CHAPTER FOUR

Separation and Interweaving in the 20th Century: Fertile Intertwining

Vincent Kolbe’s childhood memories exemplify the wealth and diversity of musics that could be heard, appreciated and appropriated in Cape Town. His contention was that Cape Town was a creole city because it was a port city through which echoes of the world could enter South Africa, and be transformed to nourish local processes of creation. Singer Sathima Bea Benjamin mentioned other repertoires that were popular in Cape Town during the 20th century, repertoires that decisively fashioned her musical tastes and her singing style: English and American pop songs. “Some people do not understand why I sing this traditional repertoire of English songs, sometimes dating back to the Victorian era, or tunes from musicals. I have been occasionally criticised for it, because it sounds like alienation … It is not true. They are part and parcel of my culture. I was surrounded by their harmonies when I was a child … I always sang them … I was raised by my grandmother who came from St Helena and behaved in a very rigorous English way. We lived in a British culture, whose features had been exacerbated by its export to the colonies. These were the songs I heard, besides religious hymns I used to sing at church. The radio broadcast English-American pop songs: Doris Day, Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole. Then there was Cape Town’s popular music. Finally Duke Ellington. I want to keep everything. I have the Nations in me.” Other Capetonians would even add to this non-exhaustive list the broad variety of pieces played by dance bands, adapted from Muslim songs, Jewish songs, Afrikaner songs, Portuguese songs, French songs (Nixon 1997: 21).

The Development of Jazz in Cape Town

Vincent Kolbe’s musical life, as well as the itineraries of Temmy Hawker, Jimmy Adams, “Cups and Saucers” Nkanuka, Christopher “Columbus” Ngcukana,
Sounding the Cape
Sathima Bea Benjamin, Abdullah Ibrahim, Chris McGregor, Winston Mankunku Ngozi and many other jazz musicians, show that the diversity of musics that constituted the soundscape of Cape Town during most of the 20th century did not amount to a patchwork of various styles and genres, but eventually blended to produce several mixes from which creation could spring forth. In this situation, jazz did not only appear as one of the possible Cape Town mixes, but as an amalgamating and transforming force capable of absorbing everything and of generating original forms of music. Jazz could play this role both for musical and social reasons. Musically, its forms are open, having evolved in the course of the 20th century and have proved able to digest an infinity of musical influences without losing its characteristics. “Jazz,” writes Gwen Ansell, “provided a common language, allowing musicians to transcend the barriers apartheid was erecting” (Ansell 2004: 72). Sharing this language allowed musicians, and listeners, to remain connected with an outer world of alternative mixed modernities from which the apartheid government wanted South Africans to be isolated, and allowed them to meet in conditions which spurred creation. According to Cape Town jazz expert Colin Miller, “[…] in South Africa, where legislation was designed to keep people of different races separate, jazz had an integrating function. Musicians of different colour, who otherwise would not have come together, found themselves performing on the same platform, jamming at each other’s homes, or just simply hanging out” (Miller 2007: 134). Jazz carried even more weight in South Africa because the word covered a much larger field than in most other societies where it was performed. Originally jazz is of extremely mixed origins; although most of its most famous creators were African-American, some of its internationally recognised exponents belonged to other groups. In South Africa, it had never been separated from other forms of popular music and had acquired, especially in urban contexts, a symbolic dimension connoting rhythms of life, modernity, creativity, implying métissage and creolisation, words which were not commonly used before the 1990s.

Jazz reached Cape Town after the end of World War I, at a time when the word was beginning to be used in the United States and the music was still in the process of being invented from regional styles rooted in New Orleans, Chicago and New York (Martin 1991). Whatever the type of music that was actually inscribed in their grooves, it seems that recordings of American music were brought to Cape Town by sailors as early as the late 1910s (Ndzuta 2007: 15). Seventy-eight rpm discs continued to bring jazz, syncopated music, songs and numbers from musicals and were soon supplemented with films. Among these was The Jazz Singer, which
had a special impact because it was technically avant-garde (actors could be heard talking and singing), featured a “minstrel” akin to the New Year Carnival revellers, and mixed what was named jazz (actually a kind of variety song derived from “ragtime” and “Coon” songs) with more indigenous repertoires (Jewish religious songs). The flow of American music irrigating Cape Town increased after World War II, when American and British bands playing jazz and dance music visited South Africa (Ndzuta 2007: 17) and recordings of the new styles that emerged in the United States in the 1940s began to be available.

The emergence of jazz big bands in Cape Town before 1948

The new genres of music originating in the United States, and sometimes known in Cape Town through the mediation of British musicians, were grafted upon the musical trunks that had been growing in the Mother City since at least the 18th century. Coloured musicians, heirs to a long tradition of dance orchestras, were logically among the first to organise modern dance bands modelled after American and British ensembles; in the 1930s they had a virtual monopoly in the dance halls, and these bands were popular not only among coloureds, but also among Africans and whites. In the 1940s and 1950s Africans formed their own dance orchestras and contributed significantly to their “jazzification” under the influence of American jazz big bands such as those led by Duke Ellington, Count Basie or Glenn Miller (Miller 2007: 136). Cape Town jazz musicians emerged from these dance bands. Coloured musicians mastered instrumental techniques and reading ability in the Lads’ Brigade, the Christmas Choirs, the Army and Navy brass bands (Nixon 1997: 20), but they learned the art of rhythmic phrasing and improvisation in bands that played in African townships, even when their members were self-taught and could hardly read staff notation (although many were familiars with tonic sol-fa). Pianist Moses Molelekoa (1918–), remembers weekend parties held on Saturdays in Ndabeni in the early 1930s, where pedal organs (harmoniums) played six-bar songs called nomximfi, presented as an antecedent of marabi. Later marabi predominated and stimulated a change in dancing styles, leading partners on the dance floor to emulate western ballroom dancing. In the 1940s, their brand of African jazz became influenced by the sound of Glenn Miller’s orchestra, and the musicians, who came from many regions of South Africa, started imitating the musical colours, the smoothness and the style of soloing that made “In the Mood” so popular (Rasmussen 2003: 163–176). In the 1940s, a few leaders and members of coloured dance bands felt more strongly
attracted to jazz, and paid more attention to African jazz. In the wake of Jimmy Adams, they laid, with their African colleagues, the foundations of a jazz culture in Cape Town (Layne 1992: 134).

In the 1940s and early 1950s, when this “jazz culture” began to take shape, spatial and social segregation was not yet strictly enforced, in spite of the measures that had been adopted to separate whites, coloureds and Africans. Langa was not exclusively African and small numbers of coloureds lived there (Rasmussen 2003: 88). There were also Africans in areas inhabited by a majority of coloureds: in District Six, Kensington, Athlone, Maitland, Crawford, Retreat and Windermere (Miller 2007: 139; Rasmussen 2003: 115, 117, 243). Consequently, according to Vincent Kolbe: “From the musical point of view there was a lot of cross-overing” (quoted in Nixon 2007: 20). Coloured dance bands – following the example given by Alf Wyllie when he hired Temmy Hawker – employed African musicians in order to modernise and “jazz up” their style (Nixon 2007: 21). A few white and coloured musicians later went to Langa to absorb the energy of African bands and familiarise themselves with the type of jazz they played. Langa became a meeting place for musicians from every background since, in the 1950s, the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (No. 49 of 1953)\(^8\) was not as strictly enforced as in the town centre (Miller 2007: 142). Moses Molelekoa remembers that Langa bands performed in District Six and that Indians and coloured UCT students attended concerts given by African musicians in the Cape Town City Hall; he, himself, played with coloured musicians and for white audiences (Rasmussen 2003: 170–175).

Two band leaders appear as the epitome of the intense interaction between African and coloured musicians that developed in the 1940s and 1950s: Frazer Temmy “Tem” Hawker (1909–1977) and Jimmy Adams (1929–2006). Saxophonist Tem Hawker embodies the absurdity of racial classifications and the strategies that were deployed to get around them. He was born in Beaufort West into a Xhosa family in which Afrikaans was spoken fluently, which allowed its members to be classified coloured. After moving to Cape Town, he lived in District Six, then settled in Langa where, in the 1940s, he formed his first band, Tem Hawker and His Harmony Kings, which included African and coloured musicians. In the 1950s, he played with coloured dance bands, including Alf Wyllie’s, and also played for the Klopse (Rasmussen 2003: 80, 82, 165–166, 168, 236). Tem Hawker taught many Langa musicians, and with a few of them formed one of the most popular Langa big bands, the Merry Macs. His influence was such that: “Up to this day, virtually all Langa jazz musicians can claim to
be musical descendants of Tem Hawker” (Rasmussen 2003: 80). This is indeed the case of tenor saxophone player “Cups and Saucers” Nkanuka (1931–), who “studied” under Tem Hawker and Joel M’Brooks Mlomo (1932–), a founding member of the Merry Mecs. The Merry Mecs played a kind of jazz influenced by marabi, American swing bands and Latin music; they also played Kloeps inspired music, vastrap and langarm (Miller 2008: 2; Rasmussen 2003: 157, 159, 234). Also a saxophone player, Jimmy Adams was born in Retreat. His father was a musician who ran a Christmas Choir, a dance band and a string band. Still a teenager, he used to go to Langa and practise with Tem Hawker (Nixon 2007: 22; Rasmussen 2003: 7–8), from whom he learned not only jazz improvisation and big-band leading techniques, but also the art of re-working specific dance repertoires (in his case, vastrap and langarm) to turn them into jazz material (Layne 1992: 153). Jimmy Adams developed a form of musical multilingualism which made him not only the revered father of “coloured” jazz in Cape Town, but, according to Lami Zokufa (1931–) – who learned the guitar with Jimmy Adams and also played piano and bass – a musician who could play marabi “better than those musicians in the townships!” (quoted in Rasmussen 2003: 269). Jimmy Adams welcomed young white people who wanted to sit in with his orchestra: Morris Goldberg, Chris McGregor, Cecil Ricca and Maurice Gavronsky (Rasmussen 2003: 14).

A very mixed milieu

Jazz made people mix and interact. Vincent Kolbe remembered: “The only previous mixing I was aware of was in the Communist Party, but that was all quite Camps Bay, really quite elite. In ’50s jazz culture, it was a different kind of thing. In the clubs there was mixing to the point of contravening the Immorality Act!” (quoted in Nixon 2007: 23). Musicians, emphasised bassist Sammy Maritz (1938–), were colour-blind (Rasmussen 2003: 133). The biographies compiled by Lars Rasmussen (Rasmussen 2003) give evidence of the intense crisscrossing that involved musicians in the 1950s. District Six was home to a great variety of people displaying a large gamut of skin colours. Langa, although an African township, welcomed coloured and white visitors. Africans played with white musicians, but in most cases white band leaders had to get permits presenting African musicians as “servants” (Rasmussen 2003: 89–90). Whites sometimes experienced problems when they wanted to go to Langa to listen to or sit in with African bands, but many musicians – such as bass player George Kussel,
drummer Cecil Ricca, trombonist Bob Tizzard, drummer Don Staegemann — ignored them, imbibed African jazz and started to experiment with modern jazz in the township. Chris McGregor was strongly connected to African musicians: he became a close friend of “Cups and Saucers” Nkanuka, whom he visited frequently in Langa, even if he had to blacken his face to get there. The two of them had met on the occasion of a concert organised by the ANC (which had not yet been banned) and later the pianist would play in Nkanuka’s band. He also attempted to organise a concert at the University of Cape Town featuring a big band largely drawn from the ranks of Nkanuka’s orchestra; rehearsals started just after the Sharpeville massacre, in March 1960, and Africans were forbidden to leave Langa; African musicians eventually managed to reach the campus when one of the white musicians, clarinettist John Bannister, who had been drafted, went to Langa in uniform and was able to lead them through checkpoints (McGregor 1995: 16). Chris McGregor also entertained a strong musical relationship with one of the pioneers of avant-garde, “free” jazz in Cape Town, baritone saxophonist and composer Christopher “Columbus” Ngcukana (1927–1993). Finally, when the Blue Notes, one of the most appreciated exponents of post-be-bop jazz in Cape Town were formed, all the members of the septet were Africans, except for Chris McGregor⁹.

Saxophonist Ronnie Beer, who at times played with Chris McGregor, was also closely linked to African musicians. Coloured musicians, like whites, needed a permit to enter Langa but, like Sammy Maritz, who frequently played with pianist Tete Mbulelo Mbambisa (1942–), Ronnie Beer usually got the necessary authorisation (Rasmussen 2003: 131). They played in the African bands that performed in the town centre. For instance, Abdullah Ibrahim backed the Manhattan Brothers and played with the Tuxedo Slickers; he could play marabi very competently and did so in the squatter camps adjoining his native neighbourhood, Kensington (Nixon 2007: 23). Finally, it was not infrequent for African instrumentalists to join Nagtroepe and langarm bands. “Cups and Saucers” Nkanuka, Christopher “Columbus” Ngcukana and even Kippie Moeketsi (1925–1983), the “South African Charlie Parker” from Johannesburg, were seen in Christmas Choirs (Rasmussen 2003: 125, 182, 225, 244). Interaction between coloured and white musicians was easier and they frequently met on stage. Finally, among this group of men who contributed to making Cape Town the South African heart of jazz in the late 1950s and early 1960s, one should not forget trumpeter Lenny Lee, whose ancestry was partly Chinese but who adopted his mother’s name, Tracey, in order to be classified as coloured (Rasmussen 2001: 28).
The Cape-ital of South African jazz

At the end of the 1950s a genuine “jazz culture” blossomed in Cape Town. The destruction of Sophiatown in Johannesburg and the relocation of its inhabitants, including musicians and artists, to Meadowlands (which would develop into Soweto) stifled the creative energies that had been concentrated in this relatively mixed neighbourhood. Although pockets of musical imagination, such as Dorkay House, survived in Johannesburg, it seems that Cape Town inherited the dynamism that modern jazz needed in order to flourish in South Africa. Drum magazine acknowledged the move in May 1961, when it devoted four pages to Cape Town and commented: “In the past years, the Cape has taken over as the place for music, snatching the laurels from the backrooms and cellars a thousand miles north in Jo’burg.”

Jazz absorbed langarm, and served as a vehicle for the assertion of a new modernism, equally distant from “traditional” cultures, considered backward and outmoded, and western academism, favoured by most whites and certain segments of the black elite. The expansion of jazz in Cape Town opened a short period of musical innovation and intellectual effervescence (Layne 1992). The first models came from the swing era: big bands led by Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Tommy Dorsey, Stan Kenton and Artie Shaw were emulated, and vocal groups such as the Four Freshmen and the Hi-Lo’s were imitated by musicians like Tete Mbambisa and Duke Ngcukana at the beginning of their careers (Rasmussen 2003: 141, 184). However, the advent of Cape Town as the capital of South African jazz corresponded with the discovery of modern jazz. Recordings made by Charlie Parker and the be-boppers were available in South Africa, and although their music sounded awkward to many South African jazzmen, it definitely seduced a few of them, among whom where Kippie Moeketsi in Johannesburg, saxophonist Harold Jephta and Abdullah Ibrahim in Cape Town, soon followed by “Cups and Saucers” Nkanuka, Chris “Columbus” Ngcukana, Chris McGregor and pianist Lionel Pillay. Harold Jephta introduced Charlie Parker’s phrasing and harmonic complexity on the saxophone, and Abdullah Ibrahim developed a style strongly influenced by Thelonius Monk. Kippie Moeketsi played in Cape Town with the Manhattan Brothers where he met Lionel Pillay and Abdullah Ibrahim. Back in Johannesburg Kippie Moeketsi, trumpeter Hugh Masekela and trombonist Jonas Gwangwa, who had worked together on several occasions (with Mackay Davashe’s Jazz Dazzlers and the King Kong orchestra) wanted to have more opportunities of playing contemporary jazz and were looking for a pianist. They called upon Abdullah Ibrahim, who joined them in Johannesburg, and they all came back to Cape Town as a group named the
Jazz Epistles, which also included a bassist from Cape Town, Johnny Gertze, and drummer Makaya Ntshoko (Ansell 2004: 118–119). The music played by the Jazz Epistles sparked off a period of creative effervescence whose main protagonists were musicians associated with Abdullah Ibrahim and Chris McGregor, whose respective musical itineraries illustrate the diversity of the paths that led to the invention of South African modern jazz.

**Abdullah Ibrahim’s urban mix**

Abdullah Ibrahim\(^1\) (“Dollar” Brand) was born in 1934 and grew up in Kensington, a predominantly coloured neighbourhood located on the outskirts of central Cape Town. His mother played piano in the local Methodist church founded by his grandmother and affiliated to the African American African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC), a church known for the central role music plays in the service and for the quality of its choirs’ and congregations’ singing. Young Dollar Brand sang in his grandmother and mother’s church choir. He was also trained in the “light classics” but soon became fascinated with American jazz. His nickname “Dollar” is said to have been given to him by African-American sailors with whom he used to mingle. While in high school, he started playing in a dance band that performed jazz arrangements borrowed from Erskine Hawkins’ American swing orchestra, but also square dances, waltzes and fox trots. He became a professional musician in 1949 and played with local bands such as the Tuxedo Slickers and the Willie Max Big Band. He also played in Klopse orchestras and was exposed to *marabi*. He discovered American jazz at a young age and was particularly impressed by Duke Ellington; later he heard recordings by Charlie Parker and Thelonius Monk, and began to fashion his own style based on them. By the end of the 1950s, Abdullah Ibrahim was a young, extremely talented pianist, although he was also somewhat eccentric and uncompromising, intent on performing exclusively his own music and refusing to play in night clubs. His piano style clearly derives from Duke Ellington and Thelonius Monk, and evokes American pianists of the same lineage – who actually may not have been very well-known in South Africa at the time – such as Randy Weston and Mal Waldron. Abdullah Ibrahim “[…] characteristically experimented with harmonic and rhythmic dissonance, unpredictable phrasing, piano colour and contrasting register” (Lucia 2002: 126). His compositions fuse with an exceptional ingenuity all the musics he heard when growing up in Cape Town: dance music, Klopse music, hymns, *marabi*, all amalgamated in a personal jazz language conveying a sense of original modernity, and yet rooted in the particular chord progressions of Methodist
Dollar Brand/Abdullah Ibrahim, who re-invented South African jazz several times.
hymnody (Lucia 2002; Mason 2007). In 1957, the cast of King Kong, the musical, spent several months in Cape Town. Hugh Masekela, Jonas Gwangwa and Kippie Moeketsi played in the orchestra that was backing the show. Chris McGregor took advantage of their presence in the Mother City to organise lunchtime concerts at the UCT College of Music (McGregor 1995: 13); it is probably during their stay in Cape Town that first contact was made between Abdullah Ibrahim and Hugh Masekela, Jonas Gwangwa and Kippie Moeketsi, a contact that led to the formation of the Jazz Epistles and to the 1959 recording of an album, Verse 1, which sounded like a manifesto of South African modern jazz. The Epistles' experience was short lived. While Kippie Moeketsi stayed in Johannesburg, Hugh Masekela and Jonas Gwangwa left for London with the King Kong crew and decided not to come back to South Africa after the Sharpeville shootings of 21 March 1960. Abdullah Ibrahim eventually went to Zurich, Switzerland, in 1962. Later he explained: “When Sharpeville occurred, it became clear that it was impossible to do anything creative in South Africa; you were completely limited. Either you towed the government line or you left, or you quit.” He consequently decided to leave, and with him went the Epistles' rhythm section, Johnny Gertze and Makaya Ntshoko, as well as a young Cape Town singer he had met in 1959 and whom he would marry in exile, Sathima Bea Benjamin.

Abdullah Ibrahim's musical universe was essentially urban. His imagination drew on the full Cape Town soundscape, which he seems to have put in the foreground more explicitly in private performances than in public, where he played more straightforward “jazz” even if in a very personal way (Mason 2007: 27), but to which he would come back more and more intensely in exile. Sathima Bea Benjamin added to the musics he had been exposed to during his childhood her own baggage of British songs and American musicals' successes, and her knowledge of Mozambique and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), where she had performed with Jimmy Adams. This contributed to broadening Adbullah Ibrahim’s possible sources of inspiration (Rasmussen 2000).

Chris McGregor: Rural South Africa and classical Europe mediated by jazz

Chris McGregor (1936–1990) was born in Somerset West, about 50 kilometres south-east of Cape Town, but grew up in Blythswood, Transkei, where his father ran a school founded by the Scottish Missionary Society. There were very few white people around; his first language was isiXhosa and the first musics he heard were missionary hymns and responsorial songs with overlapping entries typical of Xhosa vocal polyphonies. During the war, his father joined the Navy and Chris
McGregor spent some time in Cape Town with his mother. It is during his stay in Cape Town that he had his first piano lessons, and also discovered army marching bands. Back in the Transkei, he continued his musical education in Umtata, where he was exposed to *mbaqanga* and *kwela*, as well as to the voices of the Ink Spots, the Mills Brothers and Nat King Cole. In his early teens, Chris McGregor occasionally joined a coloured dance band and formed a vocal group with a few Umtata high school friends. In 1956, he won a scholarship for the UCT College of Music, where he studied with, among others, Arnold van Wyk. He enjoyed playing Claude Debussy, Béla Bartók, Anton Webern and gave the first South African performance of Arnold Schoenberg’s *Piano Stuck*, Opus 33a. At the same time, he listened eagerly to Abdullah Ibrahim, who played at the Ambassadors School of Dancing (Woodstock), from whom, as he would acknowledge later, he learned a lot (McGregor 1995: 38) and began to play jazz himself in a university group.

At the end of the 1950s, he linked up with musicians like “Cups and Saucers” Nkanuka, Christopher “Columbus” Ngcukana, bassist Martin Mgijima, as well as with trombonist David Galloway and drummer Donald Staegemann. He played with these musicians at the Ambassadors School of Dancing and sat at the piano in “Cups and Saucers” Nkanuka’s dance band, with whom he performed in Langa,
Athlone, Gugulethu and Simonstown. In 1959, Chris McGregor and his group were invited to play for the launch of the Langa Women’s Cultural Group; the programme also featured Tete Mbambisa’s vocal group, the Four Yanks, which included Nikele Moyake, and was accompanied by a young pianist from Port Elizabeth, Dudu Pukwana. Both also played the saxophone. Dudu Pukwana remained in Cape Town to join Chris McGregor’s group; his mentor, Nikele Moyake would later become the tenorist with the Blue Notes (Devroop & Walton 2007: 97–100; McGregor 1995: 21; Rasmussen 2001: 77). In 1961, after a few experiments with a big band associating musicians from “Cups and Saucers” Nkanuka’s orchestra and UCT students, Chris McGregor stopped attending courses at the College of Music, where he found that what he was taught was too disconnected from what he was experiencing in Cape Town, both as a person and as a musician. He played at the Vortex club in Long Street, Cape Town, and teamed up with Stanley Glasser to write the music for a musical, *Mr Paljas*.

In 1962, Chris McGregor took a septet to the Castle Lager Jazz Festival, held at the Moroka Jabavu Stadium, Soweto, where Dudu Pukwana and his Quintet were also playing, along with Tete’s Mbambisa’s Jazz Giants, with Nikele Moyake, “Cups and Saucers” Nkanuka’s Jazz Ambassadors, with Louis Moholo, a drummer from Langa, and Eric Nomvete’s group with a very young trumpet player from Queenstown, Mongezi Feza. The 1962 Jazz Festival, therefore, hosted the encounter of the future Blue Notes, although they appeared on stage with different formations.

In September 1963, after having spent most of his time in Johannesburg, playing, living, occasionally teaching at Dorkay House, and participating in jam sessions in African townships, Chris McGregor presented the Blue Notes at the Cold Castle Moroka Jabavu Jazz Festival. The group included Mongezi Feza, Dudu Pukwana and Nikele Moyake along with bassist Sammy Maritz and drummer Early Mabuza, and its name was deliberately coined “[...] in order to have an anonymous name so that the publicity would be possible without attracting attention to the fact that it was a mixed-race group, but one that would convey that it was jazz they were playing” (McGregor 1995: 25). The Castle beer company agreed to sponsor a big band composed of the best musicians heard at the Festival, among whom would feature the members of the Blue Notes, to play arrangements by Chris McGregor. The band was scheduled to perform in African townships, but Maxine Lautrê, Chris’ future wife, decided to organise an additional concert in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. Sammy Maritz and Early Mabuza had not shown up when the curtain was due to rise. Johnny Dyani – a
bass player from East London who had been working with Tete Mbambisa and Eric Nomvete – and Louis Moholo, both of whom attended the rehearsals, filled in for them, and from then on would provide the rhythm section for the Blue Notes (McGregor 1995: 33–40). The combination began to enjoy great popularity with jazz aficionados, but as a “racially” mixed group, they were confronted with many difficulties. They started a tour of South Africa which allowed them to move rapidly from one place to another and somehow turn around problems, as well as to try and make money to buy air tickets to Europe. Chris McGregor explained later how they proceeded when they were stopped at roadblocks: “[…] usually we were not actually breaking the law. To the extent that we were on the road, it was almost like we were 1 000 feet up. We only came down to earth when there was a roadblock, and then we pretended we were a gang of labourers with a captain. We had some well-rehearsed routines: I became the boss and these were my boys and we were on our way to fulfil a contract somewhere” (quoted in McGregor 1995: 69). Their efforts to get round segregationist laws and escape police harassment became increasingly difficult for a non-racial group such as the Blue Notes. Despite this, they managed to get passports, buy plane tickets and, on 24 July 1964, to appear on the stage of the Antibes-Juan-les-Pins jazz festival, and, after the festival, caused quite a sensation, playing through the evenings at the Pam Pam Café.

Chris McGregor’s music was an unusual blend of western “classical” music, Xhosa rural music, Ellingtonian and post-be-bop jazz illuminated by Abdullah Ibrahim. His early arrangements bear the mark of Ellington, but an attentive listener can detect an attempt at using Ellingtonian voicings on structures influenced by the staggered cycles of Nguni polyphonies and marabi chord progression (Coplan 2008: 432–437). This combination allowed him to make the best of the musicians he wrote for, be it in a sextet or in a big band, and to create rich sonic textures that could be at the same time energetic and luscious. His roots were in Transkei and, when he settled in Cape Town, he carried with him the sounds of rural villages. In Cape Town, he associated with musicians of every origin, with whom he established a close comradeship which – although his motivations were basically musical – was tantamount to a political statement.

Chris McGregor participated in anti-apartheid actions: he played with David Galloway at a private gig for the Mandela Treason Trial Fund (Devroop & Walton 2007: 123), he marched against restrictions to the admission of black students at university, and taught evening classes for Africans and coloureds (McGregor 1995: 7–12). Chris McGregor embodies the Eastern Cape–Cape Town connection, as
well as the cross-fertilisation of European, American and South African traditions. This is why Pallo Jordan considered that: “Playing with the likes of ‘Mra’ [Christopher “Columbus” Ngcukana], Kippie [Moeketsi], Cups and Saucers [Nkanuka], Dudu [Pukwana], [Winston] Mankunku, Johnny Gertze and McKay Davashe had helped him to grow from a callow emulator of Bud Powell into a definitively South African pianist, partaking and contributing to the melting pot of its evolving culture” (Jordan 1988: 6). This opinion was shared by the then University of Natal Professor and South African jazz expert Christopher Ballantine: “McGregor is the only white performer who has actually crossed over and become truly South Africanised. His bands are among the few who have achieved a real fusion of the multiple musics which represent what South Africa is and might be […]” (quoted in McGregor 1995: 62).

Repression and censorship

In the days of Abdullah Ibrahim and Chris McGregor, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, jazz was thriving in Cape Town. Not only was there a constellation of talented musicians – born in the city and in its peripheral neighbourhoods or coming from other regions of South Africa, and especially from the Eastern Cape – but they found many places where they could give their music exposure and interact with other musicians without any regard for “racial” segregation. Before the destruction of District Six, there was the Wintergarden Hall in Ayre Street and the Zambezi in Upper Darling Street, which was owned by Abie Hurzuk whose family hailed from Bombay. In Woodstock, the Naaz, in Lower Main Street, welcomed university students; also in Woodstock was the Ambassadors School of Dancing, a place welcoming musical experimentation (Muller 2008: 192–193) where, remembered photographer Hardy Stockmann: “The bands and audience were composed of black and white and anything in between, mingling freely like nowhere else in the land” (quoted in Rasmussen 2001: 112). In the City Bowl, the Vortex, in Long Street came to be considered the “home of jazz”; the Mermaid, in Three Anchor Bay, near Green Point, accepted all music lovers; also in Green Point, the Weizmann Hall, which was owned by the Jewish community, staged jazz concerts for mixed audiences; later, Club 62 remained multiracial but avoided anything that may have looked political (Layne 1992: 89). In the early 1960s the mix on which jazz was based, which was displayed on stage as well as on the floors of clubs and concert halls, became less and less tolerable in the eyes of the apartheid authorities. Clubs fell victim to police harassment and most of
them had to close down. This is one of the reasons why several musicians decided to leave South Africa: “We had a nice club scene, with no pressure from the colour bar for two years. Then gradually these places were closed down. The police didn’t like them and things got very unpleasant. So we decided to go,” explained Chris McGregor (quoted in Rasmussen 2001: 51).

The early 1960s were indeed a watershed in South Africa’s history. Many racist laws had been passed after the National Party came to power in 1948, but they were not systematically implemented and in the 1950s it was still possible to fight their arbitrariness in court. This decade was a time of struggles, culminating in the adoption of the Freedom Charter by the Congress of the People gathered at Kliptown, Soweto, on 26 June 1955. The government fought back by arresting 156 anti-apartheid activists, and charging them with “high treason”, but was finally defeated when they were acquitted in 1961. In the meantime, on 21 March 1960, the police had opened fire on a crowd protesting against pass laws, and killed 69 people. Following these events, the ANC and the Pan Africanist Congress were banned. Finally, on 11 July 1963, 19 leaders of the ANC were arrested during an underground meeting held on a farm in Rivonia, near Johannesburg. After almost a year of hearings in court, eight of them, among whom were Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu, were given life sentences. After 1963, the implementation of apartheid laws was accelerated and hardened, the aggravation of repression had dramatic implications for music-making in general and jazz playing in particular. Tony McGregor attempted to list the laws and regulations that affected musicians directly or indirectly: “[…] the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (No. 49 of 1953); the Native Laws Amendment Act (No. 36 of 1957); the Group Areas Amendment Act (No. 57 of 1957) (this Act was used by some white musicians to prevent black musicians from competing with them); […] and countless proclamations designed to reduce interaction between people of different races. For example, proclamation R26 of 1965 was to the effect that ‘no racially disqualified person may attend any place of public entertainment, or partake of any refreshments ordinarily involving the use of seating accommodation as a customer in a licensed restaurant, refreshment or tea-room or eating house, or as a member of or as a guest in any club’. As a somewhat cruel aside, bona fide domestic workers could be in such places as they were specifically excluded from the definition of ‘racially disqualified persons’. So the clubs and restaurants could be kept clean without whites having to get their hands dirty!” In addition to the texts mentioned above, the Liquor Act Amendment 1962 forbade Africans to patronise places where alcoholic beverages were sold, which made it difficult to
accommodate mixed audiences in clubs (Miller 2007: 146).

As far as musicians were concerned, the strict implementation of existing or new rules was compounded by the reorganisation of the South African broadcasting system. The policy of “separate development” designed by Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd at the end of the 1950s implied that the different “population groups” were to be offered specific radio programmes. A revised Broadcast Act was passed in 1960, which created a Bantu Programme Control Board and planned an expansion of radio services for Africans. On 1 January 1962, Radio Bantu, incorporating Radio Zulu, Radio Sesotho, Radio Lebowa, Radio Tswana, Radio Xhosa was launched, to which Radio Venda/Tsonga was added in 1965. By the end of the 1960s Radio Bantu broadcast in seven languages on full-day schedules. The creation of radio stations aimed at particular language groups was coherent with the larger scheme of separate development and the ultimate goal of fabricating supposedly independent African states within the boundaries of South Africa. It gave the government the propaganda tool it wanted; it also meant a particular treatment of music on the airwaves. To be judged “acceptable” for Radio Bantu music had to be ideologically correct and comply with Christian ideals, reflect a positive view of South Africa, and uphold the culture of the targeted “tribal” group. In addition to the Publications Committee, stations had their own Review Boards that were in charge of assessing whether or not a piece of music could be put on the air. Broadly speaking, three genres were favoured by Radio Bantu: what was supposed to be “tribal” music, choral music, and popular music; under the latter, a form of standardised and emasculated mbaganga was manufactured with the collaboration of the main recording companies. Jazz was clearly unfit for the SABC and Radio Bantu (Hamm 1991) and many recordings of South African jazz made before were removed from the SABC’s archives and destroyed (Muller 2008: 162).

Life was particularly difficult for African musicians, even before the 1960s. Music was not considered a profession: “In South Africa, it was impossible to survive making music; music was considered as less than nothing. If you hadn’t a job as a manual worker or servant and you said you played drums, they would put you in prison and send you to work in the potato fields,” Louis Moholo told French journalist Gérard Rouy (quoted in McGregor 1995: 30). The condition of black musicians was made even more difficult by the Cape Musicians Association, a white union that endeavoured to prevent the employment of non-white musicians (Layne 1992: 87). In the eyes of trombonist Dave Galloway, apartheid “[…] slowed everything down. It interrupted the natural, evolitional flow of the art form. And it seriously polarised musicians who might otherwise have been more
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cooperative towards one another. You see, the blinkered Calvinists viewed jazz as a threat to their hegemony; they were not big on personal self-expression in the first place, and the fact that *anderskleuriges* [people of other colours] were involved in the performing arts scared the shit out of them. We lived in a very paranoid society back then, and a very unnatural one” (quoted in Devroop & Walton 2007: 123). One of the consequences was that, for a time, jazz sessions took place in private homes rather than in cafés, clubs and concert halls. “Cliffie Moses’ home in Mowbray, Kenny Jephta’s garage in Kensington, and numerous other private dwellings became a world apart for musicians of different colour to meet and express themselves through music” (Miller 2007: 142). In public places, musicians were permanently threatened. For instance, when pianist Tony Schilder was backed by a white drummer, the police told the latter to take his drum and sit on the dance floor (Devroop & Walton 2007: 87). When saxophonist David Mankunku Ngozi played with a white band at the Weizmann Hall, he was compelled to blow his horn behind a curtain because of the Separate Amenities Act; singer Donald Tshomela was asked by the management of the Waldorf Hotel, where he entertained guests, to wear a waiter’s jacket to legitimise his presence there. A few light-skinned coloured musicians managed to pass for white: pianist Henry February, bassist Brian Eggleson; on occasions, pianist Richard Schilder was presented as a recent immigrant from Hungary (Miller 2007: 141). Guitarist Cliffie Moses confided to Colin Miller that his band, the Four Sounds, played for ten years at the Three Cellars, and that they were never allowed to eat in the restaurant, but had their meals served in the kitchen (Miller 2007: 140). The ridiculous aspects of these incidents must not hide the violence and humiliation that underlay them, and that musicians also experienced in their dealings with the radio.

The division of the SABC into separate programmes organised on the basis of language groups allowed no space for cross-overs. Recordings by artists like Steve Kenana and Sipho “Hotstix” Mabuse were played on Radio Bantu and could not access the waves of Radio 526, in spite of their success with audiences that were far from being exclusively African (Abrahams 2003: 22). On the other hand, Radio Bantu refused to play Juluka’s records because it considered their productions “an insult to the Zulu and their culture” (Abrahams 2003: 23). In Cape Town, pianist Tony Schilder could only play during coloured programmes, and then could not bring the white bassist who used to accompany him; when he was invited to appear in a white programme, on Sunday mornings at 7 o’clock, he had to change his name to Toni Evans (Devroop & Walton 2007: 88). Similarly, after television was
finally launched in South Africa, Lionel Pillay, a pianist of Indian descent, had to use the pseudonym Lionel Martin, to appear on SABC TV\textsuperscript{27}, and the director of the programme made sure that his face was never shown (Devroop & Walton 2007: 4).

The large record companies abode by the regulations prescribed by the SABC, on which their sales were largely dependant; they associated certain genres with certain “population groups”. According to this distribution, coloured musicians were categorised as dance musicians and were not allowed to record jazz (Miller 2007: 143). When Jimmy Adams tried to record an “African” piece with his band, Gallo refused (Rasmussen 2003: 9). Faced with so many difficulties, several musicians who did not want to or could not go into exile decided to stop playing music altogether. That was the case, for instance, of saxophonist Basil Coetzee who worked in a shoe factory in the 1970s and early 1980s. Tony Schilder worked for a long time as a diamond setter, a regular job that protected him from the hazards of the musical profession (Devroop & Walton 2007: 84). Others went into pop and rock: saxophone player Ezra Ngcukana remembered that there was a time when he “[…] had to play in rock and roll bands to earn a living; it was horrible” (quoted in Mason 2007: 28).

Exile

“There were many of these brave men and women who left their homes and their country rather than submit to the perversion of their art by a perverse, inhuman ideology”\textsuperscript{28} wrote South African jazz expert Tony McGregor, the brother of exile Chris McGregor. All testimonies collected among musicians who decided to leave South Africa indicate how painful that experience was. Not only, maybe even not primarily because, at the beginning at least, they had to endure difficult material conditions, but because of the feeling of uprooting and homelessness they felt. Abdullah Ibrahim confided that dreaming was especially heartbreaking because he always dreamt of home\textsuperscript{29}. Louis Moholo, the only survivor of the Blue Notes to see the advent of post-apartheid South Africa, concurred: “To be an exile, it’s already horrible. People are totally ignorant of your way of life, which is different. That makes establishing relationships between them and you difficult. I have the feeling that I am being raped – in the exact meaning of the word – and I’m sure that Dudu [Pukwana] feels the same […] There are times when people can tell me anything, even a joke, I’m going to give it a particular interpretation in my head.”\textsuperscript{30}

South African musicians who settled in Europe and North America contributed
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significantly to the evolution of jazz and improvised music on these continents to an extent that may not always be clearly perceived in South Africa. In addition to, among others, Miriam Makeba, Hugh Masekela, Jonas Gwangwa, who made popular what would have been called marabi, African Jazz or jive in South Africa, saxophonist Harold Jephta in Sweden and guitarist and singer Jonathan Butler in the United States brought an original tone to, respectively, jazz and popular music. Abdullah Ibrahim and the Blue Notes participated in the musical upheaval that transformed jazz in the 1960s and 1970s. They brought new colours, new flavours, new conceptions of sounds, harmonies and rhythms to the places where they played and interacted with local musicians, and also particular aspirations to freedom that could be translated into music and understood by non-South Africans in a period when the experiments of “free” jazz were thriving. Their contribution was primarily musical, but it also had political implications because their music, and often what they said about their music and its origins, aroused an interest in South Africa, and facilitated the understanding of what was really happening there.

Exile also transformed the music produced by South Africans, not so much because they were exposed to ways of playing and understanding jazz of which they were largely ignorant, but because exile forced them to reassess the South African-ness of their music, to rediscover the idiosyncrasies that underpinned their approach to music and led them to unveil its specificity. Writer Alex la Guma considered that the kind of modern jazz that was played in Cape Town at the end of the 1960s was very similar to what was then coming from the United States. Recordings made at that time, as well as albums published just after the arrival of South African musicians in Europe, confirm it: the adoption and development of be-bop and post-be-bop jazz had created a gap between jazz-inspired South African popular music (marabi, mbaqanga, African jazz, jive, etc.) and the modern sounds emanating from the likes of the Jazz Epistles and the Blue Notes. Morris Goldberg, who went to New York, explains that: “The awareness of what we had indigenously came slowly when I was here” (quoted in Mason 2007: 29), an experience shared by most exiles. The combination of staggered cycles with overlapping entries which was roughly sketched by Chris McGregor in his arrangement of Kippie Moeketsi’s “Switch” became one of the trade marks of the successive big bands he led in Europe under the name Brotherhood of Breath. The subtle left-hand moves Abdullah Ibrahim used to suggest a ghoema beat became easily identifiable in his piano playing, while carnival music and marabi surfaced in the voicings of groups he called Ekaya [“at home” in isiXhosa]. Following a
concert Abdullah Ibrahim gave in 1967 at Carnegie Hall, New York, he explained: “Everything flooded back. I played through District Six, up Hanover Street, Doug Arendse’s little place in Caledon Street, the Coon Carnival, Windermere, children’s songs, up Table Mountain, through the hills of Pondoland, my mother, father, sisters, brothers – everything.”

The fertilisation of European improvised music by South African rhythms and sound textures achieved by Mongezi Feza, Dudu Pukwana, Chris McGregor, Johnny Dyani and Louis Moholo was almost totally ignored in South Africa before 1990, and have not been given great exposure since. Only Louis Moholo has been able to come back to his motherland with his group, Viva la Black, and perform there with other musicians so that the innovations derived from his European experience could be heard by South African jazz lovers. Abdullah Ibrahim continued to visit South Africa for several years, to play and record in his home country. But, after the Soweto rebellion of 1976, he decided to declare openly his support for the ANC, knowingly accepting that he would not be allowed to come back before the country was freed from apartheid: “At the time [before 1976], he explained to French journalist Gérard Rouy, we thought that it was better not to make any political statement so that we could freely enter and exit the country. Then there was the 1976 upheaval and it became obvious that the struggle was the only solution […] This is why in 1976 we decided to make public our political position, which implied that we will not be able to come back before liberation.”

Renaissance

In the recordings made by Abdullah Ibrahim between 1962 and 1976, one can discern two aspects. When his music is intended for the European and American markets, he appears fully immersed in the currents that agitate the modern jazz scene, to the point that he is sometimes considered abstract and abstruse; when he aims at the South African public, he dwells on marabi, swing, dance music, carnival music, blues, hymns, gospel, even incorporating “gestures from Sufi traditions”. According to musicologist Christine Lucia, the creation he elaborated from this particular mixture generated among his listeners a sense of time which was not only musical but induced a meaningful rapport between the past and the future of South Africa. For Lucia, the music Abdullah Ibrahim invented through the re-appropriation of his Capetonian and South African roots and their transmutation into a musical language that was unheard of, almost unthinkable, in the late 1960s.
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and early 1970s, “[…] feeds off an immense sense of loss – reaching back into the past through denotations of tropes such as the hymn, gospel, spiritual, slavery, the church, the blues, motherhood – but it is not merely a familiar tune used in a communal context (not merely ‘Abide with Me’ sung at soccer matches); it is a familiar generic type: hymn-blues. This allows it the freedom to become a site for imagining the utopian dream of South Africa after apartheid, to be part of the future” (Lucia 2002: 138). This music, bridging the past and the future, was to have an enormous impact in South Africa.

This understanding of the role of music converged with the concerns of musicians who stayed in South Africa. During the same period, reckons Basil Coetzee, “we started looking to Africa”38. In Cape Town, local music generated a new interest: “Those who remained resisted the system by creating alternative venues where black and white musicians and audiences could meet. These were mainly away from the watchful eye of the regime and in the predominantly black areas, like District Six, Woodstock, Maitland, Elsies River and Langa. Within this setting, musicians developed hybrid forms of jazz […] Kloos discovered marabi, ghoema embraced mbaqanga and jazz comfortably kept it all together! The rich musical environment of Cape Town in which these musicians grew up provided ample material for a creative process to occur. By marrying these sounds and presenting them in a jazz idiom, the musicians found an appropriate voice to articulate their aspirations. The translation of their oppressed experiences into hybrid forms of music was itself the greatest challenge to policies of separate development” (Miller 2007: 146). In spite of the difficulties musicians encountered when they wanted to move around, to play together in public, to perform music that did not respect the limitations the government, the radio and the recording industry strove to impose, jazz in Cape Town survived the trials of the early 1960s. In July 1968, the magazine Drum could print: “Cape jazz on the upbeat” (Miller 2007: 143) and Kensington was swinging (Ndzuta 2007: 20; Rasmussen 2003: 252). In the 1970s, more or less informal jam sessions were organised at several venues, although police harassment did not abate: The Four Sounds (with guitarist Cliffie Moses and bassist Basil Moses) played at the Beverley in Athlone, St Francis Hall in Langa was a haven for musicians and, later, the Galaxy in Rylands offered a stage to groups like Pacific Express or Workforce (Ndzuta 2007: 20). According to guitarist Alvin Dyers, after all, the 1970s and 1980s were a good time for both music and musicians who continued to mix irrespective of skin colour and official classifications (Ndzuta 2007: 21).

The sign that repression could not totally suffocate jazz creation came in 1968, when saxophonist Winston Mankunku Ngozi recorded a piece titled
“Yakhal'Inkomo” (The bellowing bull). Evoking a bull that mourns the loss of another, it became a gold record in a month and was re-issued several times. It was well received because the music was extremely powerful, and because it was understood as a “deep and painful cry” (Galane 2008: 249) that echoed and amplified the wail of black people. Winston Mankunku told Gwen Ansell what he had in mind when he conceived this piece: “‘Yakhal'Inkomo’ was an odd tune. Things were tough then – but don't ask me about all that, I don't want to discuss it. You had to have a pass; you got thrown out; the police would stop you, you know? I was about 22. I threw my pass away; wouldn't carry it. We had it tough. I was always being arrested and a lot of my friends and I thought it was too tough for black people and put that into the song. So it was 'The bellowing bull': for the black man's pain” (quoted in Ansell 2004: 132). Winston Mankunku Ngozi continued to play his music through the 1970s and 1980s, in the company of African, coloured and white musicians (especially pianist Mike Perry)\textsuperscript{39}.

1968 was also the year when Dollar Brand came back to South Africa, converted to Islam and chose the name Abdullah Ibrahim. In a series of articles published in The Cape Herald, he explained how he felt about South Africa and Cape Town, and how he intended to reconnect his music with “[…] virtually the entire musical universe of coloureds and Africans: the jazz of Kippie Moeketsi, the ghoe\textsuperscript{ma} beat and minstrel tunes of the Coon Carnival, 'Shangaan and Venda and Pedi' folk songs, the Malay choirs of Cape Town's coloured Muslims […]” (Mason 2007: 29). Back in New York, he started working on new compositions based on his new conceptions.

Abdullah Ibrahim came back to South Africa several times in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Rashid Vally, who owned a shop, the Kohinoor, on Market Street, Johannesburg, was a real treasure trunk overflowing with jazz records and who also managed an independent recording company, As Shams/The Sun, asked him to do a few albums on his label (Rasmussen 2000: 63–65). In 1971, Rashid Vally recorded Dollar Brand + 2\textsuperscript{40} and Dollar Brand + 3\textsuperscript{41}. In 1974, Abdullah Ibrahim went into the Gallo studios in Johannesburg with a group of young Capetonians known as Oswietie\textsuperscript{42}, who usually played danceable covers of English and American tunes in a rocky way. They recorded Underground in Africa, produced by Rashid Vally and published on the Mandla label. The album was quite well received; it definitely sounded South African, but in a fuzzy way: “Kalahari” was a long evocation of the desert in a modal, Miles\textsuperscript{davis}ian manner, not without a tinge of exoticism, but “All Day & All Night Long”, with its rocky rhythm discreetly incorporating the ghoe\textsuperscript{ma} beat, was more audibly related to Cape Town's musics (Ansell 2004: 151; Mason 2007: 34). Apart from the subtle outcrop of the ghoe\textsuperscript{ma} beat in one of the
Separation and Interweaving in the 20th Century: Fertile Intertwining tracks, *Underground in Africa* was important because it marked the beginning of a long-lasting collaboration between Abdullah Ibrahim and saxophonists Robbie Jansen and Basil Coetzee. In June 1974, Abdullah Ibrahim, Robbie Jansen and Basil Coetzee met again in the UCA studios in Cape Town, with bassist Paul Michaels and drummer Monty Weber, and also Morris Goldberg, who was visiting at the time and was not credited on the cover of the first editions of the album that resulted from this session. They recorded several pieces and eventually rapidly put together what was to become a landmark in the history of South African jazz under apartheid: “Mannenberg”. A synthesis of South African popular musics, the album *Mannenberg: Is Where It’s Happening* immediately sold like hot cakes, so much so that Gallo finally accepted to distribute it. It offered an “[…] intriguing combination of familiar ingredients – the groove was *marabi*, the beat resembled *ticky-draai* (or perhaps, a lazy *ghoema*, depending on who was listening), the sound of the saxophones was *langarm*, and the underlying aesthetic was jazz […]. Its unique combination of musical vocabularies and idioms, rooted in South Africa, yet aware of international trends, helped to make it ‘the most iconic’ [Ansell 2004: 153] composition in South Africa jazz history” (Mason 2007: 32). It rapidly became an emblem not only of the Cape Town coloured communities, but of all the victims of apartheid who, having heard the message of the Black Consciousness Movement, looked for creations that could make them proud. Energised by Basil Coetzee’s solo (which gained him the nickname “Mannenberg”), “Mannenberg” was used in the 1980s during anti-apartheid meetings as an anthem of sorts. Randal Abrahams, who worked for the community Bush Radio and the SABC, remembered: “For me, the most South African thing about the whole experience is the short, terse phrase: ‘Julle kan maar New York toe gaan maar ons bly hier in die Manenberg’ (You can go to New York but we will stay here in Manenberg) […]. When it was performed at the Luxurama Theatre in Wynberg at the height of the school boycotts during the 1980s, it spoke to the experience of living in an area created by the apartheid regime but refusing to allow any form of oppression to break the collective spirit and will of the people” (Abrahams 2003: 11).

The Time of Fusions

In the 1980s, there were jam sessions at the Villa Review, Athlone, and Five-to-Four on Landsdowne Road, which supplemented the regular programmes offered by the Base in the city, the Goldfinger in Athlone, or the Landrost Hotel in Landsdowne where be-bop, jazz-rock and fusion could be heard. Pianist Tony
Schilder, who belonged to a large family of talented musicians, opened the club Montreal, in Manenberg, which for several years served as a the rallying place for jazz musicians in Cape Town (Ndzuta 2007: 20–21, 79). Jazz was still alive, but the collaboration between Abdullah Ibrahim and Oswietie indicated that the frontier between jazz and popular music was fading away. As a matter of fact, in the late 1970s and the 1980s musicians experimented with various kinds of fusions, inspired by the rock, jazz-rock and jazz-fusion styles that were highly successful in the United States.

**South African integrations**
South Africa after the Soweto uprisings of 1976 witnessed an explosion of musical fusions. Abdullah Ibrahim had shown that marabi, ghoema and other genres of early 20th century South African music could be re-inserted into modern productions to rekindle a political imagination able to rely on past experiences in order to build a future. Other musicians, who had the opportunity of visiting Rhodesia, where the music scene was open to artists from other African countries who were not allowed in South Africa, discovered the existence of various genres of African modern music. Sipho “Hotstix” Mabuse remembered that when he began playing in the late 1960s he was not interested in the type of South African music that was available on records or played on the radio. Mbaqanga and isicathamiya sounded too unsophisticated to his educated, urban ears. He could only relate to international pop or rock groups broadcast on Radio 5. In the early 1970s he played in a combo that called themselves the Beaters, a transparent allusion to the Beatles. Their music was a blend of pop and rock, with a lot of African-American soul music. The Black Consciousness Movement contributed to the identification with soul music, which was associated with the Civil Rights and Black Power movements. When invited to play in Salisbury [the colonial name of Harare] in 1976, the Beaters had the opportunity of hearing the type of rumba played by Zairian musicians. It was a revelation: they realised that modern and urban music could be genuinely African. On their return to South Africa, they changed their name to Harari [at the time an African suburb of Salisbury] and started to “Africanise” their music. 1976 was also the year Johnny Clegg and Sipho Mchunu formed Juluka, but the difference was that Harari, and other South African fusion groups, drew their inspiration from urban, modern, commercialised music and looked to the United States, and especially to African-American music, rather than to British rock. In other words, fusion groups appeared as the continuators of a form of South African popular music permeated by a cluster of African-American
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music: jazz, gospel, rhythm and blues and soul music. The musical trajectories of musicians such as Sipho “Hotstix” Mabuse, or saxophonist Khaya Mahlangu, who was part of Harari before he became a renowned jazzman, confirmed that the frontier between popular music and jazz had again been erased.

In 1981, Khaya Mahlangu formed another group, Sakhile, with bass guitar virtuoso Sipho Gumede. The name Sakhile means “we have built”, intimating that they had constructed a musical edifice from various material and that their work provided a place to ponder the future. According to Khaya Mahlangu: “Our concept primarily consists of different styles which come from different cultures with emphasis on indigenous music. At the time [of Sakhile’s formation], there were not many people who were giving local music a broader expression with a universal flavour.” Other groups experimenting with the fusion of different musical ingredients included Bayete, who had a hit in 1984 with “Shosholoza”, Sankomota (originally from Lesotho), Spirits Rejoice, Mango Groove and Winston Jive’s Mix Up. The latter two, formed during the second half of the 1980s, embodied a renewal of interest for 1950s South African music, jive and kwela; they reinserted in a modern language elements from musics whose memories evoked times of multiracial resistance against the implementation of apartheid. Christopher Ballantine aptly underlined that “[b]ands such as Sakhile, Bayete, and Johnny Clegg’s Savuka – as well as countless others, many of them less well known – played music in which the blend might be mbaqanga with traditional Nguni song; Cape Coloured klospé idioms with be-bop; marabi with electronic rock; Zulu guitar style with Cape Malay ghommaliedjies; or many other permutations. It is what these integrations discovered and made possible that was exciting and important, for, like their audiences, the bands where wholly non-racial, rejecting in their behaviour and commitment, centuries of racial and class dichotomy. Their music was an alchemy, helping, in its way, to corrode the old social order and to liberate the new” (Ballantine 1989: 310).

Cape Town’s fusions

The forerunner of the fusion movement in Cape Town appears to have been the Crusaders, a band led by trumpeter Temba Ngwenya, which featured pianist Roger Koza, and offered an early version of Afro-jazz, mixing jazz, mbaqanga and langarm (Rasmussen 2003: 117). Pacific Express, launched in the 1960s by bassist Paul Abrahams and guitarist Issy Ariefdien, was originally geared to American music and was dubbed “Cape Town’s answer to Earth Wind and Fire”. It evolved towards a kind of soul-jazz-fusion when pianist Chris Schilder joined in 1975. Their music
Sounding the Cape
did not sound specifically South African or Capetonian; it betrayed an aspiration to modernity that only the United States could satisfy. Yet Pacific Express played a crucial role in the evolution of Cape Town’s music because it served as conservatory where many musicians cut their teeth, notably: Jonathan Butler, Basil Coetzee and Robbie Jansen. Jonathan Butler left for Great Britain, then the United States, where he became a successful pop artist. Paul Abrahams, Chris Schilder, drummer Jack Momple, Basil Coetzee and Robbie Jansen became central figures in the musical and political storms that hit Cape Town in the 1980s. Basil Coetzee and Robbie Jansen blew the saxophones in Oswietie, which led them to record Mannenberg and many other albums with Abdullah Ibrahim. While, during the second half of the 1980s, Peto, with singer Sindile Ringo Madlingozi and members of the Ngcukana family, saxophonist Ezra and keyboardist Cyril, represented the Afro-Pop side of Cape Town – a blend that made them win the national “Shell Road to Fame” talent competition in 1986 – Robbie Jansen and Basil Coetzee were involved in attempts at using the ghoema as a basis for a new conception of jazz.

Robbie Jansen and Basil Coetzee
Robbie Jansen (1949–2010) was born in Claremont. Because of the Group Areas Act, his family was moved to Elsies River, then a destitute area where only one street was paved. His father played in a Salvation Army band. Young Robbie started with a guitar and sang, then he tried the trumpet but finally chose the alto saxophone, to which he added the flute. When he began playing professionally, he appeared with groups like the Rockets, modelled on European rock-pop guitar groups; later he discovered African-American soul music, and jazz with Basil Coetzee and Abdullah Ibrahim. After a stint with Spirits Rejoice in Johannesburg, he came back to Cape Town and started Oswietie, which also served as a backing band to one of the most famous 1970s Klopop, the Great Gatsbys; he then participated in many musical adventures, mixing jazz, soul music and the ghoema beat.

Basil Coetzee (1944–1998) was born in District Six and his family was moved to Manenberg in 1969. As a child he was exposed to the variety of music that could be easily heard in District Six: the Eoan Group’s Italian operas, the Malay Choirs, the Klopop, marabi. He recalled: “When I started getting involved with music, it was sort of a mixture of all these different influences that was actually going on around me.”48 At 18, he played the flute in Peter and the Wolf, but at about the same time he discovered jazz through Abdullah Ibrahim and Kippie Moeketsi. He began his career as an uncompromising jazz musician with people like saxophonist Duke Makasi and pianist Pat Matshikiza. He had been struck by
Saxophonist Robbie Jansen (1949–2010), companion of Abdullah Ibrahim and initiator of Cape jazz.
the particular sound Kippie Moeketsi got out of his alto saxophone, which for him was markedly African, different from the sound of American saxophonists, and he tried to introduce in his own music elements denoting Africa and Cape Town. “All the time through my years as a musician I’ve also tried looking to Africa … to find more about African music, because we’re not really Africans here, in the sense that we’re African bred … I mean we’re born on this continent but we’re not tribal you see.” Consequently, the style he developed over the years was “… actually a combination of all those different forms of music. I don’t know what to call it. We call it maybe jazz, but that is the nearest that we can come to it because it has form, it has structure, and we can improvise on it. I guess that’s the reason why they call it jazz, there’s a jazz part of it. But now the Cape side of it, that is a combination of the different influences …there’s also a form of music that is called ghoema … there is also a music that we got involved in say about 15 years ago which is the bushmen music ….”

The Genuines
The jazz-ghoema mix was systematised by the Genuines, a group led by bassist Gerald “Mac” McKenzie, in which Robbie Jansen often featured. Walking in the footsteps of Pacific Express, they broke off with what amounted to a clever imitation of American music by infusing in it the rhythms and the melodic contours of Klopse music. Their brand of ghoema music was usually sped up and energetic, which made it appealing to audiences accustomed to rock. “Mac” McKenzie was himself the son of a legendary banjo player and Klopse leader known as “Mr Mac”. He was brought up in the Christmas Choirs, the Malay Choirs and the Klopse. The jazz dimension of the Genuines was provided by pianist Hilton Schilder, son of Tony Schilder and nephew of Chris Schilder, heir to a family that gave many jazz greats to Cape Town. The Genuines decided to call their “jazzy kind of rock” ghoema, and in 1987 went into a recording studio with “Mr Mac” to cut an album that heralded the birth of original Cape Town jazz: Mr Mac and the Genuines (Shifty Records), including such classical Klopse tunes as “Baba Riebab” or “Blikkie se Boem”. Robbie Jansen also worked from ghoema music, but wanted to enrich it, to complexify it and, first of all, to broaden it by making it more African. In his late 1980s recordings, Robbie Jansen, supported by Hilton Schilder, Jack Momple, Monty Weber, Errol Dyers, rejuvenated vasstrap with mbaqanga, jazz harmonies and intricate rhythms. He explained the process of music re-composition he went through in the 1980s in the following manner: “The traditional music of Cape Town if you’re not talking
about tribal music, it would be the Coon Carnival music you know, which we call *ghoema* music … In the dance hall the music was mainly ballroom, waltz and quick steps and *langarm*, which was very much like the Coon music as well, using the same beat, the *ghoema* beat, that was very famous. We also used the *ghoema* beat but, after the *langarm* we were more into the pop music and played *ghoema* but it was a … a different kind of *ghoema* like a more African type of *ghoema* … It was a more heavier beat, heavier bass, different kind of bass lines, different drum lines because you know. … the youngsters they wanted more heavier rhythms and it was like faster, more frenzied, more violent sounding, double beat and stuff like that … That was the type of music we played in the struggle … That wasn’t exactly *ghoema* music, it had more to do with freedom. The music we also changed because the *ghoema* music was just, how can I say, it only moves around three chords harmony and it’s little, it is not very wide, one rhythmic pattern, so … we went into 13/4 and to complex rhythms and other harmonies and different chords and played more complicated lines: it was more jazzy, although we never really intended it to be jazz.”

_Sabenza_

Basil Coetzee shared the same attitude and intended the music he played with his group, Sabenza, to be a “people’s music”52. Paul Abrahams and Basil Coetzee frequently appeared at anti-apartheid meetings in the 1980s. They were sometimes joined by Jack Momple and Robbie Jansen, and the four of them formed the backbone of Sabenza53. In 1986, they recorded for Mountain Records an album which is still considered a landmark in the development of jazz in Cape Town because of the subtlety and imagination with which the musicians enmeshed African, South African and American traits. The amalgamation processes they used were analysed by musicologist Norbert Nowotny, who concluded: “Musically the most striking feature of Sabenza is the fusion of western and African elements which can be detected not only in their melodies (e.g. “Coventry Road”) and the unusual song forms, but also in the polyrhythmic structure of the rhythmic background and melodic invention (e.g. “African jazz Dance”) as well as in the pentatonic nature of especially Basil Coetzee’s improvisations” (Nowotny 1995: 150). The tone of the saxophones was definitely Capetonian, and bore traces of the *langarm* blowers; Basil Coetzee’s solos frequently relied on pentatonic scales, which are not only African but nearly universal, and the rhythmic thrust was fuelled by elaborate cross metres (Nowotny 1995: 146–147).
Two independent record companies helped musicians circumvent the official and unofficial forms of censorship with which they were confronted in their dealings with recording companies and the SABC: Mountain Records and Shifty. Shifty – using a mobile studio housed in a caravan, thence its name – was created by Lloyd Ross and Ivan Kadey in 1983, but was soon left under the sole responsibility of Lloyd Ross. From the start, Shifty’s goal was to give musicians a channel that would allow them to circulate original music with a social and political message. Lloyd Ross achieved this goal and was instrumental in building the success of Warrick Sony’s Kalahari Surfers, Sankomota, Mzwakhe Mbuli, the Voëlvry artists and, from Cape Town, the Genuines and Tannas. Lloyd Ross’ memoirs tell a lot about the mood of the 1980s, the youth’s attitudes, the audacity of some musicians and the astuteness of those who wanted them to be heard: “The political slogans of the time were ‘Forward to People’s Power’ and so on, but in my subculture, the music subculture, there was also a spirit of ‘Fuck apartheid, let’s dance’, as the fanzine Vula put it. Young people were ignoring boundaries, listening to each other’s music, playing together. Some even believed it was possible to rock apartheid into oblivion. But nobody was recording the music … The original idea was not to start a record company, but merely provide a cheap facility to document our and other peoples’ music … Ironically, the first full Shifty project was not a punk or new wave band at all, but Sankomota, recorded in Lesotho in late 1983. I had heard them whilst working on a documentary in Lesotho earlier that year. At that stage the band was a three piece, but they had previously toured South Africa with a larger outfit under the name Uhuru. Because of their lyric content, their name and the provocative onstage outbursts of a band member who went by the name of Black Jesus, Sankomota were thrown out of the country … We had made what was patently a good album; its subsequent track record and critical acclaim confirms that. But no record company was willing to release it. The music did not conveniently fit into any of the industry’s pigeonholes, and no one could see past that. This bias against original or edgy music was reinforced by the broadcast media with their safe and restrictive play-lists. Sankomota failed a number of tests in this regard. Firstly, they sang in different languages, which violated grand apartheid’s pipedream of keeping all languages pure and separate. Secondly, the lyrics referred to what was really happening in the country, which was of course a total no-no. And finally, the music was eclectic, a concept that has confused industry marketing departments since the invention of the gramophone.”
Mountain Records was created in Cape Town in 1998 in a somewhat different spirit. Its founder Patrick Lee-Thorp had been the manager for Pacific Express. He was concerned that “the established companies were not really interested in regionally based artists and particularly those living in the shadow of Table Mountain, over 1000 miles from the business metropolis of Johannesburg”, and wanted to demonstrate that the motto “local is lekker” [local is nice] also applied to innovative music. Mountain Records started with an LP by David Kramer, which was well received. Recordings by musicians who had played in Pacific Express followed: Basil Coetzee’s Sabenza (1987) and Robbie Jansen’s Vastrap Island (1989) received warm accolades. Patrick Lee-Thorp decided to use the brilliant success of his first productions to circulate Cape Town music internationally. “This was in the early 80s when the ‘Cultural Boycott’ of South Africa was gaining momentum. Consistently the target of political discrimination within the country, many of the Mountain stable of artists had little prospect of expanding their horizons. Lee-Thorp argued that this blanket boycott of already disadvantaged artists was a cold political ploy and he continued to seek international outlets for his performers while actively promoting their releases at home.”

Thanks to his effort, Sabenza, Robbie Jansen and, later, Amampondo were able to tour Europe. Finally, Patrick Lee-Thorp’s “local is lekker” spirit led him to invent the name “Cape jazz”, which he defined as: “… the music performed and composed by the jazz musicians who live and work at the Cape of Good Hope! There is a special texture and feeling to this music that makes it unique … I could see in it a strong reflection of the social and physical environment from which it came. For reasons of economic necessity, jazz players based in this city play music from a range of styles … Some of the influences range from the music of the North American jazz stars to experiences in Christian or Muslim choirs, which for many were their first meetings with formal music training. To this add the gentle melodies of the African sub-continent. Others responded to the carnival music of the South Americas brought by seafarers to this port city. Brew the mixture for many hours in the smokies (drinking and smoking shebeens) of one of the townships like the once colourful neighbourhood of District Six, and you have Cape jazz.”

Most of the musicians who participated in the elaboration of the new sounds that blew through Cape Town in the 1980s were politically concerned, and were aware that musical innovations conveyed a political message. They explicitly, deliberately mixed everything, and therefore showed obvious disrespect for apartheid regulations and contempt for its ideology. The bands were formed on the basis of the instrumentalists’ talent; in order to be original, to respond to the
aspirations of their audiences, they took what they needed wherever they could find it, irrespective of classifications in terms of “race”, “tribe” or nationality. They were supported by independent record companies whose directors shared the same points of view, and sometimes by radio programmers operating from the fringes of South Africa, including in Bantustans turned into supposedly independent states. However, for many, expressing their discontent and their opposition through music was not enough: they used music as a voice to mobilise support for the anti-apartheid struggle.

Musical Struggles against Apartheid

The Soweto uprisings rippled down to Cape Town and stirred a renewal of political action, which was infused with the ideas of Black Consciousness, and also with a re-appropriation of the ideals of the Freedom Charter. Neighbourhoods like Bonteheuwel and Langa became hotspots of political agitation. In 1980, school boycotts led to the creation of grassroots anti-apartheid organisations. In 1981, the ANC flag was openly raised at the funeral of Hennie Ferris, an ANC activist who had been jailed on Robben Island. Then a series of demonstrations denounced the futileness of the Republic Festival organised by the government for the 20th anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic of South Africa. The years that followed saw large numbers of pupils and students rally to anti-apartheid organisations, a trend that culminated with the official launch of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in Rocklands, Mitchell’s Plain, on 28 August 1983 (Field nd). The UDF was an umbrella organisation accommodating all kinds of movements, united in their 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 we” and succeeded in pushing back “the frontiers of what was politically possible” (Seekings 2000: 93, 22, 119). Demonstrations, street clashes with the forces of repression multiplied in the mid-1980s, especially in places like Athlone, Bonteheuwel, Gugulethu and Mitchell’s Plain. The campus of the University of the Western Cape (UWC), an institution “reserved” for coloureds, became a major centre of debate and action, regularly raided by the police. The UDF was banned on 24 February 1988 but continued to operate underground in spite of difficulties of organisation and communication. It eventually decided to “unban” itself in 1989. After the ANC was legalised again, 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, besides and in support of the ANC (Seekings 2000).

Musicians and the UDF

Jazz and fusion musics could be interpreted as implicit condemnations of apartheid. Many musicians actually meant it, and shared trumpeter Johnny Mekoa’s point of view: “With playing jazz, we were stating our dislikes of the racist regime” (quoted in Devroop & Walton 2007: 18). In spite of his political aloofness, guitarist Philip Tabane was seen as a beacon of liberty, and his unrelenting explorations in musical freedom have been widely understood as an assertion of black autonomy through creation (Galan 2009). Other musicians suggested their commitment in discrete ways. In a live performance, pianist and composer Gideon Nxumalo disguised a quotation of “Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika” in the second movement of his Jazz Fantasia (Coplan & Jules-Rosette 2008: 200–201). Much more explicitly, in the late 1960s and 1970s, Lefifi Tladi developed with his group, Dashiki, projects based on the idea of community art. They were influenced by the African-American Last Poets and became closely linked to the cultural wing of the Black Consciousness Movement. In public performances, Dashiki fused music with political poetry to demonstrate that pleasure and creativity expressed in vernacular idioms were necessarily political.

The launch of the UDF revived a history of cooperation between musicians and political movements which went back to the pre-World War II times of the Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union and the ANC’s involvement in vaudeville production (Ballantine 1991: 141–143). After recording “Mannenberg” with Abdullah Ibrahim, Robbie Jansen and Basil Coetzee popularised the tune by playing it at many rallies and demonstrations, so much so that it became identified with the ANC and became a kind of anti-apartheid anthem in Cape Town. Robbie Jansen used to intersperse it with little political sermons, calling the audiences to “rise up” and “be proud of our own stuff” (Mason 2003: 39). Basil Coetzee was frequently called upon to appear at rallies and meetings. He played solo or, often, with Pacific Express bassist Paul Abrahams. The duo participated in the launch of the UDF on 28 August 1983 and activists revelled in the sound they remembered from “Mannenberg”, sound which for them carried echoes of freedom. Around Paul Abrahams, Basil Coetzee formed a new band, Sabenza, with Paula Goldstone or Michael Martins (keyboards), James Kibby (guitar), Jack Momple, Tich Arendse or Deon Slabber (drums), a group Robbie Jansen occasionally joined. They participated in fund-raising concerts for families of those detained without
trial, imprisoned for political reasons, and all victims of apartheid (Nowotny 1995: 137), played at numerous trade union and UDF concerts and rallies, went to Amsterdam in 1987 for the Culture in Another South Africa conference, and supported the ANC when it was unbanned.

Basil Coetzee’s and Paul Abrahams’ political commitment made a very strong impression on Robbie Jansen and prompted him to emulate them: “I’d heard these two guys play and I admired them. I so admired them for what they stood for. While we were playing pop music to stay alive, Basil refused. And Paul refused. They didn’t want to play this kind of music. So, through admiration, I went up to go and play with them, and I followed them.” Robbie Jansen and his bands, which were always mixed, played at rallies, on campuses, interpreted freedom songs and invented new ones. Robbie Jansen explained to Gareth Crawford: “The people here needed us to educate them to tell them the reason why we had to change the system” (quoted in Devroop & Walton 2007: 52). This he did in one of his most famous songs of the late 1980s “How I’d Love to Feel Free (in my own country)”. According to cultural activist Steve Gordon, it “… is maybe his finest ode to freedom. As a singer, he addresses freedom. Childlike and chatty, the first verses coaxes: ‘Are you here? Are you there? Freedom where have you been hiding yourself? I’ve been looking all over.’ Then, in shocked desperation; ‘Are you real?’ or (punctuating this question, as though thinking aloud): ‘Do. You. Just. Exist, in imagination of my song?’”

**MAPP**

One of the outcomes of the involvement of musicians in the UDF was the creation of Music Action for People’s Power (MAPP). Trumpeter and maths teacher Duke Ngcukana, who became the coordinator of the MAPP music school in 1989, explained that: “MAPP, when it started, it was an affiliate of the UDF, it was Music Action for People’s Power, it was to use music as a vehicle for liberation. Also to subvert the government through music, for instance, meetings were banned, but concerts were not banned, so through concerts you could have these rallies without the authorities knowing.” After a UDF concert given in 1986 at Rocklands Civic, Mitchell’s Plain, Basil Coetzee and Steve Gordon, a sound engineer and cultural activist, felt the need for a structure which would bring together musicians committed to democratic movements in Cape Town. At a first meeting organised in April 1986, it was agreed that “… while it is important to facilitate the building of a ‘culture of resistance’, we need to move beyond mere resistance … that apartheid had created ‘islands of culture’ in our society, and that
as cultural activists, their role was to help break down the barriers, and be part of the building of a true ‘South African Culture’.”

The decision to create Music Action for People’s Power was made.

MAPP participated in all kinds of political events: it held cultural workshops with trade unions, community organisations and youth groups, but also acted as a booking agency and opened a school. Duke Ngcukana considered that a school was indispensable for the achievement of MAPP projects: “So I proposed that actually MAPP should be a school, doing all these other fields, but the core should be a school, and then the school would get four areas of work. One was a full-time course, with two streams, one was a jazz course to prepare the youth and young adults, some actually were quite old, to enter the University of Cape Town to follow the professional circuit. The other lot was a choral programme to train teachers … The third programme was working with a music therapist; the first one was Sol Abner, working with street kids, disabled children. Then the fourth programme was identifying community centres, as far as Stellenbosch, where there were music activities; we would go there and check out their needs and play whatever was reckoned there.”

In 1989, the year the school opened, MAPP, changed its name to Music Action for People’s Progress, and moved from Landsdowne to the Joseph Stone Auditorium in Athlone. MAPP was able to mobilise many musicians as performers and teachers; it trained a new generation that would enliven the Cape musical scene after 1990, and, according to David B. Coplan, “… soon became willy-nilly the quasi-official spokesmen for what musicians should and shouldn’t, would and wouldn’t do for political reasons” (Coplan 2002: 3). MAPP was able to extend its activities, to open the school, to support Duke Ngcukana’s Chorimba project, and to run outreach programmes in New Crossroads, Khayelitsha, Langa, Gugulethu, Athlone, Manenberg, Green Point and Stellenbosch, thanks to the support of The Network, the Swedish National Organisation for Non-Profit Cultural Associations. Unfortunately, with the advent of democracy in South Africa, foreign donors considered that it was no longer necessary to fund former anti-apartheid organisations, whatever the work they continued doing in the 1990s. The Network’s grant to MAPP was discontinued, and since it did not get enough subsidies from the local authorities or the national government, MAPP was compelled to put an end to its activities after a three-day festival organised at the Nico Malan Theatre, the former stronghold of white culture in Cape Town, from 2 to 5 February 1994, an event which featured what looked like a who’s who of Cape Town’s musicians.
From Interweaving to Creation

The presence of jazz musicians at UDF rallies and meetings underlay the emergence of the phrase “Cape jazz” to designate a particular type of jazz which had emerged in Cape Town during the 1980s. Cape jazz has become a commercial label and its existence as a definite musical genre has been disputed. Yet, it cannot be denied that Cape Town served as a melting pot for musical blending that did not develop elsewhere. Colin Miller considers that: “Cultural activism became an important platform for resistance and ensured that Cape jazz became a key vehicle of expression for the anti-apartheid movement” (Miller 2008: 3). This is an opinion supported by Vincent Kolbe, for whom a piece titled “Die Struggle” based on the *ghoema* beat, played by Mac McKenzie and Hilton Schilder during the 1985 municipal workers’ strike, could be considered as the birth certificate of Cape jazz. It appeared in the wake of “Mannenberg” and signalled the emergence of a new township culture, of which the UDF was part and parcel, a culture embraced by the youth under the influence of Black Consciousness ideas. Young activists who had been born or raised in the new townships after their parents had been relocated, and students who lived in close proximity to the African and coloured working classes, absorbed popular forms of music that could be used in demonstrations and rallies, occasions when interactions and exchanges could take place. Eventually, African township music infiltrated working-class styles of coloured music on the backdrop of their common fascination for American musics.

The elusive Cape jazz

What has been called Cape jazz incorporates and transforms musical idiosyncrasies that are particular to Cape Town coloured musicians. First, there is a particular saxophone tone that can still be heard in *langarm* bands, which may originate in violin techniques used in Cape Town. According to Vincent Kolbe: “Lots of war returnees had saxophone and clarinet skills and some brass … They had to imitate the violin figure on the saxophone. And this is how the Cape shape of line [on the saxophone] developed. And lots of people actually had this wail. The sound, a terrible kind of fish-horn sound which has been often criticised. And important is that it actually coincided with the jazz saxophone wail” (quoted in Nixon 1997: 21). However, insisted Alex van Heerden, it was not only the sound of *langarm* saxophonists that was singular: their melodic turns were also original: “… they have their own way of playing saxophone harmonies and arrangements, and melodic inflexions which are quite unique and aren’t American. And I’m not just
talking about the vibrato, it’s almost like melodic phrases that they use, particularly in the *vastrap*, when they play what they call *sopoleis* – that’s another word that they use, it means a meat soup – which is apparently one of the *langarm* dances where they actually have fixed arrangements in the dances … When they play the *vastrap*, there are certain melodic themes that they have obviously adapted from maybe the violin or the concertina or something, that’s unique and developed into that unique saxophone style.”

*Langarm*, as well as *Klopse* bands, were of course a training ground for many Capetonian musicians. By playing *vastrap* or *moppies*, they learned to set any melody to the *ghoema* beat. That was not totally new, and Sathima Bea Benjamin admitted that the musicians with whom she started singing “… used to take old songs and put them on top of this rhythm, in harmony, and sing them all night” (quoted in Martin 2000b: 41). But that was systematised and applied to material which was no longer made of jazz standards or pop songs, but of the fusions that had been concocted during the 1970s and early 1980s.

Duke Ngcukana, who hardly recognises the existence or specificity of Cape jazz, states bluntly: “That time [in the 1960s], there was no talk of Cape jazz.” He thinks that it was heard for the first time at the Grahamstown National Arts Festival in the second half of the 1970s. The idea of Cape jazz was probably inspired by Abdullah Ibrahim’s appropriation and transfiguration of carnival tunes, which underpin compositions such as “Homecoming” (Miller 2007: 145). Morris Goldberg pursued the same line with “Pedal Pusher”, a composition by Gary Kriel he played on his album *Jazz in Transit* (Mountain Records, 1983). In the same period, a new generation of musicians juggled with all sorts of South African rhythms to rejuvenate and localise their creations (Galane 2008: 223–250). In Cape Town, pianist Kyle Shepherd claimed that guitarists Alvin and Errol Dyers, Hilton Schilder, Robbie Jansen and Mac McKenzie were among the musicians who took “… traditional *ghoema* and extended it to an extent that it became an art form, not just traditional music … they added a lot of things … they intellectualised it a bit more” (quoted in Ndzuta 2007: 37). Colin Miller emphasised the role played by the Genuines in this movement: “Together Mac McKenzie and Hilton formed the Genuines. The band pushed the boundaries of music in Cape Town by mixing traditional *ghoema* music with driving rock beats and jazz improvisation. Although the band was short-lived, it made a major impact on the local jazz scene.”

The phrase “Cape jazz” appeared at a time of social and political turmoil in which some musicians reassessed their relationship with the Cape and its history and became more directly involved in politics. Duke Ngcukana considers that it
was basically created by coloured musicians who wanted to (re)claim an identity: “Cape jazz I think was more of . . . the coloured people wanting to have an identity”; while he thinks that it did not have distinct musical characteristics, he nevertheless admits that Cape Town “has a strong tradition of having a particular voice” and recognises that, in their own ways, Basil Coetzee, in whose music he heard a singular “innocence”, and Mac McKenzie were and are musical giants. George Werner insists that the Cape jazz movement must be understood in the context of the musicians’ growing political awareness: “Cape jazz was coined during the UDF period during the mid-80s. What happened in the mid-80s? Suddenly the musicians started standing up, you had COSATU . . . UDF started having rallies here, and the musicians got involved in the rallies . . . Suddenly the guys were composing protest music . . . At the same time they wanted to identify themselves different from the guys in Jo’burg . . . Cape jazz, is it different? It is not different, Cape jazz is just a bunch of musicians who started working together like at MAPP, with this MAPP incentive, and they wanted to promote their own music.”

Political involvement and asserting a Capetonian (not exclusively coloured) identity went hand in hand: a new style had to be invented to accompany the mass movement; it had to be rooted in the musical history of Cape Town and could be related to an African-American genre of music that had become universal. Musicians were no longer satisfied with reproducing foreign genres such as soul music, funk or jazz-rock, they had to make their own voice heard in the struggle. This is why they went in quest of their roots: “I think they started wanting to look at themselves and say ‘who am I?’; Erroll Dyers and Robbie [Jansen] weren’t that much Khoisan until that moment when they began to identify with a certain . . . so they started looking at their own roots.” They brought something new in the way jazz was played in Cape Town but remained Capetonians who played jazz, alongside other Capetonians who also played jazz in a slightly different manner, like Winston Mankunku Ngozi and Ezra Ngcukana, who were influenced by John Coltrane but did not repudiate township jazz. For George Werner, the best illustration of the futility of this kind of labelling remains Abdullah Ibrahim: “When you listen to his music, then I would say there is no such thing as Cape music, Cape jazz and African jazz, because he has African . . . music, and he’s got the ghoema music as well, the Kaapse Klopse music, he’s got the church music, in his music, he’s got the mbaqanga . . . there is this sound on the saxophone and it is very important . . . the sound of that saxophone that’s playing with the langarm bands . . . that wailing . . . so Dollar actually made use of that.”

The various narratives trying to reconstruct the origins of Cape jazz provide a
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few clues from which it seems possible to sketch a definition. It is jazz, because it demands improvisation; it includes elements from *ghoema*, *langarm* and *Klopse* music; but it also assimilates elements from African, or township, jazz. It is a mixture of definite ingredients that arose from the interactions of musicians coming from different backgrounds and seeking a common identity in a very special political conjuncture (Miller 2007: 144). Some actors or commentators of the Cape musical scene have perceived it as essentially coloured. Jimmy Adams claimed that it was a coloured invention: “When I asked saxophonist Jimmy Adams for his definition of Cape jazz, writes Colin Miller in the introduction to his *Jazz Collection*, he answered, ‘… it is our music, the music of the people, the Coloured people’. When pressed on this question, Adams explained it was music that accompanied picnics and annual street parades in Cape Town” (Miller 2008: 2). The dominant opinion, however, is that Cape jazz is neither coloured nor African but inextricably mixed. Even Duke Ngcukana put aside his reluctance to eventually acknowledge the existence of Cape jazz when he underlined that Mac McKenzie and the Genuines or the Ghoema Captains interwove township jazz and the *ghoema* beat: “… what they did is to take African music, popular African music and play it to that beat … if you were to say a Cape jazz, then you would typify that because it’s different to anything I’ve ever heard anywhere in the world, it’s different.”

From his experience of playing with Cape musicians, Alex van Heerden thought the combination was not limited to rhythm only but also implied harmony and melody: “I’ve almost been apprenticed by a certain community of musicians, like Robbie Jansen, Mac McKenzie, Hilton Schilder. I would say they formed my ideas about Cape music, because I played with them more than with anyone else. So I would say, through them, Cape music is a music that acknowledges Khoisan origins as well as the *Klopse*, as well as American jazz: that’s Cape jazz for me in the way that I was taught it by these people that I played with.” A little later, he elaborated on the parameters that could help define Cape music and Cape jazz: “I would think that essential is the rhythm, which they call *vastrap* or *ghoema*, when it’s carnival they call it *ghoema*. Then harmonically, it’s the European harmonic tradition that we inherited from folk songs and church music, which is very major based: tonic, subdominant, dominant, and different arrangements of those … The main difference harmonically between African jazz and Cape music is: in African jazz, they use the same kind of chords, tonic, dominant, subdominant, and it shifts quite rapidly between those chords, one bar each maybe, and over and over and over. Cape music does that as well but you might wait a bit longer on these chords … so you have a lot of inversion of chords and slight modulations
to other keys, which you find in hymns which came over into Cape jazz, in the compositions of everybody, from Abdullah Ibrahim obviously ... but also in the more contemporary ... The music that we've played as Cape jazz, it's very influenced by church music and the harmonic complexities which come with that. Which is nice because it's not American jazz. It's a different kind of harmonic system with its own complexity but because it's all major chords, it still sounds African in a sense.\textsuperscript{779} Alex van Heerden disentangled the various threads woven in the fabric of Cape jazz: the Khoisan legacy, Christian churches' chords, American jazz harmonic richness, and ghoema rhythm. To which must be added elements of marabi, mbaganga and African Jazz, which passed from Temmy Hawker to Jimmy Adams and were preserved by, among others, Winston Mankunku Ngozi and Tete Mbambisa\textsuperscript{80}. Cape jazz is improvisation on various combinations of musical traits borrowed from all the historical currents of Cape Town music and fused in diverse and changeable combinations to give birth to original creations, most of which have in common the fact that they rely on, or at least allude to, the ghoema beat.

\textit{Originary blending and creolisation}

When, in 1990, South Africa entered the liberation decade, its citizens envisioned the radically new situation they were confronted with against the backdrop of two social memories that are impossible to disentangle: a memory of violence, separation and oppression; and a memory of contacts, exchanges and togetherness, especially in creation and struggle against racism and domination (Martin 1992c). As the example of the development of music in Cape Town has clearly shown, music belongs with the memory of positive interactions, “interracial” cooperation and opposition to racism and segregation. This memory is no less pervasive and rampant than the memory of brutality and divisiveness, and it carries the germs of a common future. This is why unveiling the history of South African music is so crucial: because it sheds a particular light on what was accomplished and suffered in the past, a light which can also enlighten the path toward the edification of a “new” South Africa. Moreover, it tells a story of creolisation in which inputs from the outside, imitations, and appropriations led to original inventions that served to build new conceptions of being South African, based on a sense of self-esteem that did not derive from power but from creation.

The history of South African musics exemplifies anthropologist Jean-Louis Amselle’s theory of originary blending (\textit{métissage original}): in human societies, nothing has never been originally pure, nothing developed in isolation, and all mixing combined elements that were themselves already mixed (Amselle 1990).
Originary blending applies to Khoikhoi music, and indeed to the musics carried by Bantu-speaking migrants that settled within the boundaries of contemporary South Africa, as well as to the musics brought by European settlers and slaves of many origins. Even African musical instruments have been said to bear the mark of Indonesia (Kirby 1966), a legacy which may have been complemented by slaves from the East Indies and Madagascar. Europeans who came to the Cape, directly or via Batavia, may also have been, without necessarily being aware of it, familiarised with musics of the Islamic world, while Asian slaves had absorbed Dutch culture before being deported to South Africa: “If the origins of boeremusiek could be traced back to the Islamic spiritual music of the Islamic civilisation in Spain, Cape Malay music, the secular music of the Cape Muslims, at least their lyrics, could be traced back to the Netherlands. The Dutch folk songs, brought here from Europe during the early days of white settlement, were soon adopted and adapted by the Eastern slaves as a form of entertainment for their masters” (Davids 1985: 36).

Cape Town’s originary blending was compounded by encounters that took place at the Cape, then in the rest of South Africa. Boeremusiek integrated elements from the musics of slaves, the Khoikhoi and Bantu-speaking Africans. White parlour music was fashioned by the particular interpretive styles of slave or coloured musicians. In their own repertoires, slaves mixed what may have been preserved from their original cultures and what they could glean in the masters’ musics. Africans infused their own musical forms with elements borrowed from Europeans and slaves or descendants of slaves. Blending processes in South Africa have been intricate and unending, renewed at every moment in the history of the country. They have generated creations that transcended and transfigured the elements that were fused, giving rise to genres of music and styles of interpretation that are unique to South Africa. The singular history of Cape Town, as a port city with particular demographics and a strong cultural legacy of slavery, has accommodated special dynamics of blending and creation that have come to characterise the Mother City, and have contributed to giving it a “musical identity”; these dynamics fertilised the whole of South Africa.

Local dynamics of creolisation fused musics that were actually carried by the various people who came to inhabit the Cape and South Africa, and again blended the results with permanently renewed foreign imports. Holland and Great Britain contributed to the regular revitalisation of Cape Town’s musics but, after the middle of the 19th century, the main influence was undoubtedly North American. It started to noticeably reshape South African music, with on the one hand the blackface minstrels, who engendered what was to become the main mask
in the *Klopop* carnival and also bore upon the aesthetics of other genres, such as *isicathamiya*; and on the other, Protestant hymnody, in particular as reshaped by African-Americans which influenced the development of *makwawa*. The particular musical relationship established in Cape Town between dominated black people and the United States had a strong symbolical value. It linked the oppressed with a phantasmagoric society where freedoms and opportunities were open to non-white people: “a land of plenty, the Black Utopia as such” (Erlmann 1997: 9). This ideal was nurtured by the real presence of African-Americans in Cape Town, not so much sailors in this case, but mostly Baptist and Methodist missionaries. In the course of the 20th century, the press aimed at black readerships continued to report progresses made by “coloreds” in the United States, as well as efforts made by organisations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) or the Urban League to enhance their rights. Music was part and parcel of the vision in which the United States was painted in the colours of freedom and modernity. American music was universally (that is in a world dominated by whites) considered modern and fashionable. Identifying with American musicians and appropriating American music signified being able to integrate a world of modernity, partly legitimate because universally recognised, partly subversive since it suggested the idea of a possible non-white counter-modernity. Both dimensions of American modernity were useful to the construction of autonomous identity configurations among black people, for they contributed to strengthening black assertiveness with the feeling that it was legitimate and would be recognised by all but the racist clique that governed South Africa.

Music answered the longing for modernity. It provided a field where connections could be established, even if only in the imagination, and where appropriation led to creation, that is to the display of an ability to invent one’s own modernity, which symbolically was equivalent to a proclamation of unlimited humanity. This is one of the reasons why jazz was a major force in processes of musical innovation. It was of American origin, it was malleable, had proved it could absorb all sorts of music, had been repeatedly renewed, and had incessantly accommodated creation. This understanding of jazz made the word a kind of catch-all musical appellation in South Africa, where its domain was extended to all sorts of interrelated popular musics. Finally, although black America was frequently referred to in intellectual and political debates, especially at the beginning of the 20th century and in the 1970s–1980s, jazz and American music were not exclusively perceived as African-American. Testimonies and memoirs of South African, notably Capetonian, musicians mention American
stars and bands without distinction of colour. Glenn Miller may have been more popular than Duke Ellington, the vocal groups that were imitated were not only the Inkspots or the Mills Brothers but the Four Freshmen and the Hi-Lo’s. Cape Town had its own Paul Robeson, but also Mario Lanza and Bing Crosby, not to mention the ambiguous Al Jolson. This extensive embracing of jazz paved the way for the inclusion of white musicians in Cape Town’s jazz and fusions in the late 1950s and later. The role played by Ronnie Beer, Dave Galloway, Morris Goldberg, Chris McGregor and Cecil Ricca, to name but a few, in the emergence of Cape Town as the capital of South African jazz indicated that, while white militants were brought to court for their anti-apartheid engagement at the Treason Trial and several of them were condemned at the Rivonia Trial, whites belonged to South Africa and were part of the construction of an original and mixed musical modernity. Jazz enacted openly an emerging system of value and meaning (Coplan 2008: 406) that underpinned all other genres of music, even when they were thought to be exclusively attached to particular groups in spite of their original blending and unceasing cross-fertilisation.

Modern jazz and fusion musics gave birth to Cape jazz when musicians realised that the search for modernity could be made more successful – in terms of its relatedness to the social and political evolution of South Africa – by the integration of musical traits that, in urban settings, had for a long time connoted backwardness, if not submission. Marabi and Klopse music were summoned to rejuvenate a form of jazz capable of mobilising support for the UDF and the ANC. The new mix that appeared made ardent use of the ghoema beat, which became emblematic of Cape music. The ghoema beat is usually associated with Klopse music, ghoemaliedjies, moppies, vastrap, that is genres which are considered as typically coloured. But behind the ghoema beat, there may be more than meets the ear, and its history is certainly more complex than is usually assumed.  

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Notes

1. According to Carol Ann Muller: “Sathima was consistently excluded from the inner circle of the anti-apartheid movement. The reason: because she was perceived to play American music with African-American musicians. It was felt that her music was not sufficiently ‘African’” (Muller 2000: 35).

2. “Le satin de Sathima”, Sathima Bea Benjamin, interview with Denis Constant [Denis-Constant Martin], Jazz Magazine 320, July–August 1983: 54. This interview and a few others quoted in this chapter were collected during the 1970s and 1980s, recorded on cassettes, and translated into French. Unfortunately, the original cassettes have been lost and the French translation only remained. The excerpts from these interviews have been re-translated from the French. They may not reproduce the exact words used by the interviewees, but they do convey precisely what they wanted to mean. On Sathima Bea Benjamin’s repertoire, see: Crowther & Anderson 2000.

3. Initially known as “Dollar” Brand, the pianist, composer and band leader Adolf Johannes Brand took the name Abdullah Ibrahim in 1968, following his conversion to Islam. For the sake of simplicity I shall only use his chosen Muslim name, under which he is now famous.

4. Pianist, composer and band leader Chris McGregor underlined that: “In South Africa, too, it must be understood, the situation is not the same. People do not categorise like they do in western civilisations and the whole spectrum from folk music to the big bands is continuous, at the same time. You may have musicians who play on a Friday night with a kwela band and on the Saturday night in a jazz club and Monday entertain their friends with a guitar. The scene is not so categorical and not so much in a bag, not so much professional, too.” Chris McGregor, interview by Bill Smith, published in the Autumn 1967 issue of Coda Magazine (Canada) accessible at: http://www.mfowler.myzen.co.uk/?page_id=114 (accessed 10/01/2011).

5. Directed by Alan Crossland, 1927, starring Al Jolson in blackface.

6. A Church of England youth organisation founded in 1891 whose activities included playing music in bugle ensembles or brass and wind bands; many musicians playing in Klopsce orchestras, Christmas Choirs and dance bands have been trained in the Lad’s Brigade; Christmas Choirs competitions are regularly adjudicated by musicians belonging to the Lad’s Brigade.


8. This Act imposed segregation in all public amenities, public places (except public roads and streets), and public transport in order to prevent contact between whites and other “races”.

9. On the history of the Blue Notes, and the musical backgrounds of its members, see: Dlamini 2009.

10. Dorkay House was located at the end of Eloff Street, on the fringes of Johannesburg’s central business district. It was home to the Union of South African Artists, provided rehearsal spaces for musicians and offered courses in music and drama. It is in Dorkay House that the African Jazz Pioneers were re-formed in the 1980s (see: http://www.joburgnews.co.za/2006/nov/nov2_dorkayhouse.stm; accessed 31/01/2011).


13. Verse 1 has been reissued on CD by Gallo.


The action is set in a Western Cape fishing village, the music mixes swing jazz, melodic turns borrowed to *nederlandsliedjies* and American sentimental songs, accents from the *ghoema*. Retrospectively *Mr Paljas* sounds like a forerunner to Taliep Petersen and David Kramer’s shows. The pit orchestra included: Dennis Mpale (tp), Hugh Masekela (tp), Dudu Pukwana (as), Nick Peterson (as), Cornelius Kumalo (cl, bs), Blyth Mbityana (tb), Joe Mal (b), Columbus Joya (dm). *Mr Paljas* has been recorded on the Gallotone label (see: http://electricjive.blogspot.com/2009/10/blue-notes-1962-go-musical-mr-paljas.html; accessed 12/01/2011). It stirred up a controversy and was accused by the *The Torch*, the mouthpiece of the Non-European Unity Movement, a political organisation radically opposed to any form of collaboration with the apartheid authorities, to be “art for the CAD”, the Coloured Affairs Department set up by the government (*The Torch*, 17 January 1962: 6–8).

Mzimkulu Lawrence “Danayi” Dlova (tp), Willie Nettie (tb), Ronnie Beer (ts), Christopher “Columbus” Ngcukana (bs), Sammy Maritz (b), Monty Weber (dm).

The big band was recorded by Gallo and the album reissued on CD by Teal as: Chris McGregor and the Castle Lager Big Band, *Jazz: The African Sound*. The orchestra was composed of: Dennis Mpale, Ebbie Creswell, Mongezi Feza, Noel Jones (tp); Bob Tizzard, Blyth Mbityana, Willie Nettie (tb), Dudu Pukwana, Barney Rachabane, Nikele Moyake, Christopher “Columbus” Ngcukana (saxes); Kippie Moeketsi (cl, as), Sammy Maritz (b), Early Mabuza (dm); its repertoire included compositions by Kippie Moeketsi, Dollar Brand and Chris McGregor.

When he tried to speak isiXhosa in Cape Town, he made people laugh, because it was rural isiXhosa “chat made them think of their grandmothers!” (quoted in McGregor 1995: 5).

Minister for Arts and Culture, 2004–2009, who, when this article was published, served on the secretariat of the ANC’s National Executive Committee.

Most information in this paragraph comes from Rasmussen ed. 2001 and 2003.

Pianist Tete Mbambisa told Gareth Crawford: “At Zambezi, there was a basement full of mattresses and blankets. Musicians used to sleep there after playing because of the pass laws. We could not get to Langa at night, because they would arrest you. We had to play and sleep there. We used to play there until 12:00 and then sleep in the basement” (quoted in Devroop & Walton 2007: 100).

The Freedom Charter expounded the objectives of the ANC and other democratic movements regarding the edification of a non-racial South Africa. It constituted a reference document for the ANC and most anti-apartheid movements.


Originally transmitting from Mozambique, Radio LM (for Lourenço Marques, the colonial name of Maputo), a station popular among South African youth for the variety of musics it broadcast, was taken over by South Africa in 1972 and renamed Radio 5. It continued with
a policy of playing popular music of various genres, but was supposed to limit its playlist to “international” artists; it enjoyed a large listenership among black South Africans (Hamm 1991: 170).

27. For a long time, the South African government considered television to be a social evil, a medium through which racial mixing could be promoted; SATV, aimed at a white audience, was finally inaugurated on 5 January 1976; SATV 2 and 3, directed at black audiences, were only launched in 1982.


31. Journalist and photographer Valerie Wilmer wrote for instance that the members of the Blue Notes “[…] literally upturned the London jazz scene, helping create an exciting climate in which other young players could develop their own ideas about musical freedom” (quoted by Tony McGregor, “Prophets without honour”, Vrye Weekblad 25 September 1996: 11). Magazines devoted to jazz in North America (Down Beat, Coda) and in Europe (Melody Maker in the United Kingdom, Jazz Magazine and Jazz Hot in France, and many others) published many stories and interviews that illustrate the seminal role played by South African musicians.

32. For instance, by Abdullah Ibrahim: Jazz Epistles, Verse 1, Gallo; Dollar Brand Plays Sphere Jazz, Gallo, 1960, reissued on CD in Great Britain as part of Blues for a Hip King, Camden, 1998; Duke Ellington presents the Dollar Brand Trio, Reprise, 1964, reissued on CD in the collection Reprise Archives. By the Blue Notes: Township Bop, 1964, reissued on CD in Great Britain by Proper; Blue Notes Legacy, Live in South Africa 1964, reissued on CD in Great Britain by Ogun; Very Urgent, Polydor, 1968, reissued in Great Britain by Fledg’ling Records. The only counter-example I am aware of is a tape titled Blue Notes Play Dudu, recorded in studio on 13 June 1963, which I have been graciously given by Tony McGregor, and which has apparently never been commercially released. The music in Blue Notes Play Dudu is much closer to jive and mbaqanga than music in other contemporary recordings by the group. It may be that the Blue Notes, like Abdullah Ibrahim (Mason 2007: 27), privately “indulged” in playing popular forms of music they did not perform in public. The Blue Notes who participated in this session may have been: Chris McGregor (p), Dudu Pukwana (as), Mackay Davashe (ts), Malindi Blyth Mbitiyana (tb), Dennis Mpale or Mongezi Feza (tp), Saint Mokaingoa or Martin Mgijma or Sammy Maritz (b), Early Mabuza (dm) (see: Dlamini 2009: 68–89).


34. The Cape Herald, 21 September 1968 (quoted in Mason 2007: 30).

35. Nikele Moyake, whose health was not good, left the Blue Notes and came back to South Africa in 1965, where he rapidly died of a brain tumour. Except for Louis Moholo, the other members of the Blue Notes died in exile: Mongezi Feza in 1975, Johnny Dyani in 1986, Chris McGregor and Dudu Pukwana in 1990.

36. After 1976, Abdullah Ibrahim participated in many ANC cultural activities; for instance, he composed and directed an agit-prop show, the Kalahari Liberation Opera, which was presented in Vienna, Berlin and Paris in 1982. About the representations of the opera in France, see: Denis Constant [Denis-Constant Martin], “Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand)
38. Interview with Basil Coetzee, recorded at his home, Rocklands, Cape Town, on 24 August 1994.
40. With Victor Ntoni (b), and Nelson Magazwa (dm); released in 1971 under the label Soultown, also owned by Rashid Vally, usually devoted to dance music.
41. With the same rhythm section, plus Allan Kwela (g) and Kippie Moeketsi (as); released in 1973 under the label Soultown.
42. Basil Coetzee (ts, f), Arthur Jacobs (ts), Robbie Jansen (as), Lionel Beukes (b), Nazier Kapdi (dm).
43. Abdullah Ibrahim’s composition is spelled “Mannenberg”, although it is dedicated to Manenberg, one of the poorest townships to which people classified coloured were relocated between 1966 and 1970. The spelling adopted by Abdullah Ibrahim may – consciously or not – evoke Manne-Berg, the mountain of (real) men, ie. Table Mountain and the resilient oppressed people of Cape Town.
44. Oswietie is a contraction of the Afrikaans ‘ons weet nie’ which means “we don’t know”; according to Robbie Jansen: “When we were rehearsing we didn’t think about a name and when we got our first gig we played and the people asked ‘what is your name’ and we said ‘we don’t know’ and then, when we had to decide on a name, we had already told the people ‘we don’t know’, so we left it like that” (interview with Robbie Jansen recorded in Cape Town, 7 October 2004).
48. Interview with Basil Coetzee, recorded at his home, Rocklands, Cape Town, 24 August 1994.
49. Ibid.
51. Interview with Robbie Jansen recorded in Cape Town, 7 October 2004.
53. Derived from an isiXhosa word for work (Ansell 2004: 207).
54. Uhuru means freedom and independence in Swahili, a language widely spoken in East Africa.
56. A cultural boycott of South Africa was first called for by the United Nations in 1968; artists were required not to perform in South Africa. After 1988, it was extended to all cultural and academic activities and discouraged not only visits but any form of collaboration with South African organisations or institutions. See: “The UN’s long campaign against apartheid”, UNESCO Courier, February 1992, republished at: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1310/is_1992_Feb/ai_12135087/pg_2/?tag=content;coll1; accessed 07/02/2011.
Established in 1959 as a University College for coloureds, UWC gained university status in 1970. In 1975 a black rector was appointed. In 1982 UWC categorically rejected apartheid and adopted a declaration of non-racialism.

“I do not really think apartheid affected me, because I was living in my own world. I did not understand why people were suffering. It is only now that I think people were suffering, but I never thought about it” (quoted in Devroop & Walton 2007: 43).

Gideon Nxumalo’s *Jazz Fantasia* was recorded during a performance given at the University of the Witwatersrand on 8 September 1962, with Kippie Moeketsi, Dudu Pukwana, Martin Mgijima and Makaya Ntshoko. The tape was released on CD by Teal Records in 1991. The quotation from “*Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika*” can clearly be heard at the end of track 5, “Second Movement, ‘Home at Night’”.

Capetonian saxophonist Ezra Ngcukana played at times with Dashiki (Rasmussen 2003: 188).

A fusion of choral music, jazz and marimba bringing more than 100 people on stage at the same time.


Interview with Duke Ngcukana, recorded in Cape Town on 20 November 2007.

78. Interview with Duke Ngcukana, recorded in Cape Town on 20 November 2007.
81. See chapter 6.