

# The World of South African Music

A Reader

Introduced, compiled and edited

by

Christine Lucia



Cambridge Scholars Press

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To Michael



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# INTRODUCTION

## Reading South African music

*We face the challenge of creating a unique South African musicology, [and] have the opportunity, that other nations can envy, of building our own monuments in this 'last Paradise' (Malan 1983, 34).<sup>1</sup>*

*For any ethnomusicologist interested in the music of the slums, streets, harbours, and mines of Africa, South Africa constitutes something of an Eldorado (Erlmann 1991, 1).*

The subject of this book, South African music, tells many stories. It is a work of meta-fiction, a narration of voices constantly interrupting each other with diversions and contradictions, vying to construct itself from the remnants of a remote or recent past in much the same way that we as human subjects have the tendency (as Umberto Eco once noted) to construct our lives around the narrative conceit of the novel (1995, 131). One might argue that the stories narrated here are not fictional but infused with tangible reality through their historical, geographical, generic or cultural location: the story of African traditional music, for example, or the story of Afrikaans song, marabi piano, or Zulu choralism. Perhaps, even, there is only one subject told in many different ways according to the writer's perspective.

The quotations that head this Introduction tell of two such perspectives: in the case of Afrikaner musicologist Jacques Malan writing in the late 1970s and early 1980s, South Africa was a paradise, a *tabula rasa* waiting for the possibilities of a new kind of (white) critical inscription. For German-born ethnomusicologist Veit Erlmann ten years later the country was 'something of' an Eldorado, provided one was prepared to explore the byways of the (black) working-class poor. However different, each view is underscored by an alluring notion of paradise, a notion that comes not from the language of musicology or ethnomusicology but from the world of fiction.

Taking this view of the world of South African music as a play of narratives, a musical biography of a country, the first question to ask perhaps, is how does the story begin? Whether told through academic discourses in musicology or ethnomusicology, or related discourses of a more creative kind such as autobiography, news feature, travel journal, lecture, poetry - all represented in this *Reader* - there is a tendency to want to evoke a certain myth of origin. Such myths have been present throughout the written history of music in South Africa, a history that goes back to travel accounts of the fifteenth century, tales of miracle and wonder. Since South Africa's political changes began in 1994 however there has been a shift towards reclaiming the more immediate past, reimagining it and

even seeming to romanticise its darkest days. The musical life of the *apartheid* township of Sophiatown of the 1950s, for example, is retold repeatedly in current films, television series and books as if it this was a golden age. A slightly different example of reinvention is the alignment of Western classical music with new bedfellows. South Africa's 'First International Classical Music Festival' (known locally as the ICMF) was held in Johannesburg and Pretoria in 2001 to show such alignment bringing together (according to a media release) "the widely acclaimed English Chamber Orchestra, Xhosa-woman overtone singing, Schubert lieder [sic], African drum-singing [and] the ever-popular Ladysmith Black Mambazo" (quoted in Ansell 2003).

In this kind of narration the entire history of orchestras symphony concerts, recitals, music festivals, competitions, arts councils, censored state radio and television and the unimaginable damage of unequal education and cultural opportunities that drove this Western hegemonic order along under grand *apartheid* (and before that British colonial rule), are here erased - with the stroke of a pen - as if they had never existed. The origins are remade and classical music reborn with a new link forged between the classical (Schubert and the ECO), the traditional (Xhosa-woman and African 'drum-singing'), and the popular (Ladysmith Black Mambazo). With such reinvention of the past, music has fallen, to use Lacan's term, out of the imaginary register into the symbolic. What under Western hegemonic discourse before 1994 was just 'music' because it was music of the dominant minority has, reasserting itself under the pressure of post-apartheid South Africa, renamed itself (Classical Music) and redrawn its boundaries (International).

Behind this recent transformation of music by the wand of classicism, however, lie many other historical moments similarly driven by the imperative of changing ideologies, whose complex relationships preclude the very notion of a single narrative of South African music. The monolithic Europe-driven cultural institutions of twentieth-century South Africa so clouded the view of this plurality for the past 100 years that, until 1994 Western music seemed indeed to constitute a homogenous block, supporting the Nationalist edifice both metaphorically (through legislation) and literally (the State Theatre in Pretoria for example). Now South African music sees itself differently, as part of a set of interlocked histories, a patchwork of collective initiatives and individual efforts. In this optimistic view South Africa *is* Eldorado: flowing with gold not only musically but also (as this book itself shows) in terms of critical readings of that music - biographies, autobiographies, dissertations, articles, books - telling their stories through the eyes of composers, critics, performers, institutions of all kinds, even through the musical lens of small towns.<sup>ii</sup>

Such a radical rethink inevitably begins to show more and more clearly that the notion of a South African musical territory and set of practices before the first significant European settlement in the seventeenth century, before colonialism,

urbanisation, apartheid or globalisation, with their attendant musical impositions - Dutch psalms, Wesleyan hymns, German folksong, British music education, American jazz, house music - *is* fictitious; the precondition for its existence being precisely the absence that cannot be imagined. There is no timeless and unproblematic past where cultural contact never occurred. This myth of origin, persisting in South African discourse even to the present day and clung to by many overseas visitors hints at a freedom that once existed and might somehow come again: once a South African liberation myth with political teeth, now reinvented as an African Renaissance myth - it remains nonetheless a myth.

There is also no continuum in these stories - this *Reader* is not a 'music history' despite the way the readings are arranged chronologically - but there is a sense of both continuity and discontinuity in these pages moving inexorably towards the present moment. A definition of 'South African' in the title is linked to political history, of course, and for the purposes of this book it means music that exists or once existed within the current political borders of South Africa. Constraints of time and place are daunting in a region that has several centuries of recorded history, approximately 43 million inhabitants, covers an area of 1, 400 000 square kilometres and is bordered by six countries (Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho and Swaziland) with whom it has a shared cultural history and some shared languages. Further, South Africa has a terrain and climate almost as varied as Argentina or Australia, an ecological multi-environment that has profoundly shaped the development of its indigenous musical instruments and practices (see Tracey 1996). It has eleven official languages and many religious practices, including more than 200 indigenous Christian churches ranging from a few hundred to millions of members (the Zionist Church for example). Its music has been affected by successive waves of acculturation, some brutal, all causing major cultural transformations and retransformations.

### **Selecting the readings**

The literature in which music emerging out of such cultural polyphony is explained or in other ways 'read' is enormous. Well over 1000 items are available, not including at least twice this number in print media articles as well as hundreds of plays, poems, short stories, travel fictions and novels in which South African music is represented. The simplest way to make a selection from this vast aggregation of motifs would have been to take the 'top ten' academic articles on South African music from the last 15 to 20 years. I resisted this approach, however: partly because such writing is well known in academic circles, but mainly because such a selection would have biased the book strongly in favour of black South African popular music and jazz, and privileged white writers. The number of pieces I

included here, ultimately, came in at about 60, whittled down from 200, and even those left standing were ruthlessly pruned.

Informing this process were several criteria. First, I favoured extracts that dealt with musical material directly - whether by example, analysis, or description - so that music would have a strong 'presence'. This means that there are differences in music notation and several indigenous languages used (in song texts) although in most cases these are translated. Second, I tried to introduce as fair a distribution of gender, age and cultural background as I could manage, given the imbalance that exists. South African writers of colour are few in number despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of the population is not white. Texts are nevertheless there, and they have been included - not for the political purpose of incorporating what Kofi Agawu has called "native discourse" (Agawu 1995, 394) - but because, as Agawu indeed has shown, such discourse often speaks of music not discussed elsewhere with a voice that is not dominant.

Third was the criterion of coverage. Some areas of music are far better covered in this *Reader* than others (indigenous music and twentieth-century popular music for example); there is far less on African choral music and almost nothing (in English) on Afrikaans music. Aside from studies of individual composers or histories of towns, there is no writing on the *meanings* of Western classical music in South Africa as distinct from writing published elsewhere. Taking stock of classical music as a cultural phenomenon within a Southern African rather than European context - and taking it right back to the seventeenth century - is a long overdue project, but few writers have taken the ethnographic or post-colonial view of such music that a reading like this requires. Some gold has been well mined - the Zulu male-voice genre *isicathamiya* for example, while other texts only graze the surface of their subject and may be seen as first attempts to define a field. In making a selection there was no attempt to make up for inadequacies or unevenness in the literature by commissioning further research.

What I aimed for, rather, was a reasonable spread of topics given that unevenness. This involved excluding some well-known pieces and authors, which I did with great regret, the compensation being, I hope, a wider range of both musics and voices. Gaps in the research field are there for all to see - and there are many challenges both empirical and theoretical for young researchers to take up. Finally, the scholarship (but not necessarily its authors) emerges from within the present political borders of South Africa. One exception to this general rule is the work of Emmanuelle Olivier on the Jul'hoansi, who live in the (Botswanan) Kalahari (Olivier 1997). It is included mainly because it demythologises so effectively the imaginary of nomadic 'bushmen' that haunts some of the earlier writing in the book; and because the multivocal techniques she analyses relate tellingly to contemporary studies of Xhosa music. Olivier also deals in a way most other writers do not, with vernacular terminology and concepts.

This representation of musical practices from immigrant, urban, peri-urban, migrant and rural communities covering large geographical areas of the country is paralleled by an equally wide representation of views and ideologies, ranging from those of 200 years ago (the earliest writing is from 1806) to writing of the present. Many different kinds of discourse emerge, and the rest of this Introduction highlights some of the issues of origin, history, ideology, representation, identity, and language that are a feature of the writing.

### Origin

In her (1995) analysis of post-colonial literary criticism, Karin Barber exposes paradigms of binarism that inform both the imaginary *tabular rasa* of a South African musical paradise and the aspirations of the ever-changing Eldorado: oppositions such as traditional-modern, oral-written, past-contemporary, local-international (11). Such binarisms recall evolutionist views of music in nineteenth-century writing, predicated on the fundamental binary, self-other. As John McCall has summarised it, the view promoted in 1893 by Richard Wallascheck for example, is as follows:

<u>European Music</u>	<u>African Music</u>
modern	primitive
melodic	rhythmic
complex	simple
aesthetic	functional
mental	physical
intellectual	emotional
creative	expressive
product of culture	product of nature (McCall 1998, 96). <sup>iii</sup>

Although we are alert to Victorian ideologies of ‘ancient and modern’ or ‘savage and civilised’ implicit in this list (see for example Erlmann 1994), the traditional-modern and African-Western dichotomy persists in current thinking about music in South Africa, as do other frequently encountered pairs such as individual-communal, urban-rural. The difficulty in moving away from binaries is compounded by the degree to which they are constantly re-inscribed, if only to be manipulated afresh (as the ICMF has shown), the problem with them being precisely that they are so much part of the way South Africans think about themselves musically. In the global context, such dichotomies place us automatically in anOther country, another hemisphere, another culture, from that of the imagined West. They reduce the historical and economic contingencies of a more nuanced reading of South African music - where the West has been part of

the script for several centuries - to secondary status. A single word in any pair operates mainly in relation to its opposite and becomes a signifier of difference, one that contemporary music education and composition continually seek to undermine but ultimately reinforce, locked as they are into the symbolic order of naming.

An example of this problem is choral music, or *amakwaya* or *makwaya* (competition) music, which originated from black mission-educated composers in the eastern Cape and Natal. Choral works in this tradition are written in tonic solfa notation and become scores; but such scores are not necessarily read or even owned by those who perform them. They are scarce commodities (it takes a serious researcher to make a substantial and diverse collection),<sup>iv</sup> few choristers are fully literate in solfa notation,<sup>v</sup> and choral songs are often taught by rote over many rehearsals comprising constantly shifting groups of attendees. Composers themselves strain against the expressive, tonal and rhythmic limitations of working in solfa notation. Unavailability of scores, even when they have been prescribed for competitions, confirms their low status as ‘texts’.<sup>vi</sup> Yet fidelity to notes and instructions on the ‘score’ is a criterion that adjudicators use in assessment, and the few scores that exist are treated as classics by committees who organise the major national competitions, forming over time a canon of musical works inscribed in the consciousness of those involved in choralism. Furthermore, choralism is phenomenally popular, involving almost half the country’s population (see Mngoma 1986, 116-117).

In the midst of such ambiguity, to bring Barber into service again, it seems that whatever state of literacy choirs uphold, they all “access texts in one way or another” (1995, 12). Just as she cites the potential 30 million Hausa or Swahili ‘readers’ of texts, I would estimate that there are close on 20 million members of choirs in South Africa who ‘read’ choral songs. Where does such music fit into the oral-written paradigm? The three categories of competition songs (traditional, Western, vernacular) have themselves changed since 1994. The ‘vernacular’ was designed in the earlier twentieth century to cater for music written in solfa script by composers using African-language texts, but now includes songs in Afrikaans; thus it challenges the African-Western binary while at the same time exposing the problematic of placing Afrikaans songs alongside African solfa pieces, in the category ‘indigenous’.

There are many other examples where South African music defies neat categorisation. Constantly re-narrated and re-read, the very difficulties in conceptualising it (for this *Reader*) are part of its story. If presenting it as an anthology in the way this *Reader* presents an ‘overview’ brings out (rather than obscures) the underlying dichotomies, it also affords an opportunity to look at it precisely for those differences and anomalies, as an archaeological site in which layers of practice and meaning are encrusted together and occasionally thrown up into strangely tilted conjunctions. This enables a view of South African music as a

set of differently constituted practices resonating with each other as they develop(ed) - simultaneously as well as sequentially and with resulting discontinuities as well as continuities. With this Foucaultian notion in mind, we come to a discussion of history.

### History and ideology

The music of South Africa has evolved by a series of migrations - from many parts of the world over several centuries (Europe, the Malay Archipelago, south-east Asia, the Middle East, the US, Canada and South America), and, within the country, over several millennia. Thus its story has a number of possible ways to 'begin'. In the search for origins South African music has been particularly well served by Xhosa prophet Ntsikana Gaba (died c1821). His story is referred to several times in this *Reader*, and always he is presented as 'the first' - the first Christian convert in the eastern Cape, the first Xhosa composer, creator of the "first Christian hymn composed and sung in Kaffirland to real native music" (Bokwe [n.d. c1904], 28). His surviving hymns provide ample material for an evolutionist consideration of something that lies on the border between history and myth, to prove that "origin is there so that history can begin" (Barber 1995, 7).

One can argue that there *were* concrete beginnings, and inescapable historical facts, such as the establishment of the first permanent mission station among the Xhosa by Rev Brownlee in 1820 (Dargie 1982, 7). The building of this mission - mud, stone, hardship, prayer - and the sudden death of Brownlee shortly afterwards took place at a certain time and place, profoundly affecting the detail of some everyday lives. But such bald realities do not explain music, or tell us what moved Ntsikana and what his community of onlookers experienced. What 'text', for example, did those early congregations access in Ntsikana's chants?

There are only partial answers. The oldest account we have is by John Knox Bokwe from the late 1870s: the version given in this *Reader* was published around 1904 and was intended for a readership in Victorian Britain (the publisher was the London Missionary Society), for whom Ntsikana is domesticated as 'ab-original' Christian rather than - during frontier wars he was deeply involved in - as politicised being (see Olwage 2003, 139-42). Bokwe's myth goes thus: looking over his cattle one morning he is excited (Bokwe calls it a 'trance') by the sight of a glowing light striking his favourite ox ([n.d. c1904], 19). Returning with his family from an *umdudo* or ceremonial dance a few hours later, Ntsikana passed a stream where he unexpectedly "washed off the heathen clay from his body", the signature of conversion (Ibid., 19-20). The next morning Ntsikana sang a strange new chant and told his startled relatives that "the thing that had entered within him directed that all men should pray" (Ibid., 19-20). According to Bokwe, then, Ntsikana's hymn - his first utterance as a Christian convert - 'entered' him at night,

having been dreamt.<sup>vii</sup> First the flash of enlightenment, then the discarding of the past, the dream-song, and a prophecy.

This historic moment - Ntsikana's altered state of consciousness resembling for Bokwe St Paul on the road to Damascus - was captured very differently by Methodist leaders in 1923, celebrating a century of success in the South African mission fields. The origin of Ntsikana's music lay for them not in a mystical moment between sleeping and waking, past and future, but in a typically African spontaneous "outburst".

We can imagine how these first converts, rejoicing in the new and wonderful life that had sprung up within them, would croon, in quiet and low monotones, the message that had appealed to them, until the heart would swell and unconsciously burst into melody and praise God. Ntsikana ... has given us such an illustration. It is just a natural outburst of feeling and joy as we should expect from one emerging from the bondage of a cruel heathenism into the freedom and liberty of the children of God (Househam 1923, 53).

In his recounting of the myth, Househam downgrades song (the most ardent expression of Xhosa culture) to 'crooning', reiterates the litany of primitive music's qualities as did Wallaschek; and speaks of the great prophet Ntsikana as illustration or mere 'example' of an early convert. His distancing strategy (aside from its racial overtones) pushes the event away from the tenor of the fictional account Bokwe wrote for the metropole, leading it towards a crude evangelistic ethnography. Employing quite another register, David Dargie's (1982) account explores the musical side of this experience, as if it were not so much a religious awakening as a great creative moment in which Ntsikana juggles old and new. Dargie places his account in the context of performance: while Ntsikana was dancing at the *umdudo* - the night before he supposedly dreamed the first of his hymns - he "became aware that the Holy Spirit had entered him" (1982, 7). Dargie, like Bokwe, imagines what was said and by whom, writing his account almost as fiction. "The next day he continued to act strangely, telling people that something had entered him ... He began to sing strange chants, using the words '*elelele homna*'" (Ibid.).

Dargie's account also signals the focus on difference: he is fascinated by the merging of European and African cultural traditions into what has come to be viewed as the first South African composition (Blake 2000, 13). Here, then, Ntsikana is not so much exemplary convert as composer articulating a new musical expression. Concern for what is often seen as a 'reconciliation' between the African and Western in compositional discourse (although it often re-inscribes difference) places Dargie's account at an interesting tangent alongside other writers in this volume who have tackled the same issue, such as Bongani Mthethwa (on Alfred Assegai Kumalo [sic]), Erlmann (on Reuben Caluza), and Stephanus Muller

(on Stefans Grové). All four writers examine the interface, or in Leon de Kock's apt phrase, the 'seam' (de Kock 2001) that holds together compositional strands in the post-colony. The interweaving of these strands has, over time, been theorised under various names: in the 1970s and 80s it was called syncretism, in the 90s hybridity; in popular music or jazz discourse it might be fusion or cross-over. In terms of Ntsikana's music, such hybridity was extremely awkward, 'unlikely', as Grant Olwage puts it, revealing (through Bokwe's harmonisation) both Xhosa music 'reformed' and Victorian hymnody 'deformed' - and thereby, spawning few successors (Olwage 2003, 138). The claim for Ntsikana as compositional origin rests on his symbolic significance, then, rather than on his music. And where the music is claimed it is partly in error: the version of his hymn that Bokwe transcribes as the 'Great Hymn' is not what is now seen as the originating Great Hymn (transcribed by Bokwe as the 'Round Hymn' (Olwage 2003, 136)). The claim rests, moreover, on two massive conceptual leaps: between what Ntsikana actually chanted in the early nineteenth century to Bokwe's early twentieth-century arrangements; and again to what we choose to find original a century later.

The myth of Ntsikana as origin owes its different inflections to historical undercurrents that inevitably changed during the course of the 200-year span of this volume. The dividing line between different sections of the present book mark some of the most important moments of change in South African history: 1806-1930s, 1940s-80s, late-1980s-mid-90s, and mid-1990s to the present. They broadly define four projections that have been of over-arching significance in South African political ideology: British imperialism and its aftermath in a tangle of rapidly urbanising modernisms, the rise of Afrikaner nationalism and the philosophy of apartheid, the often violent politics of transformation, and the post-apartheid democracy. This does not mean, however, that the four sections are movements of a national symphony that move inexorably forward in time without reminiscent themes. The ideology of the colonial nineteenth century contained many elements (romanticism and nationalism being two) that persist to the present day; apartheid laws may have crumbled but their stifling impact on musical development is still felt; transformation was a long and painful stage in the South African psyche that occupied a surprisingly short span of chronological time and still has not yet ended; and although 1994 was a new beginning, even in 'the new South Africa' cultural terrain remains highly contested. The texts represented in this book reflect changing historical and ideological imperatives in ways far more complex than can be grasped by surveying the (chronological) list of contents, and some examples must now be given.

In the work of some writers (such as Melveen Jackson on South-Asian music from the 1860s to 1948) historical sensibility is very much to the fore. In others it is an insignificant aspect of the writing - some extracts seem almost to exist in a historical (or ideological) vacuum. Most of the writing cannot be fully understood, however, without knowing something of the socio-political events that surrounded

it; for example Barrow's *Account of a Journey, Made in the Years 1801 and 1802 ...* (Barrow 1806b), Alberti's *Tribal Life & Customs of the Xhosa in 1807 ...* (Alberti 1968[1815]), and Barrow's *[Travels] in Southern Africa ...* (1813). All three were written during the British-Dutch war over the Cape Colony during which, briefly: the British wrenched the Colony from Dutch control in 1795 to prevent it falling into French hands during the Napoleonic wars,<sup>viii</sup> handed it back to the (Dutch) Batavian Republic in 1803, seized it again after the Battle of Blaauwberg in January 1806 and confirmed their control through the London Convention of August 1814 (Saunders and Southey 1998, 31). Barrow was a significant player in this tug of war. He published at least five accounts of two visits to south-western Africa in 1797-98 and 1801-02, rewriting his narrative to suit the expectations of readers in London and his employer, the British Admiralty. Their appearance was timed conveniently in terms of the unfolding of political events (1801, 1804, 1806 and 1813). His accounts of 1806 and 1813 (detailed and shrewd observations including many references to music) lent narrative solidity to the centre's possession and re-possession of a distant 'other' (Pratt 1992, 58). Music provided Barrow with evidence of 'civilisation' among the inhabitants sufficient for their subjugation: "here a plentiful harvest is offered to the first reapers who may present themselves" (1806b, 400). The full titles of his books themselves speak to the imperial agenda; while his changing signature (John, John Esq, Sir John ...) traces a career whose ascendancy between 1801 and 1813 was arguably due in large part to his work on 'the colonies'.

A counterpoint to this narrative is German-born Ludwig Alberti's popular *Tribal Life ...* published first in Dutch (1810) then French (1811) and German (1815) - an English translation appeared only in 1968. Alberti's work as a professional soldier took him to the Cape in 1803-1806 (the Dutch period between British rule) on the Batavian Republic rather than British side. His view of music is as 'other' as Barrow's; but it is not so much the tale as his dour telling of it, that marks a major contrast. Not for Alberti are the literary allusions that make Barrow's text readable as (travel) fiction quite aside from its references to music. Alberti manages to reduce a great Xhosa creation myth to the following bland 'poem':

In the land in which the sun rises, there  
 is a cavern, from which the first  
 Kaffirs, and in fact All peoples, as also  
 the stock of every kind of animal, came  
 forth. At the same time, the sun and  
 moon came into being, to shed their  
 light, and trees, grass and other  
 plants to provide food for man and cattle (1968[1815], 13).

Barrow on the other hand rolls out the bleak Karoo desert north-east of Cape Town as a carpet of narrative:

From these lonely wastes of Africa, ‘where’, as Dr. Johnson observes of part of Scotland, ‘the traveller has nothing to contemplate but grounds that have no visible boundaries’, nature seems to have withheld her bounteous hand, and doomed then to cheerless, irremediable, and consequently perpetual, sterility (Barrow 1806b, 371).

No paradise here, at least on the surface. And the reference to Johnson is telling: early South African writing is often more than mere ‘account’ of history, geography or culture - it *is* the work of fiction.

Anna Bender-Brink’s (1986) *Christian Schubart and the Earliest Music about the Cape* views the music of early colonialism through the lens of more recent cultural history: she analyses two patriotic songs written by Schubart (contemporary of Beethoven - as indeed was Ntsikana) as propaganda, inciting German conscripts drafted into the Cape war on the Batavian side. This has quite different resonances from Barrow or Alberti, as one might expect. The fortunes of the British and Dutch in the Cape were also inextricably linked to those of the Malay prisoners exiled there when the Dutch East India Company began using the Cape in 1652. Cross-fertilisation between Dutch songs and psalms, German missionary hymns and Malay ritual and secular music is the result of this cultural miscegenation yet remains one of the most unexplored areas of South African music history (see Malan 1979, 24-25; Desai 1993; Martin 1999 in this book).

Later in the nineteenth century another wave of immigration brought about by socio-economic manoeuvring in London saw the influx of Indian indentured labourers and merchants into Natal from 1860 onwards, to work on the new sugar plantations. Jackson records the effects of this immigration as a diversity of musical inscriptions (‘Tiger Dance, *Terukuttu*, Tango, and Tchaikovsky’), showing how traditions brought from south Asia developed and changed alongside colonial forms of music-making, to create the diversity she problematises as South African Indian music (Jackson 1989). The 1913 Native Lands Act, which dispossessed the majority of inhabitants, provides the historical backdrop against which a number of texts discuss South African music in the 1920s and 30s, including Erlmann’s study of Caluza’s early African nationalist songs (Erlmann 1991) and Reuben Caluza’s own short essay, ‘African Music’ (Caluza 1931), written for an in-house journal in the US and thus not known in South Africa.<sup>ix</sup> Some writing emerging from the 1950s through early 80s reflects the development of two parallel ideologies that characterise the age - Afrikaner and African nationalism, and white liberal empathy with the latter (Hugh Tracey 1954; Blacking 1959 and 1970; De Beer 2001(1960); Rycroft 1977; Malan 1979, 1982 and 1986; Trewela 1981; Mngoma 1981; Coplan 1985).

Muller's claim for Grové (Muller 2000) is that his use of Africanness is 'imaginary': an Afrikaner imagining himself into an 'other' musical space rather than composing across musical syntaxes. Mthethwa (ethnographer trained in Zulu traditional practice and church music as well as Western music theory and piano) shows how Kumalo uses Western hymnody to revitalise the African aesthetic of folk music, within the already hybrid genre of African choral music.<sup>x</sup> Dargie traces traditional elements in Ntsikana's Great Hymn in order to speculate on "how it originally sounded" (1982, 17), comparing 'schooled' choral versions with 'unschooled' bow-song versions.

Muller's reading of Grové side-steps history, looking at the piece as personal state of being rather than political statement of origin, but in the context of other pieces in this book the historicity of Muller's writing is implicit in the way he constructs the discourse of Grové-Muller's quest for new Afrikaner compositional identity. There is a curious resonance, too, between Grové's description of his Damascus road experience of Africa (quoted in Muller 2000, 124) and Ntsikana's experience on the road back from the *umdudo* as told by Bokwe. In both cases there is a moment of crisis: an acceptance of some new and powerful impulse, of deep undercurrents of social change over which the individual has no control. Relying on a composer's statement (in Grové) there is, of course, an inflection on the process of hybridity that would not be present in an ethnographer's description. So Grové resonating in this *Reader* with Ntsikana, is thus very different from Grové resonating with the extract used here from David Rycroft. Where Grové in 1997 is creatively inspired by "a pick-ax-wielding black man" (quoted in Muller 2000, 124) it is with a very different ear that David Rycroft in 1964 heard '*We Majola*' sung by labourers wielding pick-axes in Durban's West Street: "young men whose roots are in the country, who come to town as temporary manual workers" (Rycroft 1977, 221). Rycroft in turn came to a positive view of Zulu 'town' music only after initially lamenting it as a sign of decadence in the same way Hugh Tracey did a generation earlier (Tracey 1954).

What such entanglements in ideology and language reveal is a struggle to affirm a new identity, while in some cases still maintaining connectedness with the European mainstream. South Africa is rich in the kind of writing - autobiography for example - that tells the tale not just of music but of music on two continents. Violinist Lucy Faktor-Kreitzer's *Taking a Bow* (1988) reveals the struggle of adaptation experienced by Latvian Jews emigrating to South Africa at the turn of the twentieth century to escape the ghettos of Europe, forging an identity out of remembered traditions in new spaces. Edward Dunn's 'New Era for South African Music' of 1949 hints at a later influx of European immigrants - after World War II - whose subsequent involvement in black music and theatre (the musical *King Kong* in 1959, for example) was as significant as their role in the revival of white concert and 'music appreciation' culture.<sup>xi</sup> Robert Godlonton's much earlier memoir of the British Settlers' anniversary celebrations in 1844 records British

songs transplanted to the eastern Cape frontier in the nineteenth century: music remembered by the first generation of immigrants; music that envoiced a displaced identity.

The longing for connection to roots elsewhere (Europe, or south Asia) is closely related to the myth of ‘continuum’, and to the myth of origin. Even though we know that such a view of music history is a “fictitious continuum, borrowed from the novel” (Dahlhaus 1983, 11), the power of narrative persists. The winds of change in global music historiography (even among people as centrist as Dahlhaus) have hardly touched South Africa, however, where a belief in periodicity (Renaissance-Baroque-Classical-Romantic-Impressionist-Modern) is embraced with almost religious fervour. Such a desire for continuity *is* often a matter of belief, too, linked to both theological and nationalist discourse. The following extract from the Church of the Province of Southern Africa’s *Anglican Prayer Book* (1989) reveals the former:

This book stands alongside the South African Book of Common Prayer (1954), itself heir to the three Prayer Books of 1549, 1552, and 1559. Behind these products of the sixteenth century lay the liturgical tradition, strongly influenced by the monastic movement with its sevenfold office of prayer, which reached back into the early centuries of the Church’s life and ultimately to our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and through him to the worship of Israel (Church of the Province of Southern Africa 1989, 9).

This rushing back into the past is symptomatic not only of desire for historical roots but of a broader cultural identity crisis in which South African histories are seen as inextricably enmeshed with other global histories. This makes any view of South African music history far from neat, since it has to relate a “chronicle of much larger spatial dimensions” than South Africa alone provides (Erlmann 1999, 9).<sup>xii</sup> Within the country itself, as David Coplan reminds us, our post-apartheid condition provides a set of “historical frames, many ‘nows’ lived alongside one another”, frames still used within the country to re-inscribe “irreducible difference [borne] by imagined cultural communities” (Coplan 1998, 140).<sup>xiii</sup> What Coplan refers to here are the histories of so-called coloured, Indian and African people previously marginalised by monolithic narratives of the Great Trek. Such musical histories are ‘nows’ that are being heard in many cases for the first time, and the new approach to history teaching underlying them is inevitable.

Before music histories are rewritten with revisionist enthusiasm, however, it is helpful to look at the many changing ideologies of historiography, analysis and ethnography in past views of South African music, ideologies often inseparable from the music or contexts they seek to represent. Two opposing ends of the spectrum included in this *Reader* might be cited here. Malan’s four-volume *A South African Music Encyclopaedia* (1979, ’82, ’84, ’86) approached the music of

South African from the apartheid discourse of the 1970s and 80s, from the paradise of Malan's 'own, unique musicology' referred to at the beginning of this Introduction. Monumental in scope, the *Encyclopaedia's* sweeping ideological frame of reference herds black South African musics into reduced representations of the 'Bantu', ignoring popular music into the bargain;<sup>xiv</sup> monumental too - in a more positive sense - in its defining use of the Afrikaans language for musicology.<sup>xv</sup> At the other end of the political spectrum lie Marxist critiques such as Richard Salmon's 'Toward a Committed Musicology' (Salmon 1977) and Christopher Ballantine's 'Taking Sides *or* Music, Music Departments and the Deepening Crisis in South Africa' (Ballantine 1984b), where musicology is used against the apartheid regime as motif of resistance.

The subjects for musicological enquiry that form a large part of this book, from whatever part of the political rainbow they emerge(d), are far more obviously written, indeed, *because* of 'South African histories' and its contexts, than they might be elsewhere in the world, where contexts for 'doing' musicology are not usually questioned. To turn to choral music and choral practice again as example: its histories have emerged through work variously representing socio-political context (and not all presented in this book): Deirdre Hansen's monograph on Xhosa composer Benjamin Tyamzashe (Hansen 1968); Yvonne Huskisson's extensive catalogue of 'Bantu' composers (1969; see also Hauptfleisch and Huskisson 1992); Khabi Mngoma's African humanist re-evaluation of 'folk and art elements' (1981); Bongani Mthethwa on syncretism (1988); Erlmann's 1991 study of Reuben Caluza that set new parameters for ethnobiography (1991, 112-155); Caesar Ndlovu (1995 and 1997) and Elliot Pewa (1992 and 1995) on the politics of choral competitions; Grant Olwage on discourses of race, class and gender in choralism (Olwage 2003). The context of doing musicology here, has profoundly affected the narrative mode of these different approaches to writing about choralism, to the extent of creating it as a genre; one, moreover, in which the boundary between subject and writer are so intermeshed as to exemplify what Homi K. Bhabha has called a "narrative splitting" of the subject (1992, 301).

The danger of presenting the extracts in this *Reader* chronologically is that they *can* give the impression of being a grand narrative of texts, showing some kind of historical development - or worse, a notion of progress - both in musical maturity and in critical thinking. Countering this possibility are two tendencies that keep all the pieces 'now': one of them being the immediacy of writers' individual voices; another, the reception history that all music has regardless of when it was composed. On the question of voice: the English of these extracts is perhaps more than usually varied in a *Reader*, partly because it reflects changes in language usage over a large time-frame (200 years), partly because the writing is drawn from varied sources (not all of it musicology), and because many authors have used English as a second (or third) language.<sup>xvi</sup> Important to note here is that my choice of items has been based on a serious linguistic limitation, that is, that all the writing

is originally in English. This has meant that a substantial number of extremely interesting works (mainly in Dutch and Afrikaans) are excluded, and this undoubtedly further skews the historical-ideological representation. The issue of language however, particularly Afrikaans, calls for consideration here of the role played by institutional contexts out of which much of the writing in this *Reader* emerged. This is a far narrower view of music than the one implied so far, but it needs to be deconstructed since it is a discourse that has had far-reaching effects on the way music is 'read', not only in South Africa but globally.

### **The world of South African musicology**

Some of the readings collected here originated in research projects undertaken for university degrees, most of them subsequently published but not necessarily with a large circulation. Thus many pieces included here are hardly known, and the musicological context out of which they emerged must be sketched. The establishment of the Musicological Society of Southern Africa in the late 1970s (with an annual congress, and a journal founded in 1981), and the Ethnomusicology Symposia in 1980 (annual Symposium and published conference papers) created new platforms for the presentation of such research, but at the same time created two separate communities of scholarship in South Africa.<sup>xvii</sup> Throughout the 1980s and early 90s, when South African universities were already affected by the international boycott and were severed from each other internally by eleven apartheid education systems, intellectual divides were further underscored by the separation between these two organisations. While both encouraged the presentation of work in progress, such work often avoided engagement with critical theory. The two organisations, but particularly the Musicological Society, tended to foster a research ethos in which the writer could remain untouched by international disciplinary shifts in the humanities and especially in musicology during this period. This state of affairs is, indeed, precisely what enabled Malan to make the remark in 1983 that heads this Introduction. It was a 'new musicology' in the sense of content and context, not to be confused with the new musicology that came out of the culture wars of North American and European scholarship in the 1980s. Underlying Malan's phrase is the kind of liberation myth alluded to at the beginning of this Introduction - an Afrikaner nationalist myth of 'own' and other, that underlay the political philosophy of 'separate development' that was legitimated by apartheid. Local views in the 1980s polarised into two musicological camps: crudely put, musicology for conservatives who engaged with the hegemonic discourse of Western classical music regardless of the way it propped up the regime (indeed, as if it had nothing to do with politics); and ethnomusicology for liberals who engaged mainly with African music and with a discourse of resistance (see Byerly

1998) or for new African scholars who engaged - problematically for them in terms of the apartheid ethos of separate development - with their 'own' music.

In his (1995) analysis of the Ethnomusicology Symposia, 'So Who Are We And What Are We Doing?' Christopher Ballantine tackled this thorny problem head-on (Ballantine 1995), grouping the 155 topics covered in Symposia between 1980 and 1993 into nine categories. One of these, 'Introductory', is where "the clear intention of the speaker was not to put forward new research, but rather to introduce the audience to some aspect of ethnomusicology, or to a particular 'ethnomusic', rather as a lecturer might teach his or her students" (Ballantine 1995, 133). Ballantine's intention was surely not to downgrade such scholars - most of them black - who in exposing a new 'ethnomusic' sought to be part of a small local scholarly community against great odds (lack of resources and expertise at the historically black universities where most of them worked). In noting that "theory constituted a disturbingly low 4.5 percent of our topics" (134), Ballantine quite rightly exposed the difference between advocacy and critique, without, however, fully explaining the word theory. The theoretical perspective of some of this writing is often an embedded formalism, taken over from writing of the previous generation of South African ethnomusicologists such as Rycroft and John Blacking, coupled with a view of traditional music that is 'insider', informant-driven.

That such notions constituted a "taken-for-grantedness", as Ballantine put it (Ibid.), may not be entirely due to complacency, as he suggests ("we can't any longer comfortably work 'inside' a received discipline; much of our work must take place at the 'cutting edge'" (Ibid., 135)). The space from which most ethnomusicologists during the 1980s and early 90s wrote about music was far from a comfort zone. It was a space where many people worked without resources or guidance, and longed for recognition, for someone to look after their advancement. Such a person, I suspect, was John Blacking: recognising that the problem lay in lack of access to the ivory towers of academe and also acting out of political defiance, he made huge efforts to get black South African post-graduate music students to Queen's University, Belfast, during the apartheid years.<sup>xviii</sup> Indeed, the high percentage of papers (in Ballantine's critique) that deal with 'traditional' music, is an indication that in wrestling with African music, many young African scholars working in the tortured spaces of 1980s black South African universities were in fact *extremely* concerned with theory, above all a theory of their own scholarly identity - subsequently manifest in later moves towards a dialogue with 'African musicology' - rather than with the culture theory embraced in the late 1980s and early 90s by popular music scholars such as Erlmann, Meintjes (1990), and Ballantine. Thus his analysis, although timely, raises, just as the reports in *SAMUS* do, an issue of crucial importance running throughout this book, about the representation of - or by - the Other.

## Representation

A brief history of the discourses through which South African music has been represented goes something like this: travel writing is a genre of representation popular from the late eighteenth to late nineteenth centuries, paralleling - indeed contributing to - the development of narrative history and the novel. The various manifestations of scientific positivism that transformed its discourse in the late nineteenth century include the modern disciplines of history, anthropology, and musicology. Folklore studies and then ethnomusicology emerged in the first half of the twentieth century, at first to deal with issues of non-Western music; then, under the impact of sociology and cultural studies, with popular music and jazz. Thus one can view any literature produced on South African music in the past 200 years or so as a prism of shifting methodological approaches. Taking a scholar at random: I.D. du Plessis' work on 'The Malay' (1940s - '70s) was a product of the positivist musicology of his era as much as it contributed to an emerging nationalist agenda. And in the way that flows of musical discourse (Western or non-Western) were seen as 'chunks' (periods, cultures, genres, composers), Malay music was just another chunk, and moreover one that hadn't been well 'covered' in the literature.

The rhetoric of representation has particularly applied to studies of performance. Espousing an anthropology of performance back in the early 1980s, David Coplan saw a metaphor for change and adaptation, an "impression of the structure of emerging African communities" (Coplan 1982, 114) - a paradigmatic antidote to the 'timeless past' discourse, in which he advocated analysing performance in terms of a "dialectical ... exchange between musicology and ethnomusicology" to show "social meanings" (127), in much the same way as Christopher Ballantine used this notion in the 1980s (see Ballantine 1984a). For Deborah James in her review of writing on black South African music (James 1990) the pull is more towards historical representation. "Only by combining musicological and historical insights can one gain a comprehensive understanding of the strength and vigour of a musical style". Understanding musical form, she argues, helps one understand a socioeconomic milieu (318), but only, it must be said, the milieu of a particular historical moment. For Regula Burckhardt-Qureshi in 1995 it was history and anthropology themselves that needed interrogation. The debate instigated by Monson, Agawu, Tomlinson and Feldman, to which Qureshi's essay is a Preface, points up the need to "challenge the frontiers of historical scholarship in music" (Qureshi 1995, 331) which in turn highlights the influence on musicology of epistemological and methodological changes within history and anthropology, the "two dominant paradigms of social science that have been informing musical scholarship with increasing explicitness" (Ibid.). Taking this debate further in 2000, Qureshi notes (echoing Bhabha) "a conceptual separation between scholar and subject, problematising all knowledge of Others, including 'insidership'" (Qureshi 2000, 19). Thus (in terms of this *Reader*) Erlmann's work

on *isicathamiya* “interrogates how a given performance practice makes sense for those involved in its production and reception, and how exactly this sense is socially organized and controlled” (Erlmann 1996, 44-45, cited in Qureshi 2000, 32).

But who are ‘those involved’, and who is representing whom? As Coplan noted in 1998, “our subjects were neither what they’d been thought to be, nor whom they claimed or seemed, and our categories were not reflected in situations on the ground” (Coplan 1998, 136). Is epistemological validity, he asks, simply “a matter of who’s talking”? (Coplan 1998, 137). The dislocating experience of fieldwork - where one person’s location becomes another’s dislocation - is not substantially different, I suggest, from the ‘journey to the field’ made by travel writers in the South African interior. Nor perhaps is it different from representing that experience through writing; or through music. A great deal of the writing in this book attempts to travel into the ‘interior’ of music and its contexts, and the struggle evident on almost every page is to find a position from which to view the music (which remains stubbornly Other) and a position from which to justify the gaze.

The resonances of one gaze against another produce all manner of dissonances that hardly need emphasis: they speak in this *Reader*, often clamorously, for themselves. Hugh Tracey’s claim that Africans in the early 1950s could not represent themselves when it came to valuing their traditional music is challenged by Caluza’s eloquent plea for African music written 20 years earlier. Mngoma’s exposure of folk elements in choral music as part of an “upsurge of [African] nationalism” (1981, 61) chimes ominously against Grobler’s matter-of-fact account of one year later (and in this book a leap of one page) of the formation of the *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge*<sup>xix</sup> (1982, 52). Blacking’s cultural analysis of the ‘rules’ of tonality and harmony in Venda girls’ initiation music (1970) stands in sharp contrast to Netshitangani’s description of Venda boys’ initiation (1997). Where Netshitangani gives an array of song texts rich in humour and pathos without analysis, Blacking’s take on harmony enhances his distance from the experience he portrays, but makes him more determined to ‘get inside’ the rules that inform it. Netshitangani’s ‘insider’ involvement in the process of ritual circumcision allows him the space to step back and use bland understatement: “*Murundu* is always held during the winter season, the reason being that it is a good time for the wound to heal” (1997, 2).

Neither scholar makes overt use of theory. Indeed, no-one could have had more influence on ethnomusicology at its formative stage in South Africa than John Blacking, yet theory is something he resisted, even despised. By down-playing it, indeed, he ran the risk of being ignored - as he testily pointed out in an interview with Keith Howard shortly before his death.

The issues raised [in *Venda Children’s Songs*] and the problems it solved hardly seem to have been accepted. Time and again I read papers that raise the

same problems yet make no reference to it. It is as if the book never happened. I carefully worked out the relationship between social structure and musical structure, yet this has been more recently addressed by others in what, frankly, I consider a naive fashion ... To a certain extent, the faults are my own. I have always disliked long-winded, theoretical discussions which are basically designed to show off how much one has read. I am not particularly interested in long diatribes on idiotic or untenable theories. I would prefer not to get involved in theoretical matters at all (Blacking quoted in Howard 1991, 63-64).

Yet what Blacking offered as a theoretical model of its time *was* analysis, a way of “dealing directly with musical material”, as Reginald Byron puts it (Blacking 1995, 22). How do other writers deal with this? Perhaps, again, it is largely a matter of methodology. The terms of Qureshi’s distinction (above) between the ‘Western way’ of studying classical music (assumed familiarity with texts resulting in insights that are subjectively ‘insider’) and the ‘separation’ between scholar and subject in ethnographic method do not help us here, as assumptions cannot be made about South African musical texts being familiar (either inside the country or outside it), nor can one always speak of a separation between scholar and subject. When the subject is music, its ‘narrative splitting’ through the use of various analytical tools is always all-too-apparent, as this *Reader* shows. Music is represented here through verbal description, diagrams, illustrations, and, not least, musical examples. Music embedded in cultural processes such as text, movement, ritual, resists easy translation into another metaphorical space, whereas Western musical scores are already-existing, semi-autonomous forms of representation. Studying music that stems from an oral rather than a literate tradition, however, has not deterred writers from making it available in the form of transcriptions. Various styles are used in this *Reader* and in any case there *is* no standard format: some are graphic; some use staff notation but in unconventional ways (the pulse notation of Dargie, for example, or the circular notation of Rycroft); some use tonic solfa.<sup>xx</sup> Many pieces discussed are available on recordings - another form of representation - to which some writers refer.

To the cultural anthropologist or ethnomusicologist, song texts are as important as musical transcriptions, sometimes more so, and often quoted at length. This heightens differences in methodology that come from training: where musicians trained in Western classical music regard music as ‘essential’, the essence for the ethnomusicologist is not analysis of musical notes; indeed, it is relatively unusual to find someone writing about South African music (such as Blacking) who has both a strong ethnographic background and a strong grasp of music theory and analysis. Penetrating the musical text is therefore a process whose problems and paradoxes are revealed on the surface of the writing in almost every piece in this book. For this is an area where there is no place to hide.

Representing the ‘other’ and ‘the music itself’, which I see as epistemologically linked, is further connected to the idea of South Africa as a nation. Strongly allied to the notional paradise or Eldorado with which I began is the equally problematic idea of South Africa as a national ‘body’, a metaphor from imperial discourse much evident in travel writing, that has by no means disappeared. Foreign funders are only the latest in a long line of readers of the South African musical scene for whom the country embodies newness, opportunity. In the 1920s operatic impresario Giuseppe Pagnelli “saw South Africa as virgin territory for opera’, and his great ambition was to produce it here with South African singers in the main roles” (Faktor-Kreitzer 1988, 65-66). John Barrow’s “plentiful harvest” of Tswana were noticed because of the dancing women, whose “softer antistrophes” provided the evidence of ripeness for the missionary project (1806b, 400). Paradise and Eldorado are sometimes coupled in these imaginaries: “A recently-arrived foreign musician remarked that he can’t resist the feeling ‘that the South African music scene is virgin ground and that we are sitting on gold’” (Makhene 1996, 152). In the 1920s, European Jews in the ghettos of Europe saw South Africa as “[D]ie Goldene Medina’ (The Golden Country), the land of opportunity where, as was common knowledge, the streets were paved with gold” (Faktor-Kreitzer 1988, 8).

Forming fresh cultural identities in a foreign place and new national allegiances in relation to internal politics are integral to the many stories of South African music. National musics are typical examples. During the rise of Afrikaner nationalism in the 1930s the *FAK-Sangbundel* (Gutsche 1938(1937)) was compiled, many of its Afrikaans folksongs being instant translations of German ones (see Grobler 1982). What is perhaps more interesting is how Afrikaans music developed after the 1930s, and how a much older repertoire of Dutch songs often derived from psalms, survives, some of it subsumed into the cultural identity of the Cape Malay. In this book two examples are given: the ‘*Magaliesburgse Aandlied*’ recorded and transcribed in 1950 by G.G. Cillié and found in later editions of the *FAK-Sangbundel* (to illustrate Cillié’s extract on Afrikaans *liederwysies*); and ‘*Rosa*’, example of a Malay genre of Dutch-derived song known as the *nederlandslied*, transcribed by Desmond Desai in the 1980s. Another example is the black nationalism embedded in Lovedale Press’s 1934 version of Enoch Sontonga’s ‘*Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika*’, regarded by the publishers as ‘The Bantu National Anthem’ (Lovedale Sol-fa Leaflets No. 17; Loots 1985). Writing that speaks *about* music as national expression, however, is less easy to come by, which is why Stephanus Muller’s deconstruction of Afrikaans art music is timely.

### **The world of South African music**

Defining the present South African nation musically as well as historically, through a text like this *Reader*, is an experiment. There are few models or prototypes.

Unlike most other books on ‘the music of a nation’, this one applies a very broad definition of music. Books devoted to the music of one country often focus on folk traditions because of the link between folk music and nationhood. Keith Pratt’s *Korean Music: Its History and Its Performance* (1987) deals for example only with traditional Korean music. Nils Grinde’s *A History of Norwegian Music* (1991) “presents an overview of the history of Norwegian music but with emphasis on art music” (xiii), but the approach still reflects the idea of national identity. Although popular or traditional ‘Black’ music might sometimes *seem* to represent South African music as whole - and excellent sources such as the articles on South African music in *New Grove II* (Rycroft et al 2001) and the *Rough Guide* (Allingham 1994a and 1994b) tend to confirm this perception - the totality of literature on South African music reveals much more. The most useful model I found was that of Gilbert Chase, who as early as 1941 proposed a history of music for a single nation that would comprise “the sum total of musical experience in its full range of social and human values”, including not only classical and “genuine folk music”, but also “such hybrid manifestations as urban street music and popular theatrical music” (Chase 1941, 17).<sup>xxi</sup> It was, though, the idea of a ‘sum total’ that I was trying to avoid: the contributions in this *Reader* are far from being - and don’t intend to be - a ‘totality’. It is an eclectic choice, ranging through travel journals, memoirs, poetry, essays, conference papers, articles and book extracts, as well as musically crossing a number of different categories and genres.

The four Parts of the book are imbalanced, and in at least three ways: the historical periods they cover, the number of extracts, the number of pages they occupy. I did not attempt to make a neat symmetry out of them. Part 1 (1800s to 1930s) is about thirty pages; Part 2 (1940s to late 80s) is about forty pages; Part 3 (late 1980s to 1994) is about ninety pages; and Part 4 (1996 to 2003) seventy pages.

More than half the extracts were written post-1990, a period of just over a decade in which writing on South African music has escalated out of all proportion - both inside the country and overseas. Indeed, it is one of the sadder reflections on our institutional musicological life that some of the most talented and interesting writers now live outside the country. Such research uses a wide range of approaches: each writer is seen coming to terms with post-apartheid, post-colonial and post-modern intellectual challenges. Some writing places itself (consciously or not) at the interface of more than one discipline, including biography, musicology, ethnomusicology, anthropology, sociology, history, linguistics, and cultural studies. Even where theoretical and methodological concerns are not made explicit, their imperatives are embedded in the writing, and can sometimes be seen most clearly at points where one piece of writing is read in tandem with another. This resonance at the surface of the writing is in some ways as important as the topic written about, and perhaps constitutes the space where my selection criteria for inclusion in this the book really show.

I chose to organise the readings chronologically rather than herd them into themes (traditional or popular), geographical areas (the Cape, or KwaZulu Natal) or genres (Zulu music, classical music). Themes emerge, rather, and create, I hope, simultaneities in the reader's imagination. The book has a beginning in the early nineteenth century only to impose some kind of time-frame on the anthology. Perhaps all that remains is to point out an aspect of the writing not yet addressed in this Introduction, concerning the way a writer's tone or voice affects our 'reading' of South African music. Godlonton's patriotic prose, peppered with exclamation marks - 'Home of our hearts! our father's home! Land of the brave and free!' (Godlonton 1971(1844), v, 34) - with its quality of mild hysteria, bespeaks the desperation British Settlers felt in finding themselves in terrain described two years before they arrived as a "wild and truly horrid region" (Latrobe 1969(1818), 174). Small wonder that the music Godlonton mentions waves the flag of Empire ('Rule Britannia', 'Auld Lang Syne', 'The British Grenadiers'), sung, one imagines, as bulwark against the horrid environment in much the same way that Dutch settlers sung *William Shuiter's Gesangen* at every sign of trouble (Barrow 1813, 315-16, 400).<sup>xxii</sup> In a situation where everything looked uncomfortably different, small wonder that even the familiar (Western classical music) appeared "strangely altered and mangled" - as Latrobe observed of the Haydn mass he witnessed in Cape Town (Latrobe 1969(1818), 299).

The quiet tone of Christopher Birkett's 'Preface' to the *Solfa Tune-book*, which he published in London in 1871, is encapsulated by a phrase whose thunderous echo down the next 130 years he could not have foreseen: "The Sol-fa notation, which I had the honour of introducing in South Africa sixteen years ago" (Birkett 1871, [n.p.]). The writing of Frieda Bokwe Matthews<sup>xxiii</sup> (daughter of John Knox Bokwe) and Reuben Caluza is part answer to this: in their equally polite way they saw it as an 'honour' to be ambassadors for African music abroad in the 1930s. Their pieces voice, however, a political stand in presenting Africa with a modern face and without apology, a tone that Hugh Tracey did not manage to strike (nor did he acknowledge their work). Percival Kirby's painstaking (1934) study of a defunct instrument (the Khoi *gora*), drawing on archival writing from travel accounts, description of extant instruments and surviving players, diagrams, photographs, shows the better side of scientific positivism. It also provides a link with writing of the past, in the way that he draws on travel journals at every turn to give evidence of how instruments were previously 'seen'.

The tone of Part 2 markedly changes, covering as it does the forty years following the Nationalist Party victory in the 1948 election through the various forms of resistance to totalitarianism and the crisis of late apartheid politics. The year 1987, with which Part 2 ends, is perhaps no more significant than 1988: indeed the whole late-1980s transition was characterised by so much political double-think, social violence and rapid legal reform (Beinart 2001, 263-70) that - even as someone who lived through this time - I could not make any historical

moment seem more significant than another. But the fact that there was an escalation of ‘the beginning of the end’ probably contributed to the sudden bulge in writing that emerged from 1988 onwards, writing characterised by an intensification in ‘taking sides’ (Ballantine 1984b) and giving rise to the title ‘Apartheid and Musicology’ for this section.

Two somewhat different trends in writing about music ripened during the 1980s: one saw Afrikaans- and English-speaking scholars viewing music as irrevocably linking them to Europe while at the same time ingraining their South African identity (van der Walt 1979; Cillié 1979; Grobler 1982; Malan 1986). These extracts connect to others: the references to Sluiter’s *Gesangen* in Barrow (1806b and 1813) is explained by van der Walt in reference to how Afrikaans church music developed; the establishment of the *FAK* (Grobler 1982) partly explains Khabi Mngoma’s take on African choralism (Mngoma 1981) and marks starkly contrasting experiences of the political economy of the arts between the 1950s and 1980s. The most significant extracts in Part 2 are those which self-consciously introduce new ideas, such as Blacking’s conception of ‘root progression’ in Venda ocarina music (Blacking 1959) and Rycroft’s use of Wachsmann’s term ‘loanwords’ to reevaluate African urban music and cause him to express his reconsideration in terms that he himself described as a “heresy” (1977, 217). Part 2 also sees an important emerging discourse, black nationalism, aimed at an indigenous readership and assessing the ambivalent role played by traditional music in identity-formation in newly-urbanising South Africa. There is also poetic writing that recalls the struggle discourse of the 1980s (Qabula 1989) and writing that *remembers* culture, such as Ezekiel Mphahlele’s (1958) memoir of Marabastad and *marabi*, Miriam Makeba’s account of experiences as stage artist (Makeba 1988), and Dollar Brand’s bitter-sweet poems of nostalgia written in the US (Brand 1970 (1966)).

Christopher Ballantine used an Adornian approach in his sociological analysis of early jazz (1984a), influencing an entire generation of South African writing about the relationship of music to society, writing that intensified in the late apartheid era. His presentation of the radical versus liberal views of black music in the 1940s (1991) is in many ways ‘vintage’ Ballantine, and one of many South African texts written during the 1980s and 90s that probed into the history, structure and agendas of South African popular music, paving the way for a burgeoning of research in this area. Indeed, the pioneering work of *inter alia* Jackson, Goodall, Davies, Mthethwa, Erlmann, Ballantine at this time constituted a school of ethno/musicology in the 1980s that has hardly been rivalled to this day. Mthethwa’s use of Zulu terms such as *indlela* (path) for melody and *isigubudu* (cattle horns) for harmony, gave something of an initiative to ‘native researchers’ exploring issues of insider versus outsider knowledge, issues much discussed in South African musicology of the 1990s. Denis-Constant Martin’s book *Coon Carnival* (Martin 1999) could hardly be more different in approach, but the way it

gives voice to participant discourse - through 'windows' inserted as a parallel text, a technique borrowed from the world of television and film - is an example of an immediacy, a sense of 'being there', characteristic of much recent writing.

It is something of a leap of faith to put between the covers of a single book a selection of readings on South African music that explores this vast and shaky terrain, the spread of music, writing and habitations - past, present, concrete, abstract - imagined above. I tried to find the impossible intersection between axes of history, geography, text, context, coverage, writers; but despite my best efforts (or perhaps because of them) this book remains a heterophony of voices, each telling its own story, each sounding a little different once surrounding stories have been told. Their diverse views of 'music' remind us of the impossibility of defining South African music as a subject.<sup>xxiv</sup>

What this *Reader* offers, then, is both an anthology of sources and, more important, a panorama of views. Drawing some of these texts together tells one kind of story about what South Africa has been and therefore to some extent, what it is; or it tells many such stories. If it is a fiction, it might be one through which South Africans can understand themselves and reconstruct their past in the way that Umberto Eco imagined; and if it is non-fiction, we can read it as a collection of narratives tracing connections that individual writers cannot make. For it is, to use Barthes' phrase, a writerly text, in which the reader is by far the most important player.

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i Editor's translation. The original Afrikaans reads: "Ons staan voor die uitdaging van 'n spesifiek Suid-Afrikaanse musiekwetenskap ... Ons het die moontlikheid, wat ander nasies ons kan beny, om in hierdie 'laaste Paradys' ons eie monumente te bou".

ii See for example Bouws 1965, Jackson 1970, Sparrow 1986, van Blerk 1986, Marais 1989.

iii Wallaschek's evolutionist take produced comparisons that were presumably read as back-handed compliments that nevertheless further distanced the 'primitive', such "among races of the very lowest order of civilisation there are frequently to be found some which have more musical capacity than many of a higher order. This is undoubtedly the case with the Bushmen" (Wallaschek 1970(1893), 1).

iv Mavis Mpola, for example, has taken several years of doctoral work through Rhodes University to amass some 200 examples of choral music by Xhosa composers: an invaluable collection that is unique of its kind.

v Exceptions include the University of Pretoria Chorale, conducted by Mokale Koapeng.

vi The series *South Africa Sings* published by SAMRO promised to fill this lacuna, but thus far has only produced one volume (SAMRO 1998).

vii Dreaming songs has been related by inter alia composers Joseph Shabalala (see Ballantine 1997), and Jabez Foley. The following account was related to Mavis Mpola during her doctoral research on Xhosa music by Foley's widow, Mrs Ethel Mtyobo: "Utishara ebavuka ezinzulwini zobusuku aqubule incwadi yakhe nosiba abhale. Mna ndakuyibona ngomso loo nto ebeyibhala" ("Teacher' [Foley] would wake up in the middle of the night and grab his book and pen and write. I would see the following day what he was writing) (Mavis Mpola, interview with Mrs Mtyobo, 27.05.01; used with permission).

viii C. Saunders and N. Southey's (eds.) *A Dictionary of South African History* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, 1998), gives good potted summaries of the main events, issues and figures in South African history. William Beinart's *Twentieth Century South Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) is one of the best detailed accounts of its recent history.

ix I am indebted to Veit Erlmann for bringing this piece to my attention.

x He applied a similar approach to analysis in his study of the hymns of Isaiah Shembe (see Vilakazi, A., with B. Mthethwa and M. Mpanza. 1986).

xi A document in the Johannesburg Public Library - the Catalogue of [Sheet] Music in the Strange Collection of Africana (1944) - speaks to another tangent of this culture, the hugely popular parlour music played in homes, clubs and concert halls. The Supplement to this

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catalogue alone (1945) has two hundred items, all voicing a strand in the multiple histories of South African music - in languages such as Zulu, English, Afrikaans, and German.

xii Braudel's notion of the *longue durée* (1980(1969)) - the notion of time moving at different rates in one geographical region so that space becomes a prism of layered history - is useful in juggling the large conceptual spaces of history and geography that apply here.

xiii Coplan refers the reader here to Graham Pechey's (1994) work on post-apartheid narratives.

xiv A fact not unnoticed by its many critics; see for example Erlmann 1991, 112.

xv It was published simultaneously in the two official languages of the day, Afrikaans and English.

xvi The first languages of such writers include Zulu, German, French, Afrikaans, Venda and Xhosa.

xvii See Paxinos (1986) on the Musicological Society, and Ballantine (1995) on the Ethnomusicology Symposia from 1980 to 1995. The split between the two bodies has lessened over the past 5 years and there are moves afoot to merge them.

xviii They include for example Bongani Mthethwa, whose work is used in this *Reader*, and Caesar Ndlovu. They also include scholars from many other African countries.

xix The Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Societies (*FAK*), the cultural wing of Afrikaner nationalism.

xx The system used in South Africa is the British system made famous by John Curwen in the nineteenth century, using a moveable doh, rather than the continental system of solfège where doh (ut) is fixed as C.

xxi Chase later proposed (1958) a model for writing *a* history rather than *the* history of music in North America. Such a history, he says, can neither be a continuous narrative nor a complete cultural survey (1958, 4), 'for it must necessarily deal with various types of acculturation that were going on simultaneously. It must strive for "penetration in depth" rather than for chronological continuity', while '[t]he predominance of primitive, folk and popular idioms, will necessitate what amounts virtually to a reversal of values' (Ibid., 5). To achieve the latter perspective, he argues for a philosophical basis in 'Kenneth Burke's theory of 'perspective by incongruity', which (prophetically, now) involves a search for 'the heuristic or perspective value of a planned incongruity' (Burke 1935, 160) in which one deliberately discards available data in the interests of a fresh point of view (5).

xxii In the early twentieth century the Afrikaners largely invented their folk tradition by setting melodies from Germany, The Netherlands and Britain to Dutch or Afrikaans texts (see Grobler 1982) while the British did not attempt this kind of musical adaptation.

xxiii I am indebted to Grant Olwage for bringing the piece by Bokwe Matthews to my attention.

xxiv The way music is so often linked to poetry, drama, dance, religion, or ritual (African, Asian, or European), is only one problematic. Another is that in most of the country's nine African languages there is no word for 'music': words used are the equivalent to 'song', or 'dance'. In current South African English and Afrikaans the words 'music' or '*musiek*' do not necessarily connote the same thing; and assumptions lie behind this word that link it to many different things - now to classical music (as in the International Classical Music Festival), now to pop (as in the phrase 'the music industry').