level yet.20

As a matter of fact, a baritone voice is now frequently added as a fourth part in *nederlands* harmonies. Abduraghman Morris’s ambivalence is very telling about the attitude of many coaches regarding the increasing sophistication of the polyphony and the role formally trained coaches and arrangers now play in some choirs. On the one hand, he seems quite critical of innovations brought into *nederlands* singing; yet, on the other, he follows suit. The apparent contradiction in his statements is solved by his insistence on rooting every innovation in the “community”, on giving them a special flavour. This amounts to disqualifying (mostly) white musicians — because, in spite of their knowledge and skills, white musicians cannot master the idiosyncrasies of coloured and malay aesthetics — and enhancing aspects that appear to be part of coloured identity. Abduraghman Morris is keen on acquiring the virtuosity of Western choirs, but intends to use it to improve an art which is intrinsically part of coloured or malay culture and evinces at the same time a long-standing tradition, a specific creativity and a capacity to participate in modernising movements.

The “traditionalists” still object to the evolution of *nederlands*, because it seems to break with a “tradition” coming from spontaneously bursting into wedding songs, in full throat and throttle, without any concern for harmonic organisation. Yet, if one listens to recordings made over the past twenty or twenty-five years, the magnitude of the changes does not seem so great. There has been a gradual shift towards increasing the number of vocal parts in the polyphony and arranging their relationships more carefully. But choirs have abandoned singing in full throat and adopted a distribution of voices according to their range a long time ago. However, mutations that have recently taken place, promoted by choirs such as the Jonge Studente, are experienced as a disruption: the increasing number of choirs interpreting *nederlands* as combine choruses has caused “a bit of consternation in the community”21 and discussions on “tradition” and “modernisation” have become more and more heated among coaches, singers and aficionados.
Conceptions of blending

Competitions strongly influence aesthetic conceptions in paradoxical ways. Judges who are perceived (including sometimes by themselves) as ignorant of the “culture” apply criteria defined and adopted by representatives of the “community”. In spite of the criticisms their decisions spark, their aesthetic orientations are accepted and adopted by the coaches, because they are formally legitimate (they are supported by the authority of the CMCB) and because coaches assume that by following them they stand a greater chance of being rewarded in the next competition. These paradoxes confirm that the evaluation of nederlands (of the repertoire and of its performance styles) is grounded on a plural aesthetic, which accommodates different value systems. These value systems do not necessarily conflict with each other, but commingle and eventually lead to judgements which, whatever hesitations and ambivalences may underlie them, result in rankings. Adjudication of the performance of a repertoire, whose beauty is assumed to be the result of blending, is therefore approached from mixed points of view. According to Abduraghman Morris:

The adjudication today is a mix. There is a lot of western influence in the musical background. In the early years, we have the older experienced lead singers from yesterday, who sang in their youth, they used to sit in adjudication of the item. So, what have happened is they have become less, and with the advent of the choral competition, the westernised adjudicators were sorted out to come and sit in adjudication of the choirs, and they automatically applied a lot of the western musical criteria to what we do. And I think the big swing or the big change away from the cultural maintenance aspect of the lied is the advent of the competitions, because every choir is looking for the edge, to be better than the next one.22

Musical blending is at the source of the repertoire’s tradition and of its “sacred” character. It symbolically evokes social and cultural mixing, an issue that runs through the history of South Africa, especially with regard to the situation of people classified coloured. An echo of the link between musical blending and cultural mixing can be heard in recent discussions around nederlandsliedjies.

Aesthetics under debate

Groups of connoisseurs created a Facebook Forum (Malay Choirs Open Group) where they exchanged views about trends in nederlands performance. We have
looked at comments posted during and after the 2013 competitions and tried to identify the main arguments introduced in the discussion. At first glance, they look like a new version of the quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns, pitting partisans of tradition against supporters of modernisation. “Traditionalists” consider that judgements passed during the CMCB competitions endanger the “community’s culture”. Adam Samodien, who was for many years chairperson of the SAK, explains their point of view: “We got a rough time trying to maintain this culture, because when it comes to competitions, the adjudicators, they don’t know our culture […] it’s a heavy task for us, we must then either convert to the Welsh Choir type of singing, which means we have to move away from our culture, and our heritage is so very important to keep it in possession or…”.

In other words, singers should follow in the footsteps of their forefathers and continue singing nederlands like djiekers or gajjats, keeping the spirit of spontaneous harmonies and natural voices. One participant in the Facebook Forum wondered: “Why is it that in some teams, the pak skondeer like they singing a combine? What happened to that raw and powerful way the pak sang that was filled with so much emotion it would give you goosebumps.”

Judges are made responsible for a lamented evolution: “That’s the thing the judges don’t need to knw the culture. They just need to knw the choral part. Makes u think that maybe its not about our culture anymore […] So that’s the question is our culture worth a first prize?”

The uniqueness of nederlands, the jewel of the “culture” is at risk because current transformations amount to a process of Westernisation, and if it goes on: “So soon we be singing a Welsh Nederlands.”

Other, less conservative, coaches share the opinion that judges are adulteration mongers. Ahmed Ismail, chairperson of a choir who is at the forefront of the movement to “improve” the nederlandsliedjies, emphasises that choirs participate in competitions in the hope of winning a prize, and that: “If you do not sing according to the criteria, you will not win a trophy.” He considers that judges know their business because they have academic qualifications. More important, he thinks that traditional ways of singing inherited from weddings were practised by people who were workers and sailors, who lacked musicality. Today, it is imperative to improve techniques and styles; this is the reason why he hired Kurt Haupt, the University of Cape Town choir conductor, to transform the collective singing of the choir:

Kurt [Haupt] has, for the last four years, put so much innovation into our nederlands, innovation in the sense that we still keep to the structures, we still keep to the traditional sides of the nederlands, but when it comes to harmonies, that is where we differ from other choirs, and we have been very very successful for the last three years now from the adjudication point of view, because of the harmonies that we do.
Shamiel Domingo, to a certain extent, concurs with Ahmed Ismail: “We’ve got to enhance our singing, there is not one choir today, especially in the nederlands, that sounds like a Welsh Choir or a church choir, or any choir, they’re still traditional nederlands, the only difference is they pronounce the words better and nicer than these choirs who want to go according THEIR idea of traditional singing […] Today the singing is more beautiful than 30 years ago.”33 An opinion that can also be read on the Facebook Malay Choirs Open Group: “I just think that we musnt think too deeply on this in terms of ‘losing tradition’ but more like enhancing a well preserved item.”34

Many coaches adopt a similar middle-of-the-road position. They do want to win prizes, but believe that it is possible to improve the quality of singing without adulterating the tradition. A good example of this approach is given by the Young Men, who have been successful in recent competitions. Adnaan Morris, who used to coach them, considered that:

> It is a very much good to the ear, to hear it. It is a good thing I think, the bringing out of the harmonies, and the balancing and the movement of the lied, I think it is a good thing. But the only thing is we’ve just got to be careful, because we regard the nederlands as a traditional item, it’s a traditional song, and we’ve got to keep the tradition and the heritage, try to keep it as pure as possible. Some choirs have taken a further step now by what is called intersinging of voices, syncopation and all this, that is something that is being frowned on by the sort of traditionalist.”35 The Young Men sing elaborate harmonies, but refrain from introducing wipdraais and stopdraais in songs which did not originally include them. They pay particular attention to maintaining the structure of the songs they interpret, so that their melodies can be clearly heard and their “mood” well preserved:

> The enhancement from our side will purely be on the choral aspect of it, with the different voices, the harmonising, the blending of the voices.”36

Several participants in the Facebook Malay Choirs Open Group agree: “We must innovate and bring freshness but not at the expense of our tradition.ill say this again […] we are who we are bcoz of our uniqueness.dnt let us become ordinary.”37 This uniqueness, of the nederlands, of the tradition, of the culture, of the coloureds, must be preserved and passed on to the next generations. It manifests a capacity to appropriate, blend and create from blending. It tells of a history that goes back several centuries and has been characterised by tribulations and suffering, which nurtured adaptation and innovation. Most choirs make a deliberate effort to recruit young, sometimes very young, singers. They are taught not only to sing, but also to know their history as encapsulated in the tradition
inherited from the “ancestors”. They are featured in the Junior Solo competition and, when they grow up to be talented young adults, can become voorsingers. This was the case of Ismail, then Mustapha Adams with the Tulips.

Aesthetics, social values and identity

In his introduction to the works of linguist and semiologist, Jean Molino, musicologist Jean-Jacques Nattiez suggested that: “The aesthetical judgement is a symbolic form about a symbolic form” (Nattiez 2009: 59). This assertion takes a particular meaning when associated with Jean Molino’s insistence on the anthropological foundations of the aesthetic experience (Molino 2009: 343). From this perspective, it is possible to approach debates on nederlandsliedjies as dealing not only with a musical repertoire and the ways it is interpreted, but also with the social context in which this repertoire is performed. The example of North-American pow-wows invites us to look at musical competitions as arenas of cultural struggles, where the status of communal values is at stake: Which ones should be retained from the past? Which ones should be brought forward in the present time to symbolically define the community? (Scales 2007: 23). Discussions about nederlands, a “unique and sacred tradition”, emblematic of a “culture” would then appear as a symbolic means to deliberate on possible configurations and reconfigurations of coloured identity. The debate may sound like a particular instance of the recurring opposition between tradition and modernity, in which both parties nevertheless agree on the impossibility of altering the characteristics of the solo part; that is, of the one aspect of the nederlands which is construed as representing the Eastern origins of both the songs and the people who sing them. Karienkels are “untouchable”; therefore, the dispute focuses on the pak.

The debate centres around stagnation as opposed to progress, or, in other words, tradition as opposed to adulteration. Welsh choirs are used as a standard against which is appreciated the extent of progress/adulteration. They occupy a particular place in South Africa’s musical landscape and can be perceived from different perspectives. They belong to the West, both from the geographical and the musical points of view; their members are white and male; and their musicality is universally celebrated. Yet, they are neither English nor Dutch; they embody a form of cultural autonomy within the United Kingdom and perhaps recall the memory of a colonial conquest. Welsh choirs have a very long history and are said to have participated in choral competitions (eisteddfodau) since the 12th century. These characteristics can arouse contrasting reactions among coloured people. Welsh choirs can be seen in a positive light because they provide a model for excellence and come from a history of oppression and contempt, but can also be viewed in a negative light because they are white and Western, and a carrier of pernicious influences. However, this opposition should be seen, not as
an unsolvable antagonism, but as the manifestation of a plurality of coexisting perceptions. French sociologist Nathalie Heinich contends that one of the attributes of Art is to reveal “the plurality of value systems which coexist not only in a single society, but also within the same individuals” (Heinich 1998: 42). The nederlands debate does not categorically oppose tradition and modernity. It deals symbolically with the legacy of the colonial situation, the particular oppression that was imposed on scheduled categories of people and the various possible ways to cope with these experiences in post-apartheid South Africa. It highlights the uncertain status of blending and mixing in contemporary South African society and questions the place and function of appropriation in creative processes, which contribute to identity configuring.

Identity and politics in the Western Cape

The permanence of the name “coloured” in the 20th century covered social transformations that changed a classificatory category imposed by fanatics of a racial hierarchisation into a group, within which emerged multiple feelings of belonging (Erasmus 2001; Martin 2001). The entity that became a group remained nevertheless heterogeneous, criss-crossed by somatic, religious, socio-economic, geographical and political differences. Various conceptions of coloured identity took shape in the cauldron of coloured experiences. Some of them radically rejected the label coloured; others accepted it because it was tied to (very) limited privileges granted by the government. Many eventually adopted it, only to subvert the signification that the government ascribed to it. Repertoires sung by Klopse and Malay Choirs were used, consciously or not, for this purpose (Martin 1999) because their very existence contradicted the stereotypes of which coloured persons were the victim: people without history or culture, a mere “appendage” to the whites. The “new” South Africa changed coloured people’s situation in several respects: all segregation laws were abolished and policies of “positive discrimination” were implemented to promote “previously disadvantaged” people. This benefitted many individuals, who accessed high positions in the civil service or in private corporations, were able to launch their own businesses, and got wealthier; others made a career in politics and became MPs, national ministers and provincial prime ministers. Some of those whose families had been forcibly removed managed to come back and resettle in the neighbourhoods where they or their parents used to live; others bought or rented houses in areas formerly reserved for whites. They registered their children in good schools (often former Model C schools) and prestigious universities. However, for the majority, nothing much has changed: the poor continue to be condemned to living in townships rife with violence, to sending their children to mediocre schools and to enduring unemployment.
New realities lived by coloured people, and their perceptions — often summed up in the frequently heard phrase: “Yesterday we were not white enough, today we are not black enough” (Adhikari 2005) — had political implications. Coloured citizens are in a majority in the Western Cape; since 1994 their votes have decided who governs the City of Cape Town and the Western Cape Province. In 1994, many coloured voters were anxious and did not know what to expect; they did not feel the African National Congress (ANC) would take care of their problems and fell victim to crude National Party (NP) propaganda. They contributed to the NP’s victory in the City and the Province. Yet, interviews conducted in 1994 made it clear that they had no real sympathy for the inventors and perpetrators of apartheid, but were instead moved by the idea that: “Better the devil we know than the one we don’t.”

In subsequent elections, coloured voters were reassured and gave the ANC a plurality, but they were eventually disappointed by policies they perceived as benefitting mostly black Africans. Consequently, they shifted their support to the Democratic Alliance (DA), possibly encouraged by the merger of the Independent Democrats (ID) with the DA. The Western Cape Province was successively governed by National Party or New National Party (NNP) premiers from 1994 to 2004, then by ANC premiers from 2004 to 2008, then by Helen Zille, the DA’s leader. The City of Cape Town was headed by an NP/NNP mayor from 1994 to 1996, then by ANC mayors from 1996 to 2000 and finally by NNP and DA mayors since 2006.

The steady decline in voters’ support for the ANC during the first decade of the 2000s, compounded by internal tensions within the ANC, often interpreted as an antagonism between an “Africanist” faction and a “coloured” one, resulted in the quite widespread perception among the ANC’s national leaders that coloured citizens of the Western Cape are disloyal and aligned with whites.

Misunderstandings between the ANC leadership and many coloured citizens in the Western Cape started as soon as the party was unbanned and began reorganising its internal structures. The political conditions of the times led the ANC to prioritise the unity of formerly segregated people, a unity that was necessarily to be realised under the aegis of the ANC. As a consequence, every organisation that had been involved in the struggle against apartheid was supposed to join the ANC. In the Western Cape, a major consequence was that the United Democratic Front (UDF) was invited to dissolve itself. Launched on 20 August 1983, the UDF was an umbrella organisation accommodating all kinds of movements, bound by their common will to fight for a democratic and non-racial South Africa. It acted as a relay for the outlawed ANC. The UDF strove to “knit together local struggles in one stream”, it created “a sense of awe” and succeeded in pushing back “the frontiers of what was politically possible” (Seekings 2000: 93, 22, 119). It was extremely popular, in particular among coloured youth.

The UDF was banned in 1988, but eventually decided to “unban” itself in 1989. After the ANC was legalised again in 1990, there were heated discussions,
especially in the Western Cape, as to whether the UDF should be maintained or dissolved. It was eventually resolved to dismantle it in August 1991, much to the chagrin of many activists who thought that it could have continued to play an important role, beside and in support of the ANC (Seekings 2000). The UDF embraced differences and its activists came from all walks of life and every group; it was spearheaded by a coloured minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, Allan Boesak, and Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The UDF managed to create synergy between people from various linguistic, religious and cultural backgrounds. The return to — as a matter of fact for many of them the adhesion to — the ANC was not satisfactory; they felt they had to conform to a mould that was too rigid. Large numbers of former anti-apartheid activists distanced themselves from post-1994 politics; they invested their energies in their professional activities or in non-governmental organisations. Between 1999 and 2009, some activists stopped voting for ANC candidates, abstained or supported other parties: the ID, the Congress of the People (COPE) and even the DA.

Citizens who resented apartheid, but did not fight it head-on, often caught in the net of effective patronage networks put in place by the NP and its local councillors, could not, in these conditions, be seduced by the ANC and elected to support other parties. The 2009 watershed, when the DA gained a majority of votes in the Western Cape Province, was the result of the convergence of disenchantment felt by citizens who had previously supported the ANC and of dissatisfaction caused by ANC policies implemented when its representatives were in power. The impression that the ANC did not care for diversity and did not, in particular, take into account the specificities of coloured experiences became widespread and was probably reinforced by the style of Jacob Zuma, who was elected national president in 2009. Abubakar Davids, coach of the Continentals, articulated it as follows:

> Then Mandela came along, but you know what? Not much has changed. These places, for people who live here, life is still heavy, heavy, heavy. You know, my people, the so-called coloureds of Cape Town, many of us feel like we are lost in a no-man’s land between Europe and Africa. I’m not sure where we fit in. That’s one reason why the choirs are so important. You must understand, the Malay Choirs is one place where you are always accepted, no matter who you are or what you’ve done.

The “no-man’s land” Abubakar Davids talks about is not only political or socio-economic, it is also cultural and has eventually to do with a certain conception of coloured identity. For historical reasons, the fashioning of black (i.e. African, coloured and Indian) identities was underpinned by an unstable balance between self-assertion, based on fleeting definitions of the home group’s characteristics, especially in the field of culture; transforming appropriation of the culture of
The meanings of blending

The meanings of blending the dominant groups; and identification with overseas’ societies and cultural practices. To human beings who were treated as inferior and confined in separate categories, themselves enclosed in a fortress of a country, music offered privileged channels of symbolic identification. It allowed them to keep in touch with the wider world and to interact with people classified in other categories (Martin 2013). Music stirred up and put in the spotlight creativity which testified to the invention of alternative modernities, construed as non-exclusively white, mixed and allowed the overcoming of alleged differences between human beings.

Jazz provides an excellent example of the intricate relationship between musical creation and the formulation (and reformulations) of black identity (Martin 2008). Even before jazz, as such, emerged in its South African form, blackface minstrel shows were a vehicle for identification with an idealised representation of the United States, and fertilised *Isicathamiya*, *Klopes* and Malay Choirs. The complex and changing links between self-assertion (proped up with permanently reinvented “traditions”), appropriation and borrowing from groups, which could be identified with, naturally engendered the coexistence of several value systems and fostered ambivalence when particular practices had to be assessed, whether in South African society at large or in specific forms of competition. Music’s multiple expressiveness, set in motion by the combination of various parameters (such as melody, harmony, rhythm, etc.) makes it an exceptional field for the concurrence of different value systems. In Malay Choirs’ repertoires, the association of a polyphony of chords with *karienkels* symbolically projects a type of unity composed of heterogeneous elements. Discourses on *nederlandsliedjes* emphasise contrasts between the (more and more) European sound of the *pak* and the supposed Eastern origins of *karienkels*; between the originality of the music and the opacity of the lyrics. These contrasts are (dis)played against the background of the *ghoema* beat, which epitomises the specificity of the music of *Klopes* and Malay Choirs, while it hints at ties with many African and non-African rhythms.

Readjusting the balance in the mix

*Nederlands* sound like a demonstration of the fertility and beauty of blending, which resonates with the history of coloured people. A commonality of differences nurtured by contacts, exchanges and blending appears in today’s South Africa as a singular phenomenon, on which renewed notions of coloured identity could be founded. It contrasts markedly with discourses of homogeneity developed about whites and black Africans. It also leads to reconsidering the notion of heritage, as it is promoted by, among others, the national Department of Arts and Culture.

Disputes about “tradition” are rife in the Malay Choirs world; yet, they have never stopped coaches and singers from introducing changes in their styles of
singing and some argue that evolution is the best way to keep tradition alive. To come back to Nathalie Heinich’s advice on how to conduct sociological studies of the arts, we agree that: “It is decisive to consider seriously the empirical reality of ambivalence as the coexistence of heterogeneous elements that split the subject but cannot be reduced to one dimension, one order of value only — the subject himself being most often unaware of his internal splitting” (Heinich 1998: 51–52).

*Nederlandsliedjies* amalgamate heterogeneous elements. Judges and enthusiasts appraise their qualities and beauty in judgements based on several value systems, in which they often express ambivalence. The criteria defined by CMCB authorities are in part inspired by principles drawn from European “art” music. Judges, however, are required not to evaluate *nederlands* according to the principles of European music. The percentage allocated to the *voorsinger*, who represents what is considered as an unalterable “tradition” rooted in the East, has been regularly increased during the course of the current decade. The main bone of contention between “conservatives” and “modernists” is the harmonisation of the *pak*. Yet, arguments advanced in discussions do not so much oppose the “Orient” and the “Occident”, but are focused on two notions of tradition. One argument refers to practices transmitted by “the forefathers”, which legitimate a form of collective self-assertion grounded in a long history. The other proposes not to reject or annihilate what has been inherited, but to enhance and improve it: to spur progress by continued appropriation, a creative strategy which has always been the engine of musical innovation and displays evidence of a capacity to invent a specific form of modernity.

The study of changes in *nederlands’* interpretation styles and controversies around them show that there is a general agreement on construing the repertoire as an expression of group affirmation: as an evidence of coloured people’s history and cultural creativity. This understanding is particularly acute because many perceive the post-apartheid phase of South African history as an episode when, once again, coloured culture (and the group who has developed it) is threatened. The history of people who were labelled coloured in the 20th century began with slavery and continued through racism, segregation and forced removals. It is a history of survival and resilience, which has demonstrated their ability to cope, in many different ways, with domination and contempt, and to overcome oppression, either by fighting it openly or by apparently bowing to it and subverting it. In today’s South Africa large numbers of coloured people feel marginalised, think that their problems, especially in terms of living conditions and education, are not properly dealt with, and that what they consider their culture is not recognised. These are reasons why new conceptions of coloured identity are brewing. In these conditions, behind considerations of the beauty of *nederlands* and the emotion the songs convey, behind arguments about the various styles of interpretation heard in competitions, a debate is taking place on the possibility of reconfiguring coloured identity in the 21st century. Malay Choirs’ aficionados, coaches and singers,
jointly work, through their very differences, towards readjusting the balance between the components entering in the mix that constitute the *nederlands* and underlie notions of their beauty. In so doing, they contribute in their own way, through discussions about an artistic practice that seems far removed from social and political concerns, to reconfiguring coloured identities.

* * *

Studying *nederlands*, first from a formal point of view, then from a sociological approach, shows how the multidisciplinary analysis of a musical genre considered, both from within and without, as emblematic of a social group (or subgroup) leads to a finer understanding of the subtleties, ambivalences and contradictions which underpin attitudes towards social and political change. Combining musical analysis with an investigation into discourses about stylistic changes appears particularly fecund in this respect. Focusing on music allows us to go deeper than the surface of polemics about electoral behaviour in the Western Cape and to undermine unequivocal notions of what would be one single coloured identity. It suggests that social representations of mixing and blending, in which human beings and their practices are encapsulated, are deeply permeated with hesitations, uncertainties and anxieties. The uneasiness that ensues relates to balances within mixes, as well as to the place and the acceptance of mixing in South Africa and affects coloured citizens — in some instances “splits” them, as Nathalie Heinich would write. It bears upon the very idea of “coloured identity” and confirms that, under that common-sense notion, the reality is made up of diverse conceptions of coloured identity, separated by many nuances, both related and differentiated by protracted experiences. Such an interpretation of the social meaning of a musical practice — embracing a musical genre, a repertoire and styles of interpretation — can only be considered as valid if the music is carefully described, with reference to the concepts and words of its practitioners, for they carry symbols likely to reveal mutations that stir up social groups.\(^{54}\)
Notes

1. A few of them are still recruited from white students coming from the University of Cape Town and the University of Stellenbosch music departments.
2. Shamiel Domingo, former chief adjudicator for the nederlands with the CMCB, interviews with Denis-Constant Martin, Wynberg, 15 October 2011 and 22 May 2013, and Felicia Lesch, then chief adjudicator for the nederlands, interviews with Denis-Constant Martin, Stellenbosch, 7 October 2011 and 15 May 2013. We would like to express a particular gratitude to Mr Domingo who gave us a printed copy of the PowerPoint presentation he made during the nederlandsliedjies seminars he conducted in 2007 and 2009.
3. From the diary of a judge participating in the adjudication of the 2011 competitions; kindly communicated by the judge to Denis-Constant Martin.
6. Copied by Armelle Gaulier from Ismail Morris' report.
8. Ismail Leeman, interview with Armelle Gaulier, Kensington, 5 March 2008.
9. Text abstracted from: CAPE MALAY CHOIR BOARD, Nederlands Seminar, 12 August 2007, PowerPoint printout kindly communicated to Denis-Constant Martin by Shamiel Domingo; although parts of the PowerPoint presentation have been omitted, the original version has been retained in the sentences quoted here.
11. Abduraghman Morris clarifies the meaning of riffling in this context: “In other words, you can [...] before you start singing the music is riffling, and you can sort of [sings a short melodic line] and then the music starts, that is allowed.” Abduraghman Morris, interview with Denis-Constant Martin, Colorado Park, 21 April 2015.
12. We shall focus in the following paragraphs on CMCB adjudication reports; the criteria used by the KTDMCB, are by and large, similar, the most notable exception being the inclusion of a category “stage personality” for the lead singer.
13. This comparison is based on documents Denis-Constant Martin has been able to consult: a few of the 2007 and 2015 reports, and all the adjudication reports filled in by judges during the Top 8 (finals) nederlands competitions in 2011 and 2013.
14. The quotations inserted between brackets have been extracted from the assessment reports we have been able to copy.
19. See Part Three, Moppies: Humour and Survival
23. Malay Choirs Open Group. Available at http://www.facebook.com/pages/Malay-Choirs/100634199977978#!/groups/98713196428/?ref=ts [accessed 17 May 2013]; the idiosyncratic spelling used in some posts has been retained in our quotations.
32. Ahmed Ismail, interview with Denis-Constant Martin, Mitchells Plain, 22 April 2015.
34. Thaabied Dante, Malay Choirs Open Group, 18 February 2013.
36. Ibid.
37. Muneer Burns, Malay Choirs Open Group, 19 February 2013; position approved by: Riedwaan Amlay (11 February 2013), Thaabied Dante (18 February 2013) and Moeniel Jacobs (26 February 2013).
38. See also: Nattiez 1990, Part II, “The semiology of discourse on music”.
39. Most independent Welsh principalities were conquered by Edward the First between 1277 and 1283.
40. The appellation Eistedfodd (plural Eistedfoddau) has been adopted by black intellectuals, white social workers and South African liberal organisations that started choral competitions in 1931. The choirs’ friendly rivalry was seen as encouraging both musical and social improvement (Erlmann 1996: 226). South African Eistedfoddau are still very popular today and welcome choirs belonging to every musical culture of the country (see: “The National Eisteddfod of South Africa”. Available at http://www.eisteddfod.co.za/ [accessed 2 September 2015]).
41. Following historian Gérard Noiriel, “group” is taken here to mean a social entity which is the result of “the subjective identification of the group’s members to the spokespersons and the symbols that give the group its unity” and “category” to designate a human aggregate constituted by “a bureaucratic effort of identity assignation which demands an ‘objective’ identification of individuals classified within abstract entities defined by law” (Noiriel 1997: 31, emphasis in the original; see also Brubaker et al. 2006).
42. The phrase was coined by Jan Christiaan Smuts, Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa from 1919 to 1924, and again from 1939 to 1948 (Lewis 1987: 210). JBM Hertzog, Prime Minister from 1924 to 1939 explained very bluntly that “the coloured” “owes his origin to us and knows no other civilisation than that of the European (although he is sometimes lacking in appreciation of it), and even speaks the language of the European as his mother tongue” (quoted in O’Toole 1973: 97). When apartheid was not far from collapsing, the wife of the then Minister for Internal Affairs and future State President, Marike de Klerk, still contended that: “They [the coloureds] are the left-overs. They are the people that were left after the nations were sorted out. They are the rest. The coloureds were always under the wings of the whites. They have never been on their own […]” (The Sunday Tribune, 5 February 1983; quoted in Adhikari 2005: 13).
43. When talking about whites, and more specifically Afrikaners, working class coloureds usually use the words “Die Boere”, which clearly refer to a history of domination.
44. The Democratic Alliance resulted from the fusion of several liberal and conservative parties. It entered into a short-lived alliance with what remained of the New National Party in 2000–2001, and later absorbed Patricia de Lille’s Independent Democrats in 2010. Its orientations are globally liberal in socio-economic matters and it claims to govern with more efficiency than the ANC. DA leaders point to their running of Cape Town and the Western Cape as an illustration of their claim. The DA was still recently perceived as a “white” party; it underwent a swift transformation under Helen Zille’s direction and young blacks have been rapidly promoted to leadership positions. On 10 May 2015, the DA’s electoral conference elected for the first time a black African as leader of the party. 

45. The Independent Democrats were launched in 2003 by a former Pan Africanist Congress coloured activist, Patricia de Lille, with a platform emphasising the fight against corruption. In 2010 a merger agreement was concluded between the Independent Democrats and the Democratic Alliance. Consequently, the ID did not field candidates in subsequent elections and ID members were included on DA ballots. 

46. Which resulted in Patricia de Lille being elected Mayor of Cape Town. 

47. The New National Party was founded in 1997, when the National Party left the government of national unity; the name change was an attempt to distance the “new” organisation from the party that ran the country during apartheid. It later entered into an alliance with the DA, and was eventually swallowed by the ANC. 


50. Western Cape provincial elections results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ANC %</th>
<th>NP/NNP %</th>
<th>DP/DA %</th>
<th>ID %</th>
<th>COPE %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>33.60%</td>
<td>56.24%</td>
<td>4.18%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>42.62%</td>
<td>34.38%</td>
<td>14.18%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>46.11%</td>
<td>9.44%</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>7.97%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>31.55%</td>
<td>51.46%</td>
<td>4.68%</td>
<td>9.06%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>32.89%</td>
<td>59.38%</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DP: Democratic Party; NNP: New National Party  

51. This summary of Western Cape and Cape Town political history since 1994 is obviously very broad and does not do justice to its complexity; for more detailed descriptions and analysis, see: chapter 7 “Pourquoi devrait-on forcément avoir un leader coloured?: l’ANC du Western Cape, ou une anomalie institutionnelle disputée” (“Why should we necessarily have a coloured leader?: ANC in the Western Cape, a contested institutional anomaly”) in Darracq 2010; also see Cornelissen & Horstmeier 2002; Eldridge & Seekings 1996; Hendriks 2005.

52. In Ross & Malan (2010): 21’56”.

53. These discourses do not totally conceal the reality of differences and mixing, yet they put the emphasis on ideas of exclusive heritages knitting together “Europeans” on the one hand and black Africans on the other. In spite of their attempts at doing justice to all South Africans, whatever the group they were formerly classified in, Presidents Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma seem to have adhered to a conception of South Africa as a juxtaposition of different peoples and cultures. The “I am an African” speech by Thabo Mbeki provides an illuminating example of this conception (Mbeki 1998: 31–32).

54. Georges Balandier introduced the idea of “social revealers” that can be studied to “detect the streams of change under the dead waters of continuity” (Balandier 1971: 86).