Towards the end of the eighties young musicians ushered in a new era. These youngsters started experimenting on new sounds, aligning themselves with international trends, but recognising local styles as well. This style was mainly influenced by house music and rap, but later the township culture (location kulture) and lyrics that express the joys and pains of the youth through street lingo started to dominate this new sound and led to the birth of kwaito music. Kwaito is township music mostly fusing international dance and local rhythms like mbaqanga and township soul. The lyrics are mostly repetitive street slang. It later developed into various brands where only the initiated could tell the difference between kwaito, swaito, kwaihop, kwai-house, kwai-jazz, lesenk, d’gong, guz, etc. The best thing to come out of these developments was the establishment of new independent labels mainly by the musicians themselves. Some of the labels were Kalawa Jazmee, 999 Music, Wolla Music, TS Records, Ghetto Ruff, Bula Records, Bulldawgz and others. The biggest challenge facing these new companies was the distribution of their products. Independent record companies would go out and look for new talent and record it. The big companies like Gallo, EMI, Sony and BMG would take the responsibility of music publishing, copyright administration, marketing, sales and distribution. In the end the major companies would take the biggest chunk of the profits. In 2006 the “new kids on the block” formed the Association of Independent Record Companies (AIRCO) to address these burning issues. Irfaan Gillan became its chairman. This would address the frustration that had driven some artists to sell “from the boot”. On one radio talk show, musician Spencerman Madibane highlighted the seriousness of this problem that threatened to turn musicians into street hawkers. In response to this, an initiative dubbed “Music
“Everywhere” was launched under the leadership of Sello Twala and Mzwakhe Mbuli. The magnitude of the challenge is easily recognisable when big deals are clinched. An example of this occurred during the countdown to the FIFA World Cup in South Africa in 2010 when it was reported that Sony/BMG had already clinched a deal with FIFA to record the official song and the official album of the historical event. Hopefully some local musicians and independent labels will benefit from some spin-offs of the deal or the games. AIRCO is a member of Worldwide Independent Network (WIN), which was established in January 2006 at MIDEM (the world’s music market), France.

Back to the birth of kwaito music. In the nightclub circuit, house music from Europe dominated the dance floor. This gave rise to the demand for locally brewed house music. In 1988 JE Movement released a hot dance album Ma Dea Luv. The name of the group was a coinage of the initials of the duo, the late James Nyingwa and Elliot Faku. Their other albums were Bad Girls (1989) and Guilty (1990).

Producers like Chris Ghelakis, George Vardas and Danny Bridgens came to the party in a big way. In 1989 DPMC released Get Down, a hot dance album performed by a trio called New Age Kids. Its members were Marcus Ndlovu, Isaac Majola and Justice Mmusi. The product was a joint venture of Chris Ghelakis, George Vardas and Jack Master. Later in 1992 the band featured Marcus Ndlovu on their album I La La Love You still working with the same production team of 1989.

When Marilyn, Bridget and Beverly Alexander met producer/engineer George Vardas they walked into the studio in 1989 and came out with the eight-track album Smooth Lover featuring the hits Pump Up The Jam, Tomorrow as well as the title track on the DPMC label. The three were collectively called Syndicate Sisters. Two tracks on the album were composed by Sydney Mogopodi of Mama’s Baby fame. Their 1991 album titled Foolish Games featured fellow musicians Ringo Madlingozi and Ronny Joyce.

In 1990 CSR released a self-titled album of a six-man band called Sensation. The songs were written by band members George Mokobane, Timothy Maqothoza, Steve Mokgachane and Joseph Mashilo. The late James Nyingwa of JE Movement and George Vardas programmed the music. It was produced by Chris Ghelakis and George Vardas featuring the voice of Blondie Makhene.

In the same year a producer/engineer called M’Du Masilela who worked with Peter Snyman released his debut dance hit project LA Beat, which sold more than 25 000 units.

In 1991 PT House released the album Big World on Music Team’s Azania Records label featuring tracks like Qinisela and the title track. The music was co-written by N. Mohale and D. Bridgens. The producer, engineer and mixer was Danny Bridgens.

Katlehong Rap Movement, Karamo, was another Chris Ghelakis project in 1991. The group released Bra Music, which also featured a cover version of
Sipho Mabuse’s hit, *Burnout*. It was produced by Chris Ghelakis, Marvin Moses and JP Beat and released on CCP’s Family label. Their other release was *Busiu* which was nominated for the 1996 SAMA.

Talking of Katlehong, the group 2 Black 2 Strong from that township had a hit with a song titled *Katlehong Most Dangerfull* from their Tusk labelled album, *Reinforcement*. The group was fronted by Kalashnikov.

The trend later took another dimension as nightclub deejays also remixed international music to suit the local flavour and released compilation albums.

Long before we knew deejays could also release their own music, in 1985 Maropeng Mahune, a night club deejay at Easy By Nite in the East Rand (Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality), released a single titled *Sexy Girl* using the name Ruby Roepsie. It was composed, produced and arranged by the CCP powerful production team of Tom Vuma and Selwyn Shandel on the King Records label. His follow-up was *Top Top* (1989), a mini album co-produced by Alec Khaoli and Colin Smith who also engineered it. Using the name Roop C, Mahune released it on the GalloGRC label. This trend was to be sustained by younger deejays from night clubs and independent radio stations like Bob Mabena whose 1996 album *Funkier – The Remixes* won the SAMA 3’s Best Pop Music Performance: Rap category. Today there are many deejays and TV personalities who have developed the trend into a roaring business, especially through compilations and remixes. Some of them include DJ Christos, Glen Lewis, DJ Fresh, DJ Cleo, DJ Ganyane, DJ Christos, DJ Bongz, DJ Brian, DJ Fistas, DJ Mavusana, Rudeboy Paul, DJ Jeff, DJ Bakstina, DJ Monde, DJ Mphulo, DJ Mbuso T, DJ Switch, T-Bo Touch, Vinny da Vinci, Eddy Zondi, Black Coffee, DJ Sdunkero and many others. SABC 1 weatherman, the late Jabu Sithole, YizoYizo 3/MTN “Ten-Ten Specials” man Killa G aka Lucky Zulu, Sipho “Psyfo” Ngwenya, Tennyson Legethe and others followed in the footsteps of media personalities like Gene Letsholo, Kina Shirinde, Force Khashane and Joe Mafela by also venturing into music. Sadly, after releasing his second CD titled Ubuntu, Jabu Sithole passed away in June 2006 and was laid to rest at the Lenasia Cemetery. Okumhlophe!

The *Monwa and Sun* duo was formed when Monwabisi Dennis Yekani met Poth Nkotsoe. As already mentioned, Monwabisi had been in music for some time already and with the younger Poth they made a formidable team that released their debut album *Majekeje* on the Cool Spot label. Their follow-up in 1989 was *Tigers Don’t Cry* featuring the title track as well as *Makonrad*. All the music was written by Monwabisi, engineered and produced by Mally Watson. In 1990 they both went solo. Monwa’s debut album was *Aweyo*, still on the Cool Spot label. It featured the title track and *1990* written and arranged by Monwabisi and produced by Mally Watson. In 1990 they both went solo. Monwa’s debut album was *Aweyo*, still on the Cool Spot label. It featured the title track and *1990* written and arranged by Monwabisi and produced by Mally Watson who also engineered it. Poth released a self-titled solo debut album in 1990 on Tusk’s Diamond Music label featuring the hit *Swear To Sweat*. All the music was written by Poth Nkotsoe, produced
by Selwyn Shandel and engineered by Argentinian Jorge Arrigone and Selwyn Shandel. In 1991 Monwa followed Poth to Tusk Music and released *Mama Kuse*, a self-written album produced by the same production team that had worked on Sun’s album.

Cool Spot Productions in 1989 released the music of yet another young male duo, *MM Deluxe*. The name was made up of the first letters in the names of the two musicians, Mduduzi and Mandla. Their self-written album *Where Were You?* featured a hit *Muchacho*. It was co-produced by Monwabisi Yekani and Mally Watson. Backing vocals were provided by Poth Nkotsoe, Gabi Mdluli, Amelia and Khulukazi Mnwela. This was the beginning of another musical journey as the two musicians, Mduduzi Masilela and Mandla Mofokeng later went their separate ways to unleash a string of hits in the new genre called kwaito music.

M’Du was born **Mduduzi Masilela** in Zola South, Soweto. Though his mother Evelyn gave him the necessary support, it was his grandparents, Roselyn and Paul who had a lasting impact on young Mduduzi’s musical career. They gave him piano lessons to keep him off the streets. When Mdu became a star he never forgot them; granny Roselyn was the only VIP at one of M’Du’s album launches I attended in Johannesburg. She is very proud of him. Later M’Du worked with musicians like Pat Shange, Yvonne Chaka Chaka and Chicco at Dephon to gain more experience and exposure. It was in 1988 on completion of his matric that the above MM Deluxe was conceived. He started experimenting with sound, mixing European and township sounds to create a new sound. In 1990 he found himself working with Peter Snyman as producer and engineer and released *LA Beat*, which did very well and encouraged him to continue with production. By 1992 he had joined one of the most progressive executive producers of the time, Chris Ghelakis at CSR Records where he continued with his production and engineering work. After two years he decided to establish his own production house and named it M’Du Productions. With all the experience he had gained over the years, he took the microphone and embarked on a solo career as the kwaito artist known by the name M’Du. His debut album *Tsiki Tsiki* became a huge hit accompanied by a powerful dance party video. In 1995 he joined Sony Music where he released *Y U 4 Me*. Some of the albums that followed and sold beyond gold included *Ipompe* (1996) nominated for SAMA 3’s Best Township Pop and Best Kwaito Dance categories; *Always Da Case* (1997) and *M’du or Die* (1998). In the same year he showed the true colours of the keyboard tiger he is by releasing his piano solo jams album, *Let M’du Jam – the other side* (1998). It was not a surprise to those who took note when he produced the late Dennis Mpale’s *Nothing But The Jam* (1997). His backing band, Mashamplani also released their albums on their own including *Kunjalo Kunjalo, Neva Neva* and *Hey Kop*. In 1999 Mashamplani was Sydney, Surprise, Tumi and Tshediso. Tokollo Tshabalala of TKBee fame was once a member of the group. M’Du also worked with another new musician, the late Bongani William Makhubela aka MaWillies, whose
debut album featuring the hit *Intwenjani* became an overnight success selling more than 300,000 units. MaG-Mbos is another kwaiTo group M’Du produced. His duet, 50-50, with homeboy Mandoza, became a monster hit. He co-wrote and produced Dr Victor’s songs like *Bayangena Bayaphuma* in 1994. “Chomi Ya Bana”, as M’Du is affectionately known, also worked with international stars like Jean Michel Jarre and Kenny Latimore. Mduduzi is married to Sara, sister to Jairus Nkwe of another kwaiTo group, Trompies. Sara has been a pillar of support to M’Du Records through her company, Saratainment. M’Du’s 2000 release *No Pas No Special* was nominated in SAMA 7’s KwaiTo category. SAMA 9 nominated The Godfather Chissa as Best KwaiTo Music Album. In 2005 his album *Ya Rocka* achieved double platinum status. The album was also nominated for SAMA’s Best Album category, as well as Song Of The Year for *Sabela*. Then followed C-Simple (Wolla Music, 2005). Wolla Music also released the music of artists like the female group Fohloza. In 2006 despite his tight schedule, which included jetting out to London, Belgium and France, producing musical scores for the BBC and Sky News, he also released an Afro-pop album titled *Believe It Or Not*. Through his Chomi Ya Bana Foundation he helps disadvantaged youth with their education.

The other half of MM Deluxe, *Mandla Mofokeng*, joined M’Du’s brother-in-law Jairus Nkwe, Eugene Mthethwa and Zynne Sibika to form a kwaiTo music group called Trompies. The name was inspired by a naughty, always-in-trouble but bright kid in an Afrikaans cartoon titled Trompie En Die Boksmombende. Their albums include *Shosholoza* (1998) and *Mapantsula* (2000 SAMA nominee), which were released by Kalawa Jazmee Records. Some of their big hits were *Magasman*, *Madibuseng*, *Sgiyangengoma* and *Zodwa*. These four later had their own projects individually and earned themselves nicknames like “Spikiri” (Mandla Mofokeng), “Donald Duck” (Eugene Mthethwa), “Mahoota” (Zynne Sibika) and “Jakarumba” (Jairus Nkwe).

Mandla from Meadowlands, Soweto, has been involved in the production of many local musicians’ albums including the theme song for SABC television soapie *Generations*. By 2005 he released a double album, which produced the hit *Current*. Eugene, who caught my attention in 1990 as keyboardist of reggae group Slaves, went on to produce his own music like the ten-track album titled *Who’s Wrong, Who’s Right?*, which was released by Heita! Records. In 2005 at the height of the ANC Deputy President Jacob Zuma saga he released music supporting Zuma’s leadership and his right to a fair trial. He also worked with groups like Ghetto Monks, Ghetto Life and Indoor Smoke. By 2007 he was the Anti-Piracy Chairperson of AIRCO. This son of a preacher was also MD of Blocks Entertainment. By 2007 he owned a record label, Kasi Records. Meadowlands-born Zynne who also became known as DJ Vetkoek is a trained pianist who did his music diploma at the Royal Academy in London. In 2002 he released his debut album *DJ Vetkoek vs Mahoota*. He uses the name DJ Vetkoek
as a disc jockey at clubs and Mahoota as an artist and producer. In 2003 he followed up with *Licensed To Hoot* and later *Ezkawazulu*. The gifted muso won the Best Soundtrack category of SAMA 10 for SABC television’s *Tsha Tsha*. In 2004 Trompies’ album *Respect* was nominated in the Best Duo Or Group category of MTN SAMA and the video of their track *Bengimngaka* in the Best Music Video section. It may interest you to know that the members of this group form the last part of the record company name, Kalawa Jazmee. Kalawa stands for Laka/Mdlongwa and Jazmee for Jairus, Zynne, Mandla, Eugene and Emmanuel. Yes, yes, let me answer that one. Emmanuel is the singer, songwriter and producer Mojalefa Emmanuel Matsane aka Mjokes or Copperhead who said in an interview he regarded himself as “the fifth unofficial member of Trompies”. His debut album was *Thabo Thiba Thabang* (Gallo Music, 1995) and by 2005 he had released *From Battery To Coil*. In 2006 Trompies released their long-awaited CD titled *Can’t Touch This*.

In 1995 son of celebrated soccer coach Stanley “Screamer” Tshabalala, Tokollo was a member of M’du’s band Mashamplani. The following year he was a member of a new kwaito group, TKZee. The name is a coinage of band members’ names Tokollo, Kabelo and Zwai. The three dudes met at St Stithians College in Bryanston in 1991. Though they attended prestigious schools, their hearts were with music. Their combination was hot: Tokollo Tshabalala and Kabelo Mabalane were fluent rappers, composers and vocalists while on the other hand Mzwandile “Zwai” Bala had classic and choral background. Though their music genre was kwaito, they invented their blend called “Guz”, which draws its influence from a variety of music styles. Their debut mini-CD was *Take It Eezy* (1996), which was nominated for SAMA 3’s Best Pop Music Performance, followed in 1997 by *Phalafala*, which went platinum. In 1998 when the world soccer craze in South Africa was at fever pitch, they released *Shibobo* featuring soccer star Benni McCarthy on the title track. Another 1998 album *Halloween* featured their big hit *Dlala Mapantsula*. The album dominated the FNB SAMA 5 nominations and won the Best Kwaito Album, Best Kwaito Single and Best Duo or Group categories. It included *Sikelela*, the theme of the local dubbed version of television show, Stansford and Son. It also featured musicians Gwyza and 2Shot. The group’s musical home was BMG Records. Like Stimela, TKZee created a family arrangement with musical friends like S’bu Ntshangase, Dr Mageu and Kagiso “Gwyza” Diseko. In 1999 they invited the friends to release the TKZee Family album *Guz 2001*. Mzwandile’s younger brother Loyiso was also featured on the album. Their track *Izinja Jam* became SAMA 7’s Best Kwaito Single. Some of their other big hits are *Masimbela* and *Happy Summer Song*. The group also had its own recording label, TKZee Recordz.

By 1998 “majimbos” each had their own projects. Tokollo Tshabalala whose influences include the late US star, Tupac Shakur released his solo albums like *Gusheshe* and *It’s Alright*, winner of Best Kwaito Single category.
of SAMA 8. Some of his hits include Mas’thanda. His follow-up CD was titled Waarheid (Is’kathi).

Kabelo Mabalane grew up in Diepkloof, Soweto fascinated by Mapantsula. His ventures early in his career included a duo called 2 Slice. When he went solo he released his debut album Everybody Watching through Prime Media. He worked with different music producers like Trompies’ Mandla “Spikiri” Mofokeng, Moses Taiwa Molelekwa and Godfrey “Guffy” Pilane to complete the album. Featuring hits like Pantsula 4 Life, it went platinum within weeks of its release. It was followed by albums like winner of SAMA 9’s Best Kwaito Music Album, Rebel With A Cause as well as And The Beat Goes On, which also won the same category in SAMA 10. In 2004 the Korah All Africa Music Awards crowned him the Best Male Artist: southern Africa. The hits of the man popularly known as “Bouga Luv” include: Pantsula 4 Life, As Long Ngisaphefumula as well as Love Me Or Leave Me Alone, winner of the 2005 Channel O African Music Video Awards’ Best Kwaito Video and Video of the Year categories. He was nominated in SAMA’s Artist Of The Year category for The Bouga Luv Album. Kabelo later worked with a kwaito group called Black Jack. The other members of the group were Howza and Gurash. Black Jack’s 2005 debut album was titled Industry Hijack produced by D-Rex aka David Campos. D-Rex was Kabelo’s partner in a company known as Groove Luv Records. Later Gurash aka Archibald Motlhatlhedi went solo and by June 2008 he was working on his forthcoming debut album to be titled Winner Takes It All. Kabelo made history in 2005 when he became the first South African to sign a five-year endorsement deal with Reebok. The footwear range resulted in him being part of the Jay Z concerts in South Africa in 2006, as the latter also had a relationship with the brand. This led to a streamline of other endorsements including ringtones, t-shirts and so on. In the same year he was awarded a certificate at Rhema Bible College for his quest to understand the Word better. He continues to recommend abstinence as the most effective method of dealing with the Aids pandemic, especially to the youth. After participating in the 2006 annual Comrades Marathon for charity, he worked with Mandla Mofokeng and D-Rex to release his follow-up album, Exodus and set the music scene ablaze with his sizzler track, Dubula Dubula Dubula. The album was nominated in the Best Male Artist, Best Kwaito Album and Song of the Year categories of the 13th SAMAs at which he was both performer and MC. He walked away with the Best Kwaito Album category. In 2007 his recording label Groove Luv Records was relaunched and renamed Faith Records boasting young musicians like Martin Phike and Howza (Cut To The Chase). This was followed by his latest offering, I Am A King featuring Danny K, produced by Guffy and Zwai Bala. He so impressed the organisers of the South African Music Awards at the 2007 as MC of the gala event that even in 2007 he was requested to guide the proceedings of the night at Sun City, North West Province.

Mzwandile “Zhai” Bala grew up in Uitenhage, near Port Elizabeth with
elder sister Pinkie and younger brothers Loyiso and Phelo. He became the first black member of the famous Drakensberg Boys' Choir. This musical kid recorded his first solo album while he was still a matric student. In 1995 he went to Scotland where he studied music at Edinburgh University. He also composed jingles for SABC television’s youth programme, Jam Alley. The versatile songwriter, producer and musical director is also a television personality who hosted the popular shows All You Need Is Love (SABC 1) and Gospel Grooves (e-tv) as well as a radio show on Gauteng’s Classic FM. The star of Strictly Come Dancing contest has featured in various live collaborations. His album Lifted won SAMA 8’s Best Rap Album. Together with brother Loyiso and the Bala Family, their CD Genesis was nominated in the Best Urban Gospel Album category of the SAMA.

After 2000 TKZee released a “less kwaito” album, Trinity, which some critics say was a sign of maturity as they were no longer boys. During the festive season of 2000, family member Dr Mageu aka Malusi Ignatius Ntshebele released Geuzin Wamampela, which featured the hit Fella Kae? In 2005 he worked with S’bu to release Twenty Four Seven through Electromode. The group was nominated in SAMA 11’s Best Duo or Group category. By 2005 SonyBMG had released TKZee’s compilation CD titled Guz Hits featuring 16 of his kwaito machine’s evergreens.

One Kalawian who earned the title of “Top Dog” early in his career is Thebe Mogane. The title in kwaito circles refers to master of the game. The man who grew up in Limpopo and North West provinces always comes out smoking with the release of every album. He took the local music scene by storm with his album Di A Boa (Ko-philly). His other albums include The Vibe Continues, Abuti Bula Buti, Tempy Life, Tempy Pusher No.1, Top Dawg as well as his 2005 sizzler, Lenyora. Some of his big hits include Ungawa Kum and Sokoloko, an observation on the “debt” lifestyle of today. He recently performed in a local nightclub and fans screamed at the top of their voices for “Mokone” to do what he’s known best for. I thought to myself the ‘top dog’ has surely arrived. On Saturday, 1 October 2005 he was billed with Sello Galane, Judith Sephuma, Zozo and Prime Circle for the South African Music Week launch in Polokwane. For the 2006 festive season he released a CD titled Tha Rocka.

On the other side of town a natural born dancer, Sello Arthur Mafokate, was hitting the market with hit after hit and earned himself the title “King Of Kwaito”, a hot crown claimed by several musos in this genre. A dance trend-setter, he would in future introduce styles like “twalatsa” and “qopetsa”. When I first saw Arthur he was with his dance group, Fame Youth Club, from Lebowakgomo on SABC television’s weekend programme, Lapologa. We met face to face when I became a deejay and I lived a few streets away from his. My first impression of him was that of a focused and disciplined talented individual. I still hold that view about him. He had an insatiable drive to become a star. His teenage passions were soccer, dance and music. Arthur, whose sibling is also
called Lolo, would choose music from my collection for his club, which included his sister and brother, the late muso Makhendlas. My relationship with him was that of brothers and we respected that. At a later stage he went to Johannesburg, where he initially came from. In Lebowakgomo the siblings stayed with their mother Grace who was a nurse at neighbouring Groothoek Hospital, whereas their father Enos was still in Johannesburg where he became a champion show jumper. In Gauteng Sello did piano lessons at school and later worked with various artists especially at EFP to prepare himself for the “big times” vision. His musical inspiration was Brenda Fassie and Sello Twala. Somewhat tongue-in-cheek, the track *Blenda Fashion* from his 1994 CD of the same name revealed his adoration for the late Nokuzola Fassie for whom he danced and later produced. As a model he won the title of Mr Soweto in 1992. Like M’du he started his musical journey as a producer/sound engineer with artists like Sun, Taboo and The New Age Kids. With the launch of the Coca-Cola Full Blast Music Show in the early nineties he joined hands with Joe Nina to contest with two projects – as Q-Face singing *I Need It* and in a trio called Out Of Control singing *Let’s Dance*. The trio had already won the “Kool Aid Dance To Stardom” in 1989, the Soweto Dance Competition in 1989, 1990 and 1991 and reached the finals of the “Shell Road To Fame” talent search in 1990.

In Coca-Cola Full Blast 2, together with Ashley Mzolo, they presented two other projects: Heaven singing *Holy Spirit* and Twin Prestige singing *Forever More*. In Full Blast 3 he presented the trio, Helela. He used to tell me whatever money he won as part of the prizes, he’d invest for his future recording studios. I believed him.

We used to agree on many issues except for his impatience with the slow wheels and red tape of the industry. I would encourage him to take time and empower himself before venturing into bigger projects upon which I knew he had the potential to embark. In 1994 he released his debut CD *Windy Windy* on the CCP Record Company label featuring the title track as well as *Ayaphanda* and *Where’s Da Bass*. He had written, engineered, programmed and produced the album. When he launched his record label with Joe Nina, he used his house number in Chiawelo, Soweto – 999. 999 Studios focused on kwai-to music with the slogan, “In Sound We Rule”. The same year he released *Blenda Fashion* under the name, Bambezela. He co-wrote the music with Tronix, who had worked with him on two tracks of the *Windy Windy* album. As his mixing skills improved, he started using the nickname “Mix Maestro”. Another name he used early in his career was “Scamtho King” (King of Rap) as on the CD *Vuvuzela*. 1995 saw *Bambezela Volume 2* release *Zama Zama Yo!* Later he stuck to the name Arthur for his solo work, which produced albums like *Kaffir* (1995), *Mnike* (1995), *Die Poppe Sal Dans* (1996), *Oyi-Oyi* (1997), *Chomi* (1998 SAMA 5 nomination), Felicia (1998), *Yizo, Inja, Umpostoli* (1999), *Twalatsa* (1999), *Seven Phezulu* (2001), *Haai Bo* (2002), *Skulwyt, Mamarela* (2004), *Sika Lekhekhe* (2005),
On 16 June 2007 he received the Golden Circle honorary award for his contribution to music.

The tragic death of his younger brother, Makhendlas aka Oupa, in 1998 left music lovers shattered especially as his album Iminwe was still rocking the “bash” crowds. Arthur’s album Seven Phezulu was dedicated to Makhendlas. I attended the funeral service of this young star at Gallagher Estates and the MC, radio preacher and my former colleague Thuso Motaung, saved the day by not allowing the occasion to deteriorate into a mourning session, but a celebration of a young and gifted life. Some of Makhendlas’s albums included the self-titled 1995 CD, which featured I-Job Yi-Job and Shapela Phansi on the Rampant Records label as well Jammer (1998) on the CCP Records label, both engineered and remixed by Arthur.

By 2001 Arthur’s 999 artists included Abashante, Supasta, Pantsula, Ishmael, All Stars, Queen (Iyaya), Purity (Naledi Thali), Nestum, Speedy, Zombo, Stitch (Lucas Tshepo Setwaba), New School, Chax and Melazzi. Other artists like Lira, Press, Power, Marabi, Chomee (Thulisile Madihlaba) and Sgonondo (James Vuma) followed later. When she released My Fantasy in 2007, Chomee was the hottest property on the local live performance scene. I always suspected that her stage name was inspired by her producer’s 1998 SaMa-nominated album of the same name. By 2001 Arthur was a television presenter hosting the popular youth programme, Ezimtoti. The programme led to his anchoring the Beacon Smoothies road show, which exposed and developed new talent amongst young musicians, especially in the kwaito genre. This culminated in the compilation of a 16-track Kwaito Hits CD including his composition Jaiva Smooth. After 13 years in business, 999 released a compilation titled Best of 999 celebrating the journey. Arthur also appeared in the early episodes of Duma Ka Ndlovu’s tshiVenda television drama Muvhango, which gave exposure to most of our musicians and somehow revived the career of Sis Mara Louw. God be praised for sustaining the crew and cast of the soapie through their turbulent 2005. Unfortunately one of its former stars, Lindiwe Chibi aka Doobsie, passed away on 8 May 2007. May her soul rest in peace!

In 1992 Don Mahwetša Laka, together with “The Big O” Oscar Mdlongwa and DJ Christos at Kalawa Records, formed Brothers of Peace in 1992. In 1994 Oscar Mdlongwa and Bruce Sebitlo released BOP’s album Traffic Cop. The wonderful performance of the album in the market encouraged them to release King Of Kwaito Uyagawula and this time they hit double platinum. After this album the group that also worked with Dr Mageu released five other CDs including Mapodisa (1998) and Zabalaza (2002). Their Project A was nominated in the Kwaito category of SAMAs. Project C was nominated in SAMAs’ Best Duo or Group category. In 2004 followed Project D: Life Iskorokoro, a dedication to the stars who had just left us like Sipho Gumede, Tebogo Madingoane, Brenda Fassie, Chiskop’s FBK, Gito Baloi and Dolly Rathebe. In producing
the album they were assisted by Mandla Mofokeng and Zayne Sibika both of kwaito group, Trompies. Both “Oskido” and “Dope” are also hot composers and producers behind the success of kwaito artists like Mafikizolo, Malaika, Bongo Maffin, Trompies, Alaska, Thebe and Skizo. The stable’s other artists included Copperhead, Chakaroski, DJ Oscar, DJ Pepsi and Spikiri.

As kwaito music artists increased in number, the cake shrunk and record companies tried every trick in the book to entice consumers and increase sales. It was in this environment that two female-fronted groups took centre stage in a whirlwind of rivalry unparalleled before – Boom Shaka and Abashante.

From Kalawa Records, Boom Shaka was a foursome made up of two girls, Thembi Seete and the late Lebo Mathosa as well as two boys Junior Sokhela and Theo Nhlengethwa. The group’s name was a coinage inspired by the power and greatness of the king of the Zulu nation, Shaka, as well as the “boom” explosion of their music sound.

**Thembi Seete**, born in 1976 in Dube, Soweto later moved to Yeoville with her mother Rebecca, and her brother. She met Lebo and Theo in the night clubs.

**Lebo Mathosa** was born on 17 July 1977, grew up in Barwa Street, Daveyton and was later sent to live with her grandparents in ga-Sekororo, Tzaneen in Limpopo Province at the age of eight. Her parents, Nomvula and Gerrit brought her back to Gauteng when she was 11 years old. She started singing in Sunday School choirs at the International Assemblies of God and received standing ovation several times for her powerful voice. When she moved to Johannesburg to matriculate at St Mary’s High School in 1991 she got more involved in music. Together with Thembi and Mmabatho they formed the LTM Girls. However, it was when she met deejays Christos Katsaitis and Oscar Mdlongwa that Lebo “Mmadibuseng” Mathosa’s gate to the music highway was opened. She was inspired by the music career of late Brenda Fassie.

**Theo Nhlengethwa** was born in 1975 and grew up in Springs. He always wanted to be a star. A clothes designer with a unique style of dress, he influenced the group’s regalia.

**Junior Sokhela** was born in 1973 in Meadowlands, Soweto though later in his life he found himself in countries like Zambia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. On his return to South Africa he ended up roaming the streets. Together with some boys they formed a breakdance group called Brown Bread Street Connection. It died when some members were arrested. Chicco Twala requested him and Ishmael Morabe from Rustenburg to join him. When they parted ways with Chicco, Junior met Nomuntu Kappa and was exposed to a wider audience. He and Ishmael later joined Cape Town’s Prophets of Da City with whom they toured Switzerland in 1992. Junior later met the other three members of the group in a Hillbrow night club. Boom Shaka hit the local market with their debut single *Makwerekwere* (1994), followed by the monster hit *It’s About Time* (1995), which went multi-platinum. Another hit of theirs, *Thobela* introduced its own kind of
dance craze. Their 1999 self-titled eight-track album was a mixture of R&B, raga and maskandi music. On this Bula Music release they worked with the maskandi music star, Bheki Ngcobo. The next album *Ain’t No Stopping (Us Now)* (1997) went gold within a short space of time of its release. Their follow-up album was titled Bambanani. The group’s name was later registered as a company, Boom Shaka Entertainment. They used their popularity and influence on the youth to create Aids awareness and promote safe sex. Their other albums include *BooM Shaka* (1994), *Words Of Wisdom* (1998 SAMA 5 nomination) and *7th Anniversary* (2001). Later the girls embarked on their individual solo projects.

In 2000 Lebogang Mathosa embarked on a solo career and her debut CD *Dream* won her SAMA 7’s Best Dance Album and Best Dance Single for *Intro*. As if that was not enough, she was also crowned the Best Female Vocalist. The album reached gold status within four weeks! In 2004 she followed up with *Drama Queen*, which also won her SAMA 11’s Best Dance Album category. Eleven years since she entered the music scene as part of Boom Shaka, Lebo scored an international release, *Lioness*, in 2005. In the same year she was nominated in the Best Female Artist: Southern Africa category of the Kora All Africa Music Awards. In 2006 the “queen of choreography” was nominated for the Mobo Awards held at the Royal Albert Hall in London on 20 September. Some of her hits were *Tsodio*, *Ngifunukuganga*, *Awudede* and *I Love Music*.

Besides her music career, the multi-talented Lebo appeared in television soaps like *Generations*, *Backstage*, *Muvhango* as well as Norman Maake’s film *Soldiers Of The Rock*. The lady declared “Africa’s Sexiest Woman” by *FHM* magazine travelled the world and supported worthy courses. Among the awareness campaigns she participated in, daring Lebo featured in the *Vagina Monologues*. Her international recognition was again confirmed when popular US R&B superstar Keith Sweat featured her on the track *I’ll Trade* (A Million Bucks) on his album titled *Didn’t See Me Coming*. After the departure of Brenda Fassie many music fans nationwide pinned their hopes on her to carry the torch of our township pop music.

On the morning of 23 October 2006 the nation was shocked to learn about her death in a car crash at the age of 29. The accident happened shortly after midnight when her male driver mysteriously lost control of her Toyota Prado vehicle on the N3 highway and hit a tree, near the Grey Avenue on-ramp in Germiston. According to her producer and mentor DJ Christos, she was busy with her fourth album scheduled to be released in 2007. Lebo whose international career was taking off smoothly under the management of Roddy Quin is sorely missed at night clubs, stadiums and various music awards celebrations. After memorial services at the Sandton Convention Centre (26 October) and Benoni Town Hall (28 October) the “lioness” was laid to rest at the local Phumulani Cemetery, Daveyton in Benoni. As great musicians live longer, towards the 2006 festive season there were reports about her record company CCP sweating 24/7 to release her secretly-recorded tracks as part
of her album to be titled _Dance To My Music – Music My Way_. I have the utmost respect for the Latin proverb “Say nothing but good about the dead”; as such, I regard the politics of her childhood adoption as a private and personal family affair. May the “drama queen” rest in peace.

Thembi’s debut solo album _Smatsatsa_ won the 2003 SAMA’s Best Music Video category. She focused her attention more and more on her acting career. Thembi appeared in popular local television dramas including _Yizo Yizo, Zone 14_ and _Gazlam’_. She also co-presented a television street dance contest, _Jika Majika_ with the likes of Prokid. By 2007 her popularity as a personality saw Rage Clothing taking care of her wear. In an interview she promised her fans to release her follow-up CD in 2008.

Rapper, songwriter and producer Junior went into production and later released his own works. Theo continued with his other love – fashion designing. In 2006 Theo featured on Revolution’s CD _4U_ on the track _Feel The Music_. Following the success of the track, he released his debut solo CD titled _Ngiyabonga_ (Universal, 2007) written and produced by Joseph and George Mothiba of Four Sounds Productions. The album was dedicated to his friend, the late Lebo Mathosa, his brother Sphiwe and Iggy Smallz. My favourite track on the CD is _Never Let You Down_, dominated by stinging and nostalgic piano notes that remind me of the music of Bruce Hornsby and The Range.

999 Music created _Abashante_ – Abel, Queen Sesoko and Nestum Nyakale. The name of the group is also a coinage. ABa is the shortened version of Abel, one of the original group members. The last part of the name, Ashante drew its inspiration from the great Ashanti Empire in south Ghana. The Ashanti people, whose social organisation is based upon matrilineal kin groups, speak the Twi language and as expert farmers harvest sufficient cocoa to can even export it. In a sense this part of the name emphasises the dominance of women in the group. Their albums include _Girls_ (1996) nominated for SAMA 3’s Best Newcomer Group, _Settlin’ Tha Score_ (1997), _Dreams_ (1998 FNB SAMA 5 nomination), _Intwenjani?_ (1999), _Vuk’uzenzele_ (1999), _Ayoyo_ (2001), _Mus’lento_ (2002). In the early days of our country’s democracy the group caused a stir when they performed their kwamoyo version of the national anthem, but that made people understand what freedom of expression is all about. Abel was later replaced by Tebogo Zombo Ndlovu. When Queen Sesoko who is the mother of Arthur’s daughter Owami later went solo, she used the name Iyaya, which literally means “It’s Going”, something always moving forward with success. By 2005 she had released two albums, _Iyaya_ (1998) and _African Queen_ (2002 SAMA nominee). She parted ways with 999 Music and in 2007 released _U Fikile_. Her album _Sweet Little Things_ is forthcoming.

After presenting television youth programme _Jam Alley_, getting married to Bilal Petersen and giving birth to baby Saabir, Nestum Nyakale returned as part of a 999 Music trio called Collabo. Other members of the group were former

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Abashante band mate, Tebogo Godfrey Ndlovu aka Zombo from Alexandra township, and a new 999er, Mandla “Power” Simelane. Their 2005 ten-track debut album was *Fezekile* featuring tracks like *Umcimbi* and *Thel’umsindo*. By the way, Zombo’s solo venture produced albums like *Mduduzi, Mamba, The General* and *Zombo*, which was nominated for SAMA 9 pitted against the likes of Kaybee’s *Sessions*. By the end of 2007 Zombo’s health was failing him due to his HIV status and efforts by Arthur to raise funds for his health bills were cut short by his death on 17 February 2008 at the St Francis Care Centre in Boksburg, Ekurhuleni. Zombo was laid to rest on Saturday, 23 February 2008. Abashante’s Abel who introduced the ragga element into kwaito music passed away at the beginning of August 2006. He was fatally hit by a car in Booyens, Johannesburg. It was a huge loss to the group, which after ten years in the industry had planned to go back into the studio for a new album by the original members.

In 2007 a versatile jazz musician was roped in to resuscitate Abashante. Her name was Thiyiwe Mbola. Born on 10 August 1984 in Welkom, Free State she was attracted to Johannesburg by the MIDI programmes. She was a former member of Sophia Tones, a group whose other members were Preston and Jamela. Earlier on she had featured in contests like the Coca-Cola Popstars, M-Net Idols as well as Backstage-EMI Superstars. In the same year at 999 Music, Thiwe also released her own solo jazz CD titled *Who Am I?* produced by her cousin Vusi Preston Sihlangu. Press was former lead vocalist of 101 whose albums include *Cry No More* and *Young, Gifted and Black*.

**Speedy** aka Harold Rangakane Mahlaku was born in Mapetla, Soweto. Earlier in his career he was a member of a duo named Intimate. The other member of the duo was Brickz. They participated in the radio-diven talent search campaign, Coca-Cola Full Blast Music Show. Later when Speedy met Oscar Mdlongwa at Club Arena, they became friends. Oscar introduced him to Junior Sokhela of Boom Shaka. Junior introduced Speedy to Thebe’s dancer, Stoan Seate from Mmabatho in the North West. Speedy and Stoan met Zimbabwe-born Apple Seed to form **Bongo Maffin**. In 1996 they released their debut album *Leaders of Da Gong* featuring Thandiswa Mazwai from Soweto on the single *Summertime*. Yes, Bongo Maffin – Thandiswa Mazwai (Red), Harold Matlaku (Speedy), Tshepo Seate (Stoan) and Anesu Adrian Mupemhi (Apple Seed). The first part of the name was influenced by the African bongo drum and the second half by ragga music from the West Indies. In 1997 they released *Final Entry*, which catapulted them to stardom and sold triple platinum in one year. The album also won the group the Best African Pop SAMA award. They championed the new school “Back To My Roots” movement with songs like Abigail Khubeka’s *Iphindlela* on their 1998 CD *The Concerto* as well as *Ndiphendule* from their 1999 CD titled *IV* originally done by Caiphas Semenya and wife Letta Mbulu. This movement was later joined by groups like Mfikizolo and Malaika. The 2001
Bongolution CD was recorded by three members – Stoan, Apple Seed and Red – Speedy had decided to go solo.

They won Kora All Africa Music Awards’ Best African Arrangement (2000) and Best African Group (2001) categories. The CD also won SAMA 8’s Best Group section. These “Leaders Of D’Gong” wrote most of their lyrics and were assisted by the Kalawa production team with music. Some of their biggest hits were Thath’Isigubhu from their SAMA-winning album, The Concerto, Mari Ye Phepha from IV and The Way Kungakhona from Bongolution. From their 1996 Final Entry days, their success grew rapidly, but some members wanted more artistic freedom.

Speedy left Bongo Maffin after the release of their Kora award-winning album simply titled IV. In 2000 he released his debut single Rumours, which was launched in style on tv screens. It was followed by his debut solo album Sgubu sa Mampela the following year. His career saw him go from Primedia to 999 Records and to Electromode. The multi-talented artist who is also an actor appeared in Oliver Schmidt’s Hijack Stories and appeared in SABC’s Gaz’lam as well as e-tv’s SOS series. His 11-track album Still Standing (2003) was recorded and released through 999 Music. Other albums include Evolution and Le Ngoma. Speedy has performed alongside the likes of Macy Gray, Kelly Price and Sisqo, with whom he recorded a single titled She: So Hot and continued to work. In 2003 he registered his own record label SD Records and by 2006 he had signed two artists, Temko and Mbongiseni. In a surprise move, in mid-2007 he announced that he was re-joining Arthur Mafokate’s 999 Music as artist and business partner and went on to release his CD Going Live with the stable. In 2008 he joined Mfundi Vundla’s SABC 1 soapie Generations.

Later on Thandiswa Mazwai also went solo releasing Zabalaza (2004), which won her many accolades including SAMA 11’s Best Female Artist Of The Year and Best Adult Contemporary Album Of The Year. It also won the producer, Malambule a Best Producer award. The album defines who she really is as well as her Xhosa cultural background. Thandiswa who was born in the Transkei in 1976 and raised in Soweto also won a Kora Award as Best Female Artist: Southern Africa. Her stage choreography is unmistakably African, while her regalia includes beaded jewellery designed by her sister Ntsiki Mazwai (Nontsikelelo). Ntsiki is a designer and poetess who released her own poetry CD in 2005. Thandiswa’s video Lahl’Umlenze won the Best Female Video category of the 2005 Channel O African Music Video Awards. Outside the borders of South Africa she was recognised with a nomination in the BBC’s Awards For World Music 2005. No wonder she embarked on an overseas tour that would also allow her to perform with Miriam Makeba on her farewell shows abroad. In the same year her own people in the Eastern Cape Province honoured her as an achiever in the Arts. In 2006 her album was nominated for the International Reggae and World Music Awards. Thandiswa’s father, Thami Mazwai, is one
of the most respected media gurus in South Africa and founder of Mafube Publishing. By the way, the Mazwai clan name is maMiya.

Prolific Setswana praise singer STOAN SEATE released his album Tsela Di Matlapa (2004) and became a television personality presenting programmes like Castle Loud and Lilizela Mililizeli. Besides acting in Soul Buddyz, he also presented Motswedeng FM’s weekend programmes, Hip-Hop Show and Party Time. Seate who named his company Stone Age later released another CD titled Heart of Stone.

APPLE SEED was born in 1973 in Zimbabwe’s Village 11 and grew up in Mbare, Harare. At the height of Bongo Maffin’s popularity he had to leave South Africa due citizenship documents. To the relief of the groups millions of fans, he returned to rejoin the group. He changed his name to Jah Seed and also got involved in productions and deejaying.

At the end of 2005 Bongo Maffin released their long-awaited album New Construction (GRC) still working with their old production team. The album won SAMA 12’s Best Duo or Group category. The group owned a clothing range.

Bongo Maffin will go down history as a creative outfit that chose not to follow the lucrative market of groups like Boom Shaka and Abashante, but championed a cultural trend that inspired outfits like Mafikizolo, Malalika, Seed and Metswako.

The group SEED comprised Thuli Thabethe, Velaphi Ngqagu and Patrick Lebeko. In 2004 the trio released the album In The Soil (Gallo Records). All tracks were self-composed, produced and arranged by D-Rex. By 2008 they had released the follow-up CD titled Germinating.

In 2006 Ghetto Ruff boasted a young Afro-pop group, METSWAKO whose CD titled Re Tswe Hole took the music scene by surprise. It was produced by Thabiso “Thaso” Tsotetsi. My personal favourite track is Ke Gopotse Gae. Metswako is Tshepo Komane, Shamla Botipe and Bernard Madumo. The trio’s debut CD was Phenduka (2003).

AKASIA was a female group consisting of former Joyous Celebration singers Asanda Bam, Fikile Zikhali, Hlengiwe Dlamini and Tumi Letsoenyo. The four were identified by Joyous Celebration choreographer, Somizi Mhlongo to form the quartet. Asanda and Hlengiwe were the lead vocalists, Fikile and Tumi mainly dancers. Their 11-track debut album Raunchy (1999) featured tracks like Full Attraction.

SOULD OUT was a product of Sony South Africa’s auditions conducted in 1997 at Mega Music. In 1998 they released their self-titled R&B album, co-produced by Godfrey Pilane and Mthunzi Namba. The three musicians Thembi Skosana, Kamogelo Moilwa and Mbuso Thabethe invited Zamo Nkos to feature in two of the tracks. The hit Show Some Luv charted on most radio stations in the country. The album won the group SAMA’s Best R&B Album category and was nominated for Kora All Africa Music Awards’ Best Newcomer category.
in 1999. Mbuso, Thembi and Zamo later became television personalities. In 2005 Thembi who lived in Soshanguve moved to Cape Town, went solo under the name Desert Chyld and released a 12-track deep house-Afrosoul album titled *Milestone* produced by Guffy Pilane and Glen Lewis. Zamo presented a number of television shows but the most prominent was *Mojo*. He co-hosted it with his designer wife Khensani. Her company, Stoned Cherrie also released a compilation CD titled *Stars At Play*.

**Chiskop** was another popular kwaito group boasting among their hits *Thando* and *Umhlaba Uyahlaba*. The group members were Sphiwe, Sizwe, Sibusiso and Mdu. The name was inspired by the clean-shaven heads style of certain township guys. They started working with ace producer Gabi le Roux in 1996 to release hits like *Klaimar* and *Abantwana*. Gabi co-produced their 1998 CD *Zonke Bonke* with Tim White. Other albums included *Ghetto 2000*. Mdu, whose real name is Mduduzi Tshabalala later went solo and released his debut album *9 II 5 Zola South* in 1999 using the name **Mandoza**. It featured the hit *Uzoyithola Kanjani?* produced and composed by Gabi with self-written lyrics. The album was followed by *Nkalakatha* featuring Sbu from Chiskop and Tokollo from TKZee. It shot to the sky selling more than 25 000 units within the first week of its release and became SAMA 7's Best Kwaito Music Album. Some music critics say its success is a combination of Gabi’s Midas touch, crossover kwaito as well as Mandoza’s aggressive township attack. Whatever the reasons, the public – black and white – just loved the track. I attended a number of corporate functions organised by our white compatriots and they all had one thing in common – *Nkalakatha*. He followed up with albums like *Godoba* (SAMA 8: Winner of Best Song Of The Year, Video Of The Year and Best Producer nomination), *Tornado* and *Mandoza*. His 2004 album *Sgelegeqe* was nominated in MTN SAMA’s Best Kwaito Music Album category. It was followed by Phunyuka Bamphethe (2005) with tracks produced by D-Rex, Gabi le Roux, Guffy and Arthur Mafokate. *Nkalakatha* remains the highlight of his career so far. Some of his other hits include his duet with homeboy, M’Du Masilela, *50/50*. Interestingly, he named his son after Tokollo of TKZee, which makes him another Tokollo Tshabalala in the house! Mandoza is an ambassador for Dr Rolihlahla Mandela’s 46664 HIV-Aids awareness campaign. His awards include Kora’s Best Artist: Southern Africa in 2001 and Best African Video (2004). In the spirit of the new South Africa that Dr Mandela fought for, Mandoza teamed up with Danny K to release a crossover album, *Same Difference*, which featured tracks like *Friday* and *Ooh Child*. Maybe this is the way to go, judging by the popularity of multiracial groups like 340ml. Mandoza also starred as a rugby player in the film *No. 10*. In 2005 he announced the unveiling of his clothing range, MDZ Mandoza. The follow-up CD *Ngalabezi* was released in 2006. His partnership with Danny K was rewarded by the 2006 Channel O Spirit of Africa Music Video Awards. They scooped the Best Collaboration Video for “Music”. The star whose name was inspired by a tv

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cartoon character released another CD titled *Champion* in 2007.

**Danny K** aka Danny Koppel is a typical “new school Johnny Clegg”. Though he grew up in Johannesburg’s northern suburbs, he hung out with black friends, most of whom were also into music, like Jimmy Bangura. He listened to a lot of black American music from Berry Gordy’s Detroit-based Motown. His father, Gary was very supportive and encouraged his son to follow his dream. Gary took his sons to a Sipho Mabuse show and that was the turning point in little Danny’s life. As he grew up he loved the music of TKZee and worked with Khanyo Maphumulo and the late Tiny Siluma on some of their projects. While still a university student doing a law degree, he already had a hit *Hurts So Bad*. He continued with his postgraduate Business Management studies. When his father advised him to go for observations at Downtown studios he hardly knew that he’d meet his mentor, Alexis Faku. In 2001 he released a self-titled 14-track album produced by Alexis and Peter Martin on the Primedia label. The album was nominated in the Best Producer category of SAMA 7. In 2003 he released *J23*, a tribute to his “guardian angel” late brother Jarren, who died tragically in a helicopter crash on 8 June 2003 at the age of 23. By the way, J3 is also the name of his record label. Danny K’s other hit was *Love In The Club*. In 2005 he was the joint winner of SAMAs Best Pop Album category with Mandoza for *Same Difference*. His follow-up R&B CD *This Is My Time* (2006) won SAMA 13’s Best Pop Album: English. His relationship with prolific songwriter Roy Julian Benjamin aka RJ Benjamin (Swimming In the Soul of Music) has enriched his catalogue. It was interesting to note that the manager of Metro FM’s Best Styled Artist was his mother Pam. Surely Danny is in warm and safe hands!

The television youth drama *Yizo-Yizo* could easily be the film version of kwaito music because they share one thing in common – reflecting today’s youth culture uncut. The educational series directed by Kroonstad-born Teboho Mahlatsi reflects on the culture of learning in black schools. It was launched on 27 January 1999 on SABC 1 at 20h30. Among the accolades the television drama serial received was the 2005 Channel O African Music Video Awards. It produced some of South Africa’s hottest kwaito musicians like Bonginkosi “Zola” Dlamini and Dumisani “Chester” Dlamini who was discovered by Mbongeni Ngema. Chester also became a successful producer and artist who collaborated with Young Nations aka KASH (Kept in Africa’s Subliminal Hold) on his 2003 sizzler titled *Win*. By 2005 Chester was in Namibia shooting a film on the life of that country’s former president, Sam Nujoma.

Another musician who was involved with the series, Kyllex aka Thembinkosi Faku became a successful producer and worked on *I Am Free*, an album by a young Afro-house muso, Malik aka Sabelo Zwane who grew up in Daveyton, as well as Cream’s *Sebayayi Sola*.

**Zola** was born Bonginkosi Dlamini and grew up in Zola, Soweto. His mother, Sebenzile Thembi Dlamini is a staunch Zionist. As a youngster some of his
friends were today’s musicians Mandoza and Mapaputsi. Many of us took note of him when he played the role of Papa Action in a television drama produced by the African Cultural Centre graduate Teboho Mahlatsi, Yizo Yizo. The CD, Yizo Yizo 2, won SAMA 8’s Best Soundtrack/Original Score category and Zola was nominated in the Best Kwaito Single category as Papa Action for Ghetto Fabulous. In 2001 he released his debut album Umhlwembe under the name Zola produced by Kaybee through Ghetto Ruff. The album did well in the market and achieved sales of more than 80 000 units within a short time of its release. It went on to win the Best Kwaito Music Album, Best Music Video for track Ghetto Scandalous and Zola was nominated Artist Of The Year in the Standard Bank SAMA 8. At the time he was at Jabulani Technical College for courses on Drawing and Bricklaying. The success of the album necessitated focus on his solo career without worrying about homework and assignments.

In 2002 the star who later became known as Zola 7 released Khokhovula. His fame was boosted by the awards he received for his music: Metro FM’s Song Of The Year in 2001 and SAMA’s Artist Of The Year category in 2002 and 2005. He presented the television youth programme Take 5 and later initiated his television programme called Zola 7 assisting the youth to achieve their dreams. It was through the programme that he discovered a young girl singing opera in Soweto and recorded her for his album, Bhambatha. The track was titled Don’t Cry, a harmonious blending of opera and kwaito! It sold more than 120 000 copies and won him SAMA 2004’s Artist Of The Year category. Some of the great tracks on the album are X Girlfriend and Ntombazana. By 2005 he had added the album Ibutho to his catalogue and it went platinum within weeks of its release. It was followed by a DVD, Zola – The Journey Part One.

The multi-talented Zola aka Zola 7 played the role of a gangster in yet another film, Zola Maseko’s Drum. He also featured in the first South African Oscar-winning film, Tsotsi, both as actor and musician. The Gavin Hood-directed film starring Presley Chweneyagae and Terry Pheto was an adaptation of Athol Fugard’s book. In 2006 he addressed the United Nations world conference on the Arms Control Bill in New York. In the same year he received a Special Recognition award at the Channel O African Music Awards held at Gallagher Estate in Midrand on 15 October. He owns a record label called Guluva Entertainment. He is Zola, he is from Zola, his mother is Zionist and he is Zulu. A success story – from an artist to a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador!

Zola’s Zola homeboy, Mapaputsi aka Abbie Sandile Ngwenya, is known for hits like Izinja (2002) from his second CD, which reached triple platinum as well as Woza Friday. His albums include Kleva (2003), Last Man Standing (2004), Grova Mo (2005) and Still Barking (2007). At the time of writing this book he was almost ready to release his follow-up album.

Skeem was formed in 1996 by friends who used to be deejays in the nightclubs of Hillbrow: Teba Shumba, Jacob Mogwatile, Lucky March and Ishmael Morabe.
The four brought their various influences into the group: Teba came from Gugulethu with a reggae background, Jacob a rapper, Lucky a pantsula with traditional music background and Ishmael a hip-hopper from the North West. Their biggest hit was *Waar Was Jy?*, which won SAMAs 3’s Best Township Pop Performance category. In 1999 they won the coveted SAMAs 5. Their albums include *Salute*, which won them an award in the Coca-Cola Full Blast Music Show ‘99, *Can’t Get Enough*, which achieved double gold sales and *Ozwa*. Their other hit, *Re Tla Be Re Le Da*, was included on the *Yizo Yizo* album. By the time they released *Ema* through M’Du Masilela’s Wolla Music, Ishmael had gone solo in 1999. Jacob Mogwathe passed away in early 2005. RIP

**ISHMAEL** was born Ishmael Molefi Morabe on 30 November 1971 in Wolmaransstad in the North West Province. He grew up in Rustenburg. After being recruited by Ramon of world-famous Cape Town hip-hop group POC in a Hillbrow nightclub in 1990, he went to the Mother City. In 1996 he became lead singer of Skeem and went solo as E’Smile releasing the single *Jo’burg City* (1997). His debut album Mr House won him SAMAs 5’s Best R&B Album. The album *Iskhathi Sa Khona* co-produced with Kaybee was released under the name “E’Smile II Ishmael” through Lance Steh’s Ghetto Ruff. It led to the nomination of the two musicians in the Best Producer category of SAMAs 7. He later joined Arthur’s 999 Music to release albums like *Akuna Mathata* (2002) and *S’Manje Manje* (2003), but eventually went back to Ghetto Ruff. Some of his memorable hits include *Roba Letheka* produced by Arthur Mafokate and released through 999 Music and *Avulekile Amasango* produced by Kaybee and released by Ghetto Ruff. In 2005 he released his album *Long Way Home* still working with Kaybee. The CD was awarded SAMAs 12’s Best R&B Album category. He mentions the Semenya couple, Letta and Caiphus, as his local inspiration. At the time of writing this book he had seven albums to his name and was part of that jazz funk hip-hop outfit, Jozi, whose other members were Bongani Fassie, Crazy Lu and Da-les. That’s the Motherland Crunk guys for you!

Victor Kebareng Bogopane entered the kwaito arena as Doc Mabena, but after realising the confusion that could arise as there already was Doctor Khumalo and Bob Mabena, he changed his name to **DOC SHEBELEZA** and became popular with the youth for hits like *Ebumnandini* and *Ngibhoboze*. His albums include *Ingagara, Ingwazi, Ngcono Ngifene, Fihla* and *Amantombazane*. Shebeleza’s production and song writing skills can be witnessed in his other projects including a four-man band called Ama-Skumfete made up of Tshepo Mohale, Ashuwa Komane, Tony Tsambo and KK Okhonchane. The band’s album *Tsipa* was sold by the dance craze of the same name.

TS Records, like 999 Music, Bulldawgs and Kalawa Jazmee, was home to some of kwaito’s rising stars. One of their sensations was **MZKEKEZEKE**, whose debut album *Sguqa Ngamadolo* hit the music industry like a Tsunami. It was something fresh and unique in South Africa, especially the mask that always
hid the face of the performer and his township street lingo. The man from Welamlambo Section, Tembisa received so many accolades in a very short space of time from the SAMA, Metro FM Music Awards and Duku Duku Awards. In fact, he has won SAMA’s Artist Of The Year and Song Of The year in 2003 as well as in 2004 for his Storotoro album. His other powerful hit was Akekho Ugogo. Albums like Izinyoka, Ezasekasie and Ama BEE endeared him even more to his throng of fans. With the release of his 2005 CD Ama BEE, the man behind the concept, DJ Sbu aka Sbusiso Arthur Leope, announced the retirement of the artist known as Mzekezeke. DJ Sbu was not only a musician, but also a deejay at youth radio station YFM as well as presenter of popular youth tv game show, Friends Like These. He also featured in SABC 1’s music show, One. Together with Thembinkosi “TK” Nciza they own TS Records. Besides his focus on production and management of artists, DJ Sbu released a new album titled Y-Lens Volume 1. It won the 8th Metro FM Music Awards’ Best Compilation section. His remixed version of Josh Groban’s Remember When It Rained will always remind us of December 2006. It won SAMA 13’s Song Of The Year category. By 2007 he had released his follow-up CD L’Amour A Tours Le Droits (Love Has Every Right) and moved on to present Ukhozi FM’s morning drive show “Ezasekseni”, which won Stars of Mzansi’s radio show category. In May 2008 he returned to youth radio station YFM.

Brown Dash’s debut CD was Puff & Pass. His album Mthandazo Wabolova featured a hit Phans’ Komthunz, which won SAMA’s song Of The Year award in 2005. The album itself won the Best Kwaito Music Album category. In 2005 the star also known as Siphiwe Mpamile announced the September release of his third album, Dashboard, produced by Godfrey “Guffy” Pilane and Mandla “Spikiri” Mofokeng. S’Khathi Sakhona was his 2006 festive season release boasting the production prowess of M’Du Masilela, Jabulani Ndaba, Robbie Malinga and Gabi le Roux. In 2006, together with stable mate Ntando, he parted ways with his record company, TS Records.

In 2005 the group Izinyoka released Half White N Packet Chips. The trio was formed by 51 Cent, Sashman and Manando. Their album was produced by the likes of Robbie and Mjakes. In 2005 their CD Thebelele was nominated in Metro FM Music Awards’ Best Kwaito category.

The above category was also contested by Durban’s T’Zozo & Professor (Thokozani Zulu and Mkhanyiseni Langa) whose CD Woz’e Durban took the kwaito scene by storm. This duo’s nominations included Best Album, Best Newcomer, Best Song and Best Kwaito categories. Thokozani Zulu originally from Umgababa township and Professor Langa from Umlazi township won the Best Kwaito section. In 2007 they entered the 8th Metro FM Music Awards contest with their CD titled Togetherness.

In 1998 Teal Records released Cream’s single Sebayi Sola produced by Kyllex. Their 1999 album Time Is Money was released by Universal Music. The album was
produced by Jamela, Cream and Quentin Foster who also recorded, engineered, and programmed it at Rhythm Life. The members of the group were Ezee Dogg, Tu Short and Play. Their trade mark was their hair-styles.

Alaska’s hit Accused introduced them to music fans as a new dynamic band on the kwaiito scene. Their albums include Alaska 2000 and Most Wanted, which featured the hit, Hosherr.

Skinny Bwoy, Shakes, Asanda and Spencer are members of a group called Trybe. They had a huge hit, Diba-Diba, which also promoted a dance craze of the same name. Their albums include Shelela (Universal Music, 2000), engineered and produced by Gabi le Roux. Gabi was nominated as Best Producer for the album in SAMA 7.

One of the groups that produced a new kind of sound within the kwaiito genre was Makhufe. The name should not to be confused with the annual event Mangaung African Cultural Festival (MACUF). By the time they released their fourth album, Senganga, it was clear that their blending of traditional Sotho, kwaiito and house music would result in a new sound; they defined the sound as Lesenk music.

Other groups of the era that come to mind are Oda Meester – Vusi, Lerato and Ntsikelelo (FNB SAMA 5 nomination); Ghetto Luv – Yolanda, Chantal and Wanda Baloi, who later moved to Cape Town in 2002 where she worked with Loading Zone and released solo albums Voice and So Amazing thereby winning the Kora 2004 Best Arrangement category; as well as one group that said much about the new democratic South Africa, 3Sum, a gay band consisting of Koyo Bala, Jeff Moyo and Amstel Makwane. Their debut CD was titled Dirurublele (Butterflies) and was released through EMI. The trio won the 2005 Metro FM Music Awards’ Best Styled Group category. Their 2007 follow-up Siyavuma was released through Prokelly Entertainment.

Kwani Experience was another young new-era group who defined their kind of music as “Mudaland funk”. Their debut album was titled The Birth Of The Mudaland Funk. They were nominated in three categories of the Metro FM Music Awards viz. Best Group, Best Styled Group as well as Best Newcomer. The 2004 original line-up of eight, which included Nosisi Ngakane (vocals), Siyolo Jumbo Dazana (saxophone) and Madite Moalusi, later changed to seven. By 2007 when they released their second CD Live After Birth the outfit of six dudes and a lady vocalist membership was Nkoto Keitu Malebje (female vocalist), Kwelagobe Petros “PO” Sekele (poet/rapper), Mahlatse Riba (piano), Frank Magongwa (bass), Gontse Makhene (bongos/congas/djembe), Monde Mkhizwana (drums) and Bafana Nhlapo (percussion). The CD was produced by respected musician, Sibusiso Victor Masondo and also featured percussionist Tlale Makhene. The band was featured on SABC 2’s Weekend Live on Saturday 20 October 2007 in a programme that was dedicated to the Springbok rugby team due to face England that night.
There was also **Uju** whose music is not easy to put in a box as they mix poetry, hip-hop, mbaqanga and other genres to produce their unique sound. In 2005 the group was still independent of any contractual obligation with record companies, and their debut album was *Cape To Cairo*.

There was also Blue African Skies whose debut album was titled *Hlabelela*.

Among the generals of this new school music there is also **Robbie Malinga**, an ace producer who also has his own music career with hits like *Insimbi* and *Mporomporo*. By 2005 he had released albums like *Susana*, which was nominated Best African Pop in SAMOA 11, as well as Meadowlands released through TS Records. His 2006 remake of Mahlathini’s *Lilizela Mililizeli* took the music fans way back to the glory days of mgqashiyo featuring one of African Pop’s top musicians, Ntando.

**DJ Cleo** is one hot young producer who left YFM in 2002 to focus on his music career. He was born Tlou Cleopas Monyepao on 24 December 1979 and grew up in Vosloorus, East Rand (now Ekurhuleni). After a stint with gospel group Bonafide and church band, he studied sound engineering at Allenby Campus. Through his “Will Of Steel Productions” he released CDs like *Es’Khaleni*, with Extension 2 featuring DJ What What on *Goodbye (Time To Say Goodbye)* in 2005. This dance floor version of the Sarah Brightman hit won the Best Dance Video in the 2006 Channel O Spirit of Africa Music Video Awards. This was followed by *Es’khaleni Zone 3*, winner of SAMOA 13’s Best Urban Dance Album. The track *Ndiya Ndiya* was nominated Song Of The Year for SAMOA 2006. His fans and music collectors in general were happy when he released the 2007 follow-up *Es’khaleni Phase 4*, winner of Metro FM’s Best Dance Album section. His hit *Ngihamba Nawe* was nominated for MTN SAMO 14’s Record of The Year category, the most liberated section of the awards without male this, female that. The category was won by DJ Sdunkero’s *Maputo Song*. However, his *Phase 4* went on to win the Awards’ Best Urban Dance Album category. DJ Cleo’s other products include the music of Pitch Black Afro, Mzekezeke, Brown Dash, Doc Shebeleza, DJ What What and Brickz.

**Brickz** aka Sipho Ndlovu from Zola, Soweto wrote and performed with Speedy as Intimate as well as homeboy Mapaputsi before he could release his debut CD, Andapende. He signed a two-album contract with DJ Cleo’s Wheel of Steel and released his debut CD *Facebrick* (2005). It featured the hit *Sweetie, My Baby*, which was complimented by a powerful video for television viewers. The “Babyface” from Zola scooped both the Best Newcomer and Best Kwaito Album categories of SAMOA 12. In 2006 Brickz won the Best Kwaito Video for *Tjovitjo* in the Channel O Spirit of Africa Music Video Awards. The track was also included on the soundtrack of the blockbuster movie *Tsotsi*. His next CD titled *Estokfeleni* (Ghetto Ruff) was nominated for the 8th Metro FM Music Awards and won SAMOA 14’s Best Kwaito Album section. In 2008 Ndlovu, who already had his own company Brickado Music, was given his clearance by Wheel of Steel.
A graduate of Lehurutshe College Of Education, **Godfrey Pilane** from Thlabane, Rustenburg in the North West Province, uses the Educational Psychology he studied to enhance his artists’ creativity. Playing his parents’ guitar and keyboard at home cultivated the passion that pushed him into the 1987 Shell Road To Fame. Though he did not win, he went on to perform with an R&B group called Exceed, a somewhat prophetic name for him. His interest in production was sharpened by his engineer friends Jabu Nkabinde and Kaybee. Passion sent him into studios with groups like POC and Devante (1995), a group later nominated in SAMA 7’s Best Producer for their Richard Aronson-produced album *Elements Of Love*. As a musician he uses the name Guffy, which was derived from his first name, Godfrey. Maybe you can try saying “Godfrey” with food in your mouth.

Godfrey’s association with Kaybee produced hits like *Jakalas* and *Vuka Mavulele*. On his ten-track *O Rata Mang* (Sony Music, 1999) he dedicated the track *Kgabo Mokgatla* to his father, Meshack Pilane. His mother is so proud of him that she paid him a surprise visit on SABC 1 television show *All You Need Is Love* for the nation to know how precious he is to her. His other albums include *Phodile* (2001) and *Gufsta My Producer*. Godfrey Pilane owns a music company named Guffy Productions. Some of the musicians he has produced include Kabelo, Tokollo, Mandla Mofokeng, Family Factory, MaWillies, Khanyo, Sbu, Hugh Masekela (Revival) as well as the late MaWillies and Brenda Fassie (Paparazzi). Perhaps one of his biggest achievements was the discovery and production of the group Malaika.

The producer who proved that music knows no colour is affectionately known as Ibomvu. **Gabi le Roux** was born in Johannesburg to Pastor Le Roux. Like Selaelo Selota he is a champion athlete. By 1976 he was touring the country with rock musicians like Neil Solomon and The Passengers as a keyboardist. Inspired by George Duke he went into production. His first project was in 1999 with Themba Ngwenya, the mbaqanga musician. As already shown, most of his successes were scored on the kwaito front with stars like Mandoza, Mashamplani, Trybe and others. But what some of us may not be aware of, is that he has released his own albums like *Ibomvu* (2000) and *Let The Music Talk*. He owns a recording studio, Mighty Music Studios in Cape Town. Besides the afore-mentioned works, he has also worked with artists like Busi Mhlongo, Ringo Madlingozi, Ntokozo Zungu, Thozama Margaret Motsage, the late Nokuzola Brenda Fassie and others.

Besides Oscar Mdlongwa of Kalawa there is another Oscar, Oscar Mlangeni who co-owns a record label with Nimrod Nkosi named Bulldawgs. Both men were in the television industry, Oscar producing the popular youth programme, *Jam Alley* and Nimrod presenting the same programme. Nkosi later anchored the National Lottery’s tv game shows. This stable boasted young kwaito stars like Mzambiya aka Nkosinathi Zwane, Nomasono “Mshoza” Maswangelani and others.
Sboniso Msawawa Dlamini. **Mzambiya** from Zola in Soweto impressed national television viewers by dancing and speaking fluent township lingo commonly called Tsotsitaal in Nimrod Nkosisi’s *Jam Alley* show. From there the “Bulldawgz” of youth music released his hot albums including *Jersey #10* featuring Orlando Pirates’ Steve Lekoelea, which sold over 25 000 units. His other albums are *From Zola To Hollywood* (2000), *Heir To The Throne* (2002) and *Zikode* (2004). One of his big hits was *Iskathi*. Mzambiya also worked with Backstage star, Loyiso “Chippa” Mangena on *Mzambiya vs Chippa – Undisputed* (2003), *Chippa vs Mzambiya – Undisputed Part Two* (2005).

Another dynamite, **Msawawa**’s albums include *The Hurricane* (2001) and *Sibalukhulu* (2004). The hit *Bowungakanani*? surely proved that “dynamite comes in small packages”. In 2005 he went into the studio with producer “Techno” to work on a 12-track album that features tracks like *Ingoma Yami Ingaphakathi*.

**Mshoza** aka Nomasonto Maswanganyi released her debut album, *First Lady* with Bulldawgz Productions. It propelled her to stardom at the age of 18 setting dance floors ablaze with the hit *Kortes*. She later joined Mzura Kuse’s Ziyawamo Productions and released the albums, *The Return* (2005) and *Intomb’ Emnyama* (2007). In May 2007 she was negotiating an exit in order to join ABK Productions. By January 2008 she had released her latest offering titled *Vimbani* as wedding bells were ringing for her and Witbank (now eMalahleni) businessman, Jacob Mnisi.

Maybe I need to pay tribute to the guys from the North West Province who revolutionised local music by effectively popularising hip-hop in the Setswana language. This music presentation is known as Motswako. **Baphixile** guys, Blax Myth aka Sipho Mabena and Prof. aka Sobukwe Seremane released albums like *Ngoma* (Sony, 1998) featuring Da Roof and *Kasiology* (Virgin Child, 2000) featuring hits like *Shate!* In 2004 their *Apesam Bakwadz* was nominated in the Best Rap Album category of SAMA 11.

**Jabulani “Jabba” Tsambo** aka **Hip-Hop Pantsula** also hit the market with songs like *Mafikeng* and *Tswaka*. His albums include *Introduction* (1999), *Maftown* (2002) as well as *O Mang?* (2004) on which he worked with another new hip-hop musician, Mr Selwyn. *O Mang Reloaded* was released in 2005. In 2007 the five-times Channel O Awards nominee surprised both judges and viewers by winning SABC 2’s *Strictly Come Dancing* finals with his professional dance partner, Hayley Bennet. In the same year he launched his own record label, Lekoko Entertainment. As if that was not enough, he was nominated for the MTV Base Awards and released his CD *Acceptance Speech*, which stirred a storm on the dance floors featuring *Music and Lights*. HHP was the first recipient of the music section of the first Stars of Mzansi Awards on 29 February 2008. Other nominees in the SABC 1 event were Lira and Freshlyground. *Acceptance Speech* received three nominations in the SAMA 2007: Best Album, Best Male Solo and Best Rap Album categories. The hit from the album titled *Music and Lights*
contested the MTN Record of the Year category. HHP came out tops in the Best Male Solo Artist and Best Rap Album categories. The Awards’ Best Female Artist category winner was Karen Zoid for Postmodern World.

**Tuks SenGanga’s** album Mafoko A Me was crowned Best Rap Album by SAMA 12. It featured his massive hit, 525 600 Minutes. The talented Tumelo Meshack Kepadisa from Mafikeng was later featured in a Massed Choir Festival on Sunday, 24 September 2006 at the Standard Bank Arena. What a befitting honour and moment of glory! His 2006 follow up was MC’s Prayer, winner of the 8th Metro FM Music Awards’ Best Hip-Hop Album Award.

Another group, **MoraFe**, was formed by Khulani, Towdee and Kay-G. These Mafikeng guys’ debut album was Maru A Pula, which was released through Ghetto Ruff.

To enjoy more rhythms and rhymes from this generation, sit back and listen to Bongo Maffin’s praise singer, Stoan Seate, rolling with ease and sailing above song and dance. Institutions like Mmabana Cultural Centre deserve a page in the history books of South Africa’s cultural revolution!

Thulani Ngcobo aka **Pitch Black Afro** was born in Orlando, Soweto to Geli and Raynold Ngcobo. He rose to fame in 2003 with the success of his debut album Styling Gel, which featured two hits Ntfontofo and Pitch Black Afro. The CD reached the double platinum sales status within three months of its release. The former cleaner and waiter wears a wig to enhance his image. Having studied Classical music, specialising in piano and voice, he embarked on his music career after Simply Red performed at his place of work, the Dome in Northgate, in 1990. His musical home is Ghetto Ruff. Among his awards were Metro FM’s: Best Newcomer, Best Hip-Hop Album and Song Of The Year (Pitch Black Afro). His follow-up albums included Split Endz and Bigger, Blacker, Better. Other Ghetto Ruff artists included Spykos and Bravo.

**Skwatta Kamp** is a group formed by Fantumslirk aka Slikour, Shugasmakx, Nish, Flabba, Bozza, Nemza, Infa, Relo and company. The majority of its members were friends from Leondale, Ekurhuleni. In 2001 they released Skwatta Kam-pain, followed by Khut En Joyn (2002) for which they received SAMA’s Best Rap Album Award as well a Metro FM Music award. Their album Mkhukhu Funkshen (2003) took the local music scene by storm and won SAMA 10’s Best Rap Album as well as a Kidz Choice award. They also won Metro FM Awards’ Best Hip-Hop category in 2003. Their hits include Umoya, Child’s Play and The Clap Song, winner of the 2005 Channel O African Music Video Awards’ Best Hip Hop Video. They were nominated in the 10th Kora All Africa Music Awards’ Best Hip-hop category for Washmkhukhu. After leaving Gallo Records and joining EMI they released Bak On Kampus (2006). Some members later released own solo projects. Slikour aka Siyabonga Metane was born on 13 April 1981 in Katlehong, East Rand (now Ekurhuleni). He released Ventilation Mixtape Vol. 1 featuring peers like HHP, Pro-Kid and Proverb. It was followed by
Ventilation Mixtape Vol. 2 in October 2007. Relo aka Refiloe Tloatse who holds a fashion design diploma also went solo. In 2008 the group released Kings and Queens of Tomorrow urging children to report abuse. They were also part of local musicians who recorded Not in My Lifetime, following the May 2008 uprisings against foreign nationals.

Mr Selwyn aka Selwyn Ngwenya was born in Pimville and has worked behind the scenes with other known hip-hop musicians to sharpen his skills including Amu on The Life, The Rap, The Drama. The release of his album The Formula was accompanied by the video, Shake It. Recognitions from SAMA 2004 and the Channel O Music Awards are confirmation that Selwyn has a bright future. His follow-up CD was Zone 5, a dedication to Pimville.

ProKid aka Linda Mkhize is from Klipspruit, Soweto. His debut album was titled Head & Tales. He followed up with other sizzlers titled DNA (2006) and Dankie San (2007). Like most of his peers, he is a product of the Soweto Black Sunday Movement. On the first Stars of Mzansi Awards his collaboration with the Parlotones was mind-blowing!

Proverb worked for Gauteng’s youth radio station, YFM and went on to release his own music. In 2007 his CD titled Manuscript was nominated for the 8th Metro FM Music Awards.

Some of the most creative productions were from Revolution, a duo made up of Alexandra-born brothers Joseph and George Mothiba. The project was a real revolution as it turned the music of old African uncompromising stars, Philip Tabane and Fela Kuti into nightclub hits through their debut CD, The Journey (SAMA 9 nominee). They won SAMA 10’s Best Dance Album section for The Journey Continues as well as SAMA 11’s Best Duo Or Group category for Another Level (Universal Music, 2004), an album that went beyond the triple platinum status. It featured some of the new generation of jazz musicians like Pops Mohamed, McCoy Mrubata and Jimmy Dludlu. These kind of remixes gave jazz music another face and made it easily accessible to the youth. By 2006 the duo had released Roots through their label, 4 Sounds Productions. It featured the voice of Makwarela-born Madhuva Madima of Muvhango fame on Light Of My Life. The talented Maduvha is niece to the well-known gospel star, Itani Madima. Many music fans first knew her as a member of Joyous Celebration and later as a stand-in for Mafikizolo’s Nhlanhla Nciza (née Mafu) during her maternity leave. Revolution produced Madhuva’s self-titled debut CD. The brothers’ next albums were 4U and Fusion.

There is also Durban’s Finest (Sox and Tira) whose album, Vol. 2, The Finest Level won the 2005 Metro FM Music Awards’ Best Compilation category. The two deejays were facing stiff competition from T-Bose’s Nightpulse and DJ Claude’s Stereocandi Essential Tunes 2. The Best Dance category was scooped by DJ Bongz while Sy Ntuli was the winner of the Best Jazz category. The Best Compilation category’s winner of SAMA 13 was Flabba’s Nkuli vs Flabba. Tira
was the first winner of the Club Deejay category of the first Stars of Mzansi on 29 February 2008!

**Maggz**, who was born Gift Magubane, paid his dues performing with the likes of Prokid. He was featured on the latter’s CD, *Head & Tales*. In 2007 the Pimville lad released his long-awaited debut CD aptly titled *Sorry For The Long Wait*.

In 2005 **Wikid** aka Andile Thekwane brought back bump jive clothed in hip-hop reviving the magic of The Movers. He won the 2005 Metro FM Music Awards’ Best Hip-Hop category for his CD *Anger Management*. The CD also featured his father’s hit composition, *Bump Jive*.

**Gang Of Instrumentals** (GI) was formed in 2004 by former students of the South African School Of Motion Picture Medium And Live Performance (AFDA) in Johannesburg, Mandla Ngcongwane and Tumi Masemola with two other friends. The name was inspired by one of Dr Dre’s tracks. The two mentioned use stage names Lady Naturelle and Mandla N. They released their debut album, *Kassi Flava*, which featured the hit *Cry 4 Me*. The other two friends left the group for solo careers when the very close partners Mandla and Tumi focused on their production company, Black Brain Pictures whose products include SABC comedy, *City Ses’la*. Later GI was joined by Bongo Riot who was already a solo performer. The Channel O nominees’ other CDs include *Salute* (featuring Number One Girl) and *Round 3*.

Some of the most promising young voices at the time of writing this book were those of a girly trio, **Tyte** whose *Tindzaba* placed them on radio charts. The group consists of Klerksdorp-born Pearl Moagi, former SABC 1 continuity presenter Kedibone Mkhabela and her sister Florence.

Also watch out for **Bojo Mujo** from House Therapy Records who after his debut CD followed with *The Return of Bojo Mujo – Session 2* (2005). His *Destiny – Session 3* was burning dance floors as this book was completed.

**Bashanyana** was a young trio consisting of Obed Mohajane, Khumbulani Mhlongo and Sipho Sabelo. Their debut album *Molamo Waka O A Chesa* featured songs in Sotho languages.

In 2004 the group Geneses released their CD *Roll Ova* through Sheer Sound.

The Mathews brothers Reez and Russel from Eastwood, Pietermaritzburg were known as members of R&B trio, Ashaan whose CDs include *She’s Got My Heart* (2002) and *On The Road* (2003). Realising that their music was well-received “down-under”, they flew out to Australia. After staying in Australia for two years, they returned home in 2005 and took a break from music. They later formed a new group, **Junema**. The name was a coinage of the months of their birth, June and March. The duo’s Afro-soul debut CD was titled *True Reflection*.

SAMA 2006 nominated a young man called **L’Vovo Derrango** for the Best Kwaito Album and Song of The Year categories. The trailblazer was born Thokozani Ndlovu on 1 September 1979 in Newcastle. His schoolmates named him L’Vovo after the American rapper, LV. His debut album *Bayangisukela*
scooped the Best Kwaito Album category of the 8th Metro FM Music Awards, while the title track won the Song of the Year section. He then followed up with *The Teddybear* (2007).

Musicians in this category include Zubz, Jub-Jub Maarohanye, Zulu Mobb, Hidden Force, Young Nations and many others.

The new school era, locally and internationally, was also characterised by “sampling”. Sampled tracks include Double Exposure’s *My Love Is Free*, Betty Wright’s *Tonight Is The Night*, Ten City’s *That’s The Way Love Is*, Womack and Womack’s *Baby I’m Scared of You*, Gladys Knight and the Pips’ *Midnight To Georgia*, Joni Mitchel’s *Big Yellow Taxi*, the list goes on. Another trend was that of “mashing” whose purpose is to cross over from one track to another without creating a gap in-between. It also creates such a smooth transition that a dancer/listener hardly realises the change. Both techniques call for proper copyright clearance with publishers.

One would have thought that beyond the liberation struggle politics there would be very little lyrical controversy in music. Wrong! This new school music, especially kwaito and hip-hop, got the nation talking. Some of the songs that caused controversy by playing to the pelvic gallery included *Sika lekhekhe* (Arthur Mafokate), *Sista Bethina* (Mgarimbe aka Nkosinathi Mfeka) and many others which for unknown reasons did not raise any big storm. However, what is interesting is how the negative publicity ends up promoting the songs to platinum levels, for example *Ama Weekend*, which carries the track *Sista Berthina* sold over 250 000 units! Sadly, Mgarimbe’s fellow musician and producer Jabu Mdinge passed away in July 2007 and was buried in Orange Farm.

The growth of hip-hop as a global phenomenon resulted in the need for players to meet annually and exchange ideas. In 2005 a Global Hip-Hop Summit was staged at the Bassline in Newtown, Johannesburg. The event, which was sponsored by the United Nations, was organised by Sipho Sithole of Native Rhythms Productions and Lee Khasumba of YFM.