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Disquieting (Post-Apartheid) Musical Modernism

Four Hermeneutic Readings

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Declaration of Authorship

I, William Eric Fourie, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is my own. Where I have relied on the work of others, this is clearly acknowledged.

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Abstract

This thesis considers manifestations of musical modernism in post-apartheid South Africa. Modernism has in recent years been regarded as conservative and elitist. These critiques, coupled with the way in which European modernist music was utilised by the apartheid government to substantiate a 'progressive' white culture in opposition to a 'regressive' black culture, suggest that modernist music in contemporary South Africa would at best hold little cultural import and, at worst, represent the cultural capital of a repressive regime. I argue in this thesis that the opposite is the case, that modernist works composed between 1994 and 2018 can be interpreted within and against the societal conditions of the post-apartheid era. To do so, I draw on, and develop, a broader definition of modernism, which is ontologically grounded in the notion that modernism is an artistic response to the conditions of modernity. This definition allows me to delink modernism from its contextual position in early twentieth-century Western centres as well as its aesthetic characterisations and consider under its remit music that is responsive to post-apartheid modernity.

The thesis develops the concept of post-apartheid musical modernism in four hermeneutic case studies of works that have previously received no, or only little, scholarly attention. The first is Kevin Volans's String Quartet No. 5, 'Dancers on a Plane' (1994). This case study considers the work within the conditions of post-apartheid art. These conditions reject the instrumentalisation of art as a form of resistance against the apartheid regime and prompt a move away from realist forms of expression. In the second case study I read *Johannesburg Etude No. 1* (2011) and *City Deep* (2018) by Clare Loveday against the neoliberal economic order as it manifests in the country's mining industry. This case study maps, through

the close reading of Loveday's works, the growing disillusionment with the post-apartheid government as the socialist tenets of the struggle were systematically replaced by an economic system that exacerbated the inequality between the rich and the poor. The third is a reading of Theo Herbst's *Konka Klanke (Tunguska)* (2010). This case study draws on theories of forgetting by Heidegger and Ricoeur to read Herbst's composition against the discourse of forgetting espoused by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's findings on the human rights violations of the apartheid era. I interpret Herbst's composition in terms of a bifurcation of forgetting, in which forgetting can be understood as both a necessary condition for memory, and, simultaneously, a destructive, pathological form of amnesia. In the fourth case study, I read Andile Khumalo's spectralist composition, *Bells Die Out* (2013) as a critique of the expectations of blackness. Khumalo's work, I argue, does not resound blackness explicitly, but produces blackness as a ghost of colonial modernity. Drawing on these four case studies, I argue for a revised conception of musical modernism in South Africa, one that both recognises its critical potential in post-apartheid South African cultural politics and in a more global canon of modernist music.

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(1) Disquieting (adj.) Post-Apartheid Musical Modernism

(2) Disquieting (adj.) Musical Modernism

(3) Disquieting (v.) Post-Apartheid Musical Modernism

(4) Disquieting (v.) Musical Modernism

Introduction

White Scars

What is the place of musical modernism amid the cultural debris left in the wake of apartheid? Is it, to recall Derek Walcott's famous image, a cracked heirloom marked by white scars?¹ Is it the very scarring of whiteness on a cracked or broken society? Does musical modernism bare these scars in the intimacy of personal readings, as Denis Hirson has suggested?² Alternatively, and following Ingrid de Kok, do these scars become visible in the sphere of public cultural memory?³ Or can musical modernism in the post-apartheid era be thought of in an altogether different way? Having grown up under the democratic dispensation, I feel compelled—by love, by hatred, by curiosity, by defiance, by guilt—to understand these questions when I listen to the composition(s) of my own modernity, a modernity at once free and still deeply oppressed.

¹ Derek Walcott, *The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, & Giroux, 1993), 9.

² Denis Hirson, *White Scars: On Reading and Rites of Passage* (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2006).

³ Ingrid de Kok, 'Cracked Heirlooms: Memory on Exhibition', in *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa*, ed. Sarah Nuttall and Carli Coetzee (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 57–71.

While tracing scars and mending cracked heirlooms are difficult tasks, identifying the original wound against which modernism in this context must be thought is not. This wound, although incredibly complex, has a singular name: apartheid. Instigated when the National Party, an Afrikaner political group guided by white-supremacist ideologies, came into power in 1948, the term refers to the institutionalised system of racial segregation that devastated all spheres of South African life and carved out a stratified modernity in the country. While perhaps felt most acutely in political activism, economy, and social ordering, apartheid's effects extended to the arena of culture where, as I will show with particular reference to music later in this introduction, hierarchies of black pre-modernity and white modernity formed the basis for the disempowerment and oppression of the country's non-white majority population. This system inflicted a wound that in the years after apartheid came to form the white scars referred to by De Kok and Hirson. My concern in this thesis is with these scars both as markers and subjects of musical modernism in the post-apartheid era.

That said, it is hard to know exactly what is delimited by the term 'post-apartheid'. When, for instance, did the post-apartheid era start? Legislatively, one might assume that it started on 2 February 1990 when the then president, F. W. de Klerk, announced in his opening address to parliament that he would repeal discriminatory apartheid laws and lift the ban on anti-apartheid political parties such as the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP).⁴ Politically, 27 April 1994 and

⁴ De Klerk indeed saw 2 February as the day he ended apartheid. Simon Osborne, 'FW de Klerk: The Day I Ended Apartheid', *The Independent*, 2 February 2010, accessed 24 July 2019, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/fw-de-klerk-the-day-i-ended-apartheid-1886128.html>.

the first democratic elections might be a more suitable date. Morally, it might be best to consider the advent of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in 1996 during which the wounds of apartheid were publicly addressed.⁵ Anachronistically, one might argue that the adoption of the Freedom Charter on 26 June 1955 in Kliptown was the moment when the post-apartheid era first manifested, albeit only as an aspiration.⁶ Of course, no (or perhaps only very few) serious commentators would consider any one of these an appropriate date because the end of apartheid and the advent of the post-apartheid era have generally been understood as complex events with various moving parts that at some point all miraculously aligned.⁷

Similarly, it is not entirely certain that the post-apartheid era continues today, or whether, as some have argued, it ended with the Marikana massacre on 16 August 2012 when thirty-four miners were gunned down by state security forces and, with them, the Rainbow Nation utopia was shot dead too.⁸ The post-apartheid era might also have ended with the student protests which started as an attempt to remove a statue of Cecil Rhodes at the University of Cape Town in 2015, but quickly (and violently) escalated under

⁵ The TRC is addressed at length in Chapter 3.

⁶ I discuss the Freedom Charter at length in Chapter 2.

⁷ For instance, see Patti Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a Miracle: The End of Apartheid and the Birth of the New South Africa* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998), or Robin Renwick, *The End of Apartheid: Diary of a Revolution* (London: Biteback Publishing, 2015).

⁸ The Rainbow Nation is a term that refers to the emergent multicultural state after apartheid. It was coined by former Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and was championed by Nelson Mandela during his first months in office. See Kathryn A. Manzo, *Creating Boundaries: The Politics of Race and Nation* (Boulder: Lynne Reiner, 1996), 71. On its negation with the Marikana massacre, see Greg Marinovich, 'Marikana, One Year Later: The Hell Above and Below Ground', *Daily Maverick*, 16 August 2013, accessed 3 January 2019, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2013-08-16-marikana-one-year-later-the-hell-above-and-below-ground/>. I address the Marikana massacre at greater length in Chapter 2.

the banner of Fallism to encapsulate the abolishment of tuition fees, decolonising the curriculum, and other issues that placed the university at odds with the post-apartheid promise of the emancipation of the youth.⁹ In this sense, the post-apartheid era ended with the disillusionment in the promises of access to education, but also of transformation more broadly, made by Nelson Mandela's government.

With hazy temporal parameters, it is perhaps more productive to consider the post-apartheid era as a condition, rather than a demarcated period in time. In this regard, Graham Pechey's definition, which although published in 1996, remains eloquent and useful today. His definition dismisses politically aligned (and for him, banal) assertions that the post-apartheid era had been fully realised when all citizens were given an equal vote.

Against this banality of [its political] usage, the sense of 'post-apartheid' [...] defines a condition that has contradictorily always existed and yet is impossible of full realisation: always existed, because apartheid as a politics of permanent and institutionalised crisis has from the beginning been shadowed by its own transgression and supersession; impossible of realisation, because the proliferating binaries of apartheid discourse will long outlive any merely political winning of freedom.¹⁰

Thought of in this way, Pechey's definition of the post-apartheid condition resembles Jürgen Habermas's proposition of Western modernity

⁹ Fallism is a term derived from the various 'mustfall' protest movements such as #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall. For an extensive discussion on the politics of Fallism, see Rekgotsofetse Chikane, *Breaking a Rainbow, Building a Nation: The Politics Behind #mustfall Movements* (Johannesburg: Picador Africa, 2018).

¹⁰ Graham Pechey, 'Post-Apartheid Narratives', in *Colonial Discourse, Postcolonial Theory*, ed. Francis Barker (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 153.

as something incomplete, left open by the unfinished business of its promised emancipation.¹¹ Indeed, Pechey continues to conceive of post-apartheid as a descriptor of a modernity that emerges as a humanist-emancipatory response to the oppression of the apartheid regime and the colonial domination that preceded it.¹² While I agree with Pechey's argument of the incompleteness of a post-apartheid modernity, I will show in this thesis that its emancipatory promise is accompanied in equal measure by the oppressive economics of neoliberal capitalism and, at times, in the continued manifestation of racialised categorisations. Reconfiguring slightly Pechey's contradictory definition, the post-apartheid condition, I suggest, contains both the lingering effects of apartheid and the possibility to move beyond them.

I will argue for this contradictory ontology of post-apartheid modernity through interpretative readings of modernist musical works composed between 1994 and 2018. Doing so is articulated in the first of four possible readings of this thesis's title, which takes disquieting as an adjective and the word 'post-apartheid' as not bracketed out. Read in this way, this thesis is concerned with forms of post-apartheid musical modernism which can be understood as disquieting, especially when read against a stable—and utopian—conception of post-apartheid modernity. Yet to achieve this reading, and as I will extrapolate upon in more detail later in this introduction, a second reading of the title is required. In this second reading, the title still invokes 'disquieting' as an adjective but brackets out 'post-

¹¹ Jürgen Habermas, 'Modernity – An Incomplete Project', in *The Anti-Aesthetic*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), 3–15.

¹² Pechey, 'Post-Apartheid Narratives', 156.

apartheid' by drawing on conceptions of modernism taken from non-post-apartheid contexts or frames of reference. However, these conceptions of modernism retain the adjective 'disquieting' for the way in which they do not rely on categorical aesthetic conditions for the identification of modernism as it is expressed in music. They rely instead on the forms of response such music does or does not offer when read against modernity. The third reading of the title manifests less explicitly in this thesis, but is the culminative product of my interpretations. This reading considers 'disquieting' as a verb in its etymological and overly literal sense. In what follows, I will draw a selection of works, which have until now been relegated to silence, into an enunciative discourse. None of the works that I discuss here have been the subject of sustained critical discussion or performance. As I will argue later in this introduction, part of my work here is to pull them out of silence and make them quiet no more. The fourth reading of the title, which I will return to in the conclusion of this thesis, also invokes 'disquieting' as a verb, but again must bracket out the term 'post-apartheid'. This reading uses 'disquieting' in the more conventional sense and I will consider the possibilities of inserting the works under discussion here into a broader, international canon of musical modernism. Doing so, I will suggest, would be to upset the limited geo-political—but also interpretative—remit of Western musical modernism.

Modernist Music's Troubled Past

To situate the music I will discuss in this thesis, it is important to understand the way in which contemporary European art music was used by state

representatives in the apartheid cultural sphere. That is, it is important to understand this music's history which is marked by the white scars mentioned before. A revealing moment in this history is Karlheinz Stockhausen's 1971 visit to the country, which included lectures and concerts in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Pretoria and was jointly sponsored by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and the Goethe Institute.¹³ The tour fell within the apartheid state's larger project of importing Western (and predominantly European) art music for the promotion of white culture, a project that was outlined by the state broadcaster already in 1962, nine years prior to the tour.

Radio South Africa should, by means of positive contributions in its own sphere, promote the survival and bounteous heritage of the White people of the Republic of South Africa while at the same time encouraging the development and self-realisation of the non-white population groups in their own spheres.¹⁴

The statement appeared in a state-sanctioned newspaper on 4 May, exactly two weeks before a visit by another grand figure of Western art music, Igor Stravinsky, which was sponsored by the broadcaster and covered live on

¹³ Stockhausen's South African tour has been only scantily documented. The lengthiest account is given in Mary Bauermeister's autobiography, but provides little by way of exact details. See Mary Bauermeister, *Ich Hänge im Triolengitter: Mein Leben mit Karlheinz Stockhausen* (München: btb, 2013), 265–71.

¹⁴ SABC quoted in John Hinch, 'Stravinsky in Africa', *Muziki* 1:1 (2004), 73.

radio.¹⁵ The visit was arranged and personally overseen by the SABC's music director, Anton Hartman, who felt it his mission to educate the Afrikaner nation in the current trends of European art music.¹⁶ In pursuing this project, Hartman invited composers such as Henk Badings, Pierre Boulez, and Heinrich Sutermeister, alongside Stravinsky and Stockhausen, to present concerts and lectures throughout the country.¹⁷ Surveying these composers, it is clear that the emphasis for Hartman lay on European art music more broadly, rather than being attracted to specifically modernist or high modernist composers. After all, Sutermeister's neo-Romantic output would not easily fall under the modernist rubric, and Badings was himself chastised by leading modernist figures such as Luigi Nono for the octatonic tendencies in his electronic works.¹⁸

Be that as it may, the exponents of European high modernism, and in particular, Stockhausen, seemed to occupy a privileged position in Hartman's project: for Hartman, Stockhausen's was the 'music of the future'.¹⁹ It was

¹⁵ Stravinsky's visit to the country has been documented in *Ibid.* It has recently also been the subject of a BBC documentary in which Stravinsky is portrayed as defying the apartheid state by conducting a concert for a black audience in Springs, a mining settlement outside of Johannesburg. Of course, by conducting this concert, he endorsed, unwittingly perhaps, the separate development policies of the state, rather than defied them. Michael Dingaan, 'Stravinsky in South Africa', *BBC World Service*, 2017, accessed 28 June 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p058zhsn>.

¹⁶ Hartman's edifying impulse is well documented and came to the fore, for instance, when he grouped educators with industries of radio, film, and music as those that would promote Afrikaner nationalism among the youth. Chris Walton, 'Bond of Broeders: Anton Hartman and Music in an Apartheid State', *The Musical Times* 145:1887 (2004), 73. His desire to educate the Afrikaner nation in trends of contemporary European art music is further documented in Mia Hartman, *The Anton Hartman Story* (Pretoria: Crink, 2009).

¹⁷ A full list of invited composers and performers can be found in R. J. van den Berg, 'Die Musiekaktiwiteite van Die SAUK 1936–1966' (MMus Thesis, North West University, 1976), 82–3; 98–103.

¹⁸ Louis Andriessen and Jonathan Cross, 'Composing with Stravinsky', in *The Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky*, ed. Jonathan Cross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 253.

¹⁹ Hartman quoted in Walton, 'Bond of Broeders', 70.

therefore important that a special effort be made to convince white South African audiences that these abstract sounds formed not only part of their cultural heritage, but a marker of their eventual self-actualisation. These laboured considerations can be read in the correspondence between Hans Adler and Hans Kramer, the respective chairs of the Johannesburg and Cape Town Music Societies and Hartman's collaborators on Stockhausen's South African tour. In a letter to Adler, Kramer wrote:

As I told you on the phone I met with [Gunter] Pulvermacher and [Richard] Behrens [the heads of music at the Universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch]. They are both very keen to have a programme [of Stockhausen's music]. How my subscribers are going to 'take' this offering is a big question mark. But I feel they should be exposed to this type of 'sound'. I don't think, honestly, that it is 'music'.²⁰

The hallmarks of Hartman's ideology were clear in his colleagues' correspondence. There was a sense of duty in investing in the cultural capital of the whites who would have exclusively made up the membership of these music societies.²¹ Echoing the paternalistic attitude of the apartheid state, Kramer had a desire to educate 'his' subscribers. Yet there was an added layer of Hartman and his collaborators' stance here, too, in the form of a bureaucratic ambivalence toward the actual substance of Stockhausen's

²⁰ Hans Kramer, 'Letter written by Hans Kramer to Hans Adler', dated 20 May 1970, Hans Kramer Collection, MSC 81, 22(2): 1970–72. My thanks to Annemie Behr for sharing her research on the Kramer Collection with me.

²¹ See Annemie Stimie Behr, 'The Hans Kramer Collection at the National Library, Cape Town: An Archival Perspective on Jewish Patronage of Music in 20th-Century South Africa', *Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa* 12:1–2 (2015), 1–22.

music. It was after all only sound and not music, and thus it did not warrant any serious engagement or understanding at the level of content. Put differently, as aesthetic cultural capital, Stockhausen's *music* seemed nugatory. However, stripped of its musical value and presented purely as a vehicle for the betterment of whites (and thus a form of racialised cultural capital), it was worth Kramer risking an unpredictable reaction from his subscribers.

The reduction of Stockhausen's music to a form of racialised cultural capital reveals something of the way in which high modernism was inscribed with whiteness in this context. Unlike the other forms of European art music offered by the likes of Badings and Sutermeister, high modernism was allowed to function as a cypher of whiteness in its surplus alone, regardless of its aesthetic substance. That is, it was so representational of whiteness that it needed not satisfy the actual listening habits or expectations of whites. In the way Kramer, Adler, and Hartman co-opted it, high modernist music was an excessive form of whiteness that transcended the standard whiteness of European art music, a form of whiteness that could contain risk in its excess.

Indeed, the excessive whiteness of high modernism was revealed most vividly in a lecture recital that Stockhausen presented in Pretoria. On this occasion, the hyper-conservative Afrikaner audience, whose bounteous cultural heritage this music was meant to be, did not greedily accept their pedagogue's offering. George King, the former head of Art History, Visual Arts and Musicology at the University of South Africa, recalls the concert:

S[tockhausen] started by outlining his composing philosophy and approach to music in general. There was lots of talk about the harmony of

the spheres, with a physical demonstration which he gave by swooning across the stage with arms flung open, making whooshing sounds—a bit like *Biggles Flies East*.

Then there was a performance of a work for four loudspeakers, two placed at each side of the stage and another two in the back corners of the auditorium, creating a quadraphonic experience. [...] I cannot remember a title. [...] What does indeed stick vividly in the memory is the fact that S[tockhausen] insisted on all the lights being dimmed during the performance, an unfortunate circumstance as it enabled at least half the members of the audience to creep out of the [auditorium] under cover of more-or-less darkness, among some muffled giggling and shuffling. So when it was over and the lights came on again the place was more than half empty (I seem to recall there had been a sizeable audience initially). This infuriated [Stockhausen] and the event ended abruptly.²²

One cannot know exactly why the audience members snuck out under the cover of darkness, but that they did signals that Stockhausen's brand of high modernism was indeed only functional in its excess: the audience could sit through the theoretical discussion, but once confronted with its musical substance, they had to flee. Yet despite his ambivalent reception in apartheid South Africa, Stockhausen continued his tour, presenting a radio broadcast and his final concert and lecture series in Johannesburg. That is, despite the fact that audiences walked out on it, high modernism's excessive whiteness retained its privileged position among institutionalised portrayals of white culture.

²² George King, 'Stockhausen's Visit to South Africa', email to the author, 17 October 2017.

That state institutions such as the SABC attempted to co-opt European art music into their project of developing a white culture, however, does not mean that this music's afterlife and influence could be so neatly contained. Two other anecdotes from Stockhausen's tour are telling. During one of his live radio interviews, Stockhausen lauded the virtues of 'mixing'.²³ This horrified SABC officials, who, as apartheid state representatives, had been legislating against 'mixing' of any sort (premised on the idea that any other mixing might lead to racial mixing) and indeed for whom the word would have been almost a taboo. A similar sense of horror, one imagines, would have struck Stockhausen's keepers when they learnt that he was approached by a student activist after his last concert in Johannesburg and was convinced to go to Soweto, South Africa's largest township, to meet with the leader of the Black Consciousness Movement, Steve Biko. Indeed, the horror this meeting must have invoked is palpable in the absence of its documentary evidence.²⁴ What would it have meant for the state if their emblem of whiteness became sympathetic to the cause of black emancipation?

These two anecdotes serve as reminders that although modernist music was co-opted by the apartheid state as a marker of whiteness (and thus of the regime), it would be reductive to read its history as contained in this singular purpose. Consider, for instance, Graham Newcater's 1967 serialist ballet, *Raka*, which is based on N.P. van Wyk Louw's epic of the same title originally published in 1941. While the text occupied a canonic position in Afrikaans

²³ Walton, 'Bond of Broeders', 70.

²⁴ To my knowledge, the only record of this meeting can be found in Bauermeister, *Ich Hänge im Triolengitter*, 271. It, however, became the imaginative subject of a 2017 work by Philip Miller, *BikoHausen*, in which recordings of Stockhausen's lectures in the country were played against recordings of Biko's speeches.

literature, Newcater envisaged his setting as an experimental anti-establishment gesture akin to the literary works of the ‘Sestigers’ such as Jan Rabie, Breyten Breytenbach, and Adam Small, who openly criticised the regime.²⁵ Set in a strict twelve-tone language, this music, which was commissioned by the state through the Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal (PACT), ‘implied a radical democratisation of pitch relations’ in glaring opposition to the racialised hierarchies imposed by the apartheid government.²⁶ Thus although sanctioned by the regime, this form of modernism did not unambiguously recreate or even represent the central tenets of the state’s ideology. Many other apartheid-era composers’ works can be read in a similarly recalcitrant relationship to the governing political system during the time, thereby suggesting that there does not exist a clear correlation between modernism and apartheid ideology.²⁷

That said, there remains a mark left on modernist music, whether of European or South African origin, through the regime’s designation of it as the cultural capital of whites. This mark is discernible in various studies that have attempted to ‘map’ South African art music practices, which, by invoking Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of cultural fields, argue that there has been

²⁵ Stephanus Muller, ‘Value in Ambiguity: Listening to Art Music in Contemporary South Africa’, *The Conversation*, accessed 1 July 2019, <http://theconversation.com/value-in-ambiguity-listening-to-art-music-in-contemporary-south-africa-91116>.

²⁶ Ibid. For an detailed analysis of the twelve-tone method used by Newcater, see Amoré Steyn, ‘Graham Newcater’s *Raka* in Its Literary, Musical and Socio-Political Context’ (MMus Thesis, University of Pretoria, 2008).

²⁷ Stephanus Muller, for instance, has shown how Arnold van Wyk, the darling of institutional music during the apartheid era, similarly produces music at odds with state ideology through its intimacy and sense of non-disclosure. See Stephanus Muller, ‘Arnold van Wyk’s Hard, Stony, Flinty Path, or Making Things Beautiful in Apartheid South Africa’, *The Musical Times* 149:1905 (2008), 61–78.

a shift away from modernism since the end of the apartheid regime.²⁸ This shift is framed in these studies as a shift from an ‘autonomous hierarchization’ in which ‘composers recognise only the world of other composers’ during the apartheid years to a ‘heteronomous hierarchization’ in the post-apartheid era in which the composer’s ‘work has to be more accountable [...] to the larger field of economics and the new political order’.²⁹ The mark thus left on modernist music after apartheid is the inscription of its status as autonomous and therefore unconcerned with the world around it. As Christine Lucia, one of the foremost proponents of this theory, argues,

the greater autonomy of art music composition in the 1970s and ‘80s was due, I suggest, to the way it was protected from (and by) the racialised class politics of the [field of economics and power relations], enjoying certain privileges even from within a dominated position in the hierarchy of power, such privileges including financial support endorsed by that power.³⁰

²⁸ The first and most influential of these studies is Christine Lucia, ‘Mapping the Field: A Preliminary Survey Of South African Composition and Performance as Research’, *SAMUS: South African Journal of Musicology* 25 (2005), 79–104. Other notable examples include Thomas Pooley, ‘Composition in Crisis: Case Studies in South African Art Music 1980-2006’ (MA Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 2008); Clare Loveday, ‘Collusion and Collision: A Composition Portfolio Focusing on Straight Saxophone and a Thesis’ (DMus Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 2009); Mokale Abel Koapeng, ‘I Compose What I Like: Challenges Facing A Black Composer in the South African Choral Field’ (MA Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 2014); and Hans Huyssen, ‘Composing (in) Contemporary South Africa: Theoretical and Musical Responses to Complexity’ (PhD Thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2015), esp. 110–20.

²⁹ Lucia, ‘Mapping the Field’, 88.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

Lucia's theorisation accounts for the way in which composers such as Stockhausen were treated by Hartman and his collaborators. Their music would only be for the consumption of white audiences (the racialised class politics) and would furthermore be framed not as music, which might have some form of socio-historical context, but as sound abstractly devoid of any relation to the world. As an excessive form of whiteness, this music was indeed so protected from the world, and thus so autonomous, that it could fail (its audiences could sneak out of its performance under the cover of darkness) and still retain the state's endorsement.

Yet Lucia's theorisation does not account for the moments of rupture such as Stockhausen's meeting with Biko or Newcater's radical democratisation in music. Viewed from the perspective of these events, modernist music under the apartheid regime was perhaps less autonomous and more hyper-conscious of its place in the world. The SABC officials, after all, immediately drew connections between Stockhausen's pronouncements on the value of mixing and the ideology of separate development in the country.³¹ In this sense, it is perhaps more useful to focus on the protection, rather than the autonomy, of modernist music under the regime. Of course, that this music was protected did afford its composers a degree of autonomy, but it was a

³¹ Walton, 'Bond of Broeders', 70–1.

false autonomy, one always acutely aware of its social, political, and historical contexts.³²

Focusing on the notion of protection instead of autonomy per se also allows for a better explanation of the difference between modernist music before and after the regime change. It is not so much that this music (and its creators) became less autonomous, but that its privileged position—and thus its protected status—was stripped away. This stripping away occurred in part at a policy level in government. In 1996, the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology issued a White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage in which they detailed how the Performing Arts Councils such as PACT, which commissioned Newcater's *Raka*, were to receive a drastically reduced subsidy from the state on the grounds that these institutions serviced only a small and elite (and white) audience.³³ Instead, the state instituted a National Arts Council which would administer government funding to arts practitioners. In material terms, this meant that the forty-six percent of the Department's budget that went to the Performing Arts Councils under the apartheid regime was diverted to a national structure, thereby redistributing

³² This is not a false autonomy in the Adornian sense, which holds that modernist music can impart a partial social critique exactly because it subscribes to an Enlightenment idea of autonomy that is a product of the very culture modernism seeks to disarm. In other words, it is not false in the dialectical sense. It is rather a false autonomy in the sense of posturing autonomy while reproducing its own totality. Read in Adornian terms, it is a form of instrumental rationalisation which subsumes its object under the universal (it does not matter what we hear in Stockhausen's music, it is white, therefore it is good). On Adorno's critique of instrumental reason, see Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002). For Adorno's own extensive discussion of false autonomy, see Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), 1–20.

³³ Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, 'White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage', *Department of Arts and Culture*, 1996, accessed 2 July 2019, <http://www.dac.gov.za/content/white-paper-arts-culture-and-heritage-o>.

funds traditionally reserved for whites-only performing arts productions (including music).³⁴ Thus the most significant portion of the economic support that protected the project of white cultural development, which included, for instance, exposure to the music of Stockhausen but also the commissioning of music by white South African composers, was removed.

The removal of government support reflected a growing public distrust of the sanctity of European art music. Writing in 1992, and in stark contrast to the SABC's 1962 proclamation, Geoffrey Chew notes that 'the broad South African public, both black and white, does not fully accept classical music as its cultural possession'.³⁵ Among composers, especially those aligned to institutions such as the SABC, the distrust translated not into a rejection of European art music but into a specific rejection of the European avant-garde, and perhaps any form of experimentalism more broadly. As Mary Rörich, one of the foremost commentators on contemporary music during this time, argues, the South African avant-garde reached its peak in 1983 with the SABC Contemporary Music Festival where composers such as Peter Klatzow, Roelof Temmingh, Hans Roosenschoon, Jacques de Vos Malan, and Carl van Wyk presented some of their last serious attempts at a musical experimentalism.³⁶ Surveying what happened to these composers after the festival, Rörich concludes: 'Klatzow and Temmingh returned to the Cape and the safety of pre-modernist styles and audiences. De Vos Malan gave up

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Geoffrey Chew, 'Culture and Value: The Musical Canon in a "New South Africa"', *SAMUS: South African Journal of Musicology* 12 (1992), 1.

³⁶ Mary Rörich, 'African Style Avant-Garde', *The M&G Online*, 18 July 2003, accessed 3 July 2019, <https://mg.co.za/article/2003-07-18-african-style-avantgarde/>. Kevin Volans stands out in Rörich's analysis as the composer present at this festival who did not succumb to the ennui of the time. I detail his experience in Chapter 1.

composing altogether and eventually took the chicken run to Australia'.³⁷

Newcater, who is not included by Rörich here, lapsed into silence in the early '90s and would only return tentatively to public consciousness in 2011.³⁸

The shift away from modernist practices in the late 1980s and '90s, as Thomas Pooley has argued, was coupled with the emergence of a cross-cultural aesthetic in which composers inflected their own European art music idioms with endogenous Southern African music.³⁹ This inflection was the primary manifestation of the realisation mentioned by Lucia earlier that composers became aware of the accountability of their music within the new political order. That is, with the restructuring of governmental funding mechanisms and the recognition and promotion of black South African culture by the state, composers, now left economically and culturally exposed, had to reconcile their own practices with the world in which they found themselves. Indeed, as Rörich writes in a 1995 review of an album of work by Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph, another apartheid-era composer, 'musical ethnicity has become not just fashionable but obligatory for local "politically correct" composers'.⁴⁰

The level of anxiety induced by this obligation and the exposure that came with it is perhaps exemplified by an exchange across two volumes of *SAMUS: South African Journal of Musicology* between Lucia and Klatzow. In an largely positive review of Klatzow's 1993 piano suite, *From the Poets*, Lucia

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Muller, 'Value in Ambiguity'.

³⁹ Thomas M Pooley, "Never The Twain Shall Meet": Africanist Art Music and The End of Apartheid', *SAMUS: South African Music Studies* 30/31 (2011), 45. I treat this point at greater length in Chapter 4.

⁴⁰ Mary Rörich, 'Zaidel-Rudolph, Jeanne. *Music of the Spheres*. GSE Claremont Records CD GSE 1532', *SAMUS: South African Journal of Musicology* 15 (1995), 62.

points out that Klatzow starts drawing on African influences in this work despite having had ‘extremely tenuous links with (not to say contempt for)’ such integration in the past.⁴¹ Klatzow responded in the following journal issue by painstakingly listing instances in which he had been for such a musical integration, starting from his earliest attempts at writing a symphony at the age of thirteen which included a climax on *Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrica* (the pan-African liberation hymn that came to constitute part of the post-apartheid national anthem) to the promotion of his own colleagues’ African-inspired compositions.⁴² Aside from the example drawn from his juvenilia, the other examples he lists seem to corroborate Lucia’s point since they almost exclusively comprise the settings of or responses to white Afrikaans texts or icons, rather than African ones. Yet that Klatzow tries to reframe his career as a composer deeply invested in the local speaks to the anxiety of being called out for being implicated in the project of European aspiration propagated by figures such as Hartman. The desire here, it seems, is to recast himself as an indigenous composer and at the same time to distance himself from the forms of European art music, especially the avant-garde, on which his career was earlier built.

This crisis of identity, but also of exposure and accountability, eventually crippled mainstream composers’ avant-garde and experimentalist

⁴¹ Christine Lucia, ‘Klatzow, Peter. *From the Poets* (Suite for Piano), SAMRO Scores (Johannesburg: Southern African Music Rights Organisation Limited [SAMRO] 1993)’, *SAMUS: South African Journal of Musicology* 13 (1993), 117.

⁴² Peter Klatzow, ‘To the Editor, SAMUS’, *SAMUS: South African Journal of Musicology* 14 (1994): 125–26.

aspirations during the '90s.⁴³ 'There is no longer a South African "international avant-garde" in music', writes Rörich at the turn of the century. 'It is, thankfully, quite dead. Its inability to engage with context and change, its lack of generosity and elitism are the final nails in its coffin'.⁴⁴ Yet almost as soon as the final traces of the avant-garde in the mainstream fell away, there emerged a new avant-garde, which was not aligned with or dependent upon institutions such as the SABC. The main protagonist in this resurgence was Michael Blake, a Cape Town-born composer who had moved to London in 1977 where he studied with Stanley Glasser at Goldsmiths College, and who, with almost two decades of experience in building up new music ensembles in the United Kingdom, returned to South Africa in 1998.⁴⁵ Upon his return, Blake presented a paper at the Musicological Society of Southern Africa's Annual Congress in which he spoke of the emergence of a South African experimental aesthetic whose proponents did not include the apartheid-era establishment composers, but instead a younger generation of composers including Martin Scherzinger, Bongani Ndodana-Breen, and David Kosviner, as well as more established composers such as Kevin Volans and Matteo Fargion.⁴⁶ In these composers, and in his own music, Blake suggested that the turn toward endogenous forms of music should not be allied with a regression into pre-modernist styles in the way that

⁴³ Outside the mainstream, composers such as Jürgen Bräuninger continued to produce highly experimental works throughout the '90s, while also calling out the appropriation of black South African music by white composers. See Jürgen Bräuninger, 'Gumboots to the Rescue', *SAMUS: South African Journal of Musicology* 18 (1998), 1–16.

⁴⁴ Rörich, 'African Style Avant-Garde'.

⁴⁵ For Blake's biographical details, see Stephanus Muller, 'Michael Blake 50: Interview with Stephanus Muller', *Musicus* 30:1 (2002), 119–26.

⁴⁶ Michael Blake, 'The Emergence of a South African Experimental Aesthetic', *Proceedings of the 25th Annual Congress of the Musicological Society of Southern Africa*, 1998, 1–6.

establishment composers such as Klatzow had asserted. Instead, he argues, such a turn should become the grounds for a ‘radical aesthetic of the moment and of the future’.⁴⁷

For Blake, this approach would underpin a vast infrastructure for new music performance and composition that he would build over the coming decade. A year after his paper, Blake established a new music organisation, NewMusicSA, to rejoin the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM), which South Africa left in 1957.⁴⁸ The organisation hosted its first festival, the New Music Indaba, in 2000.⁴⁹ Alongside the festival, Blake initiated the Growing Composers Project, which was aimed at the inclusion of black composers who were in the past structurally excluded from institutions of art music composition.⁵⁰ In 2005, a second festival, the Unyazi Festival, was added to NewMusicSA’s offering. This festival focused specifically on the performance of electronic music and attracted a host of international figures. Marking perhaps the distance new music had come since the apartheid days, Stockhausen was not the guest of honour. Instead, Halim El-Dabh, the so-called ‘father of African electronic music’, along with George Lewis, Pauline Oliveros, Francisco López, and Yannis Kyriakides were among the featured composers.⁵¹ The major manifestation of Blake’s notion

⁴⁷ Stephanus Muller, ‘Miniature Blueprints, Spider Stratagems: A Michael Blake Retrospective at 60’, *The Musical Times* 152:1917 (2011), 77.

⁴⁸ Michael Blake, ‘South African Composers on the World Stage: The ISCM in South Africa’, *Fontes artis musicae*, 54 (2007), 359–73.

⁴⁹ For a history of the Indaba festivals, see Mareli Stolp, ‘New Music for New South Africans: The New Music Indabas in South Africa, 2000–02’, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 143:1 (2018), 211–32.

⁵⁰ For a full account of this project, see Michael Blake, ‘Die Informelle Akademie: Alternative Zugangsweisen Zum Kompositionsstudium in Südafrika’, *Neue Zeitschrift Für Musik* 167:5 (2006), 26–27.

⁵¹ Jürgen Bräuninger, ‘Introduction: Unyazi’, *Leonardo Music Journal* 16 (2006), 63.

of a radical experimentalism based on endogenous music, however, was the Bow Project, which he started shortly after he met Nofinishi Dywili, the master Nguni bow player from Lady Frere in the Eastern Cape, in 1999. The project sought to arrange and reimagine Dywili's songs and became one of the main vehicles for issuing commissions and the basis for many of the Growing Composers Workshops.⁵² Over the course of the following decade and following Dywili's passing in 2002, Blake drew in dozens of composers to respond to this music, and the project eventually culminated in 2010 in a double-disc recording featuring thirteen newly created works for string quartet alongside remastered versions of the original songs by Dywili to which the quartets correspond.

While Blake's efforts to draw on endogenous music as the basis for a new avant-garde differed substantially from the pre-modernist political correctness of mainstream composers such as Klatzow, the mark left by apartheid cultural institutions on Western music in the country was indelible. A moment in the critical reception of the tour preceding the launch of the Bow Project album is telling. During the tour, live performances of a selection of the string quartets by the Danish Nightingale Quartet, who were recorded on the album, were interspersed by the original songs performed by another master bow player, Mantombi Matotiyana. The juxtaposition of string quartet and traditional bow player, however, left one commentator

⁵² The project has unfortunately not been the subject of much sustained scholarly work. Reviews, however, exist in Leonore Bredenkamp, 'The Bow Project: CD Review', *The South African Music Teacher* 146:1 (2011/2012), 27–8; Natalie Watermeyer, 'The Bow Project', *Classicfeel*, October 2010, 45; and Ashraf Jamal, 'Searching for the Grail of Sound', *ArtSouthAfrica* 9:2 (2010), 78–79.

particularly uncomfortable. In his review of the Durban leg of the tour, Nishlyn Ramanna wrote,

While it was an interesting evening of music, I didn't particularly enjoy it. Being old enough to remember the South Africa of segregated schools, beaches and living areas, I felt uncomfortable with the separateness of *uhadi* stage left, and super-blonde quartet stage right. [...] I couldn't help finding the whole exercise a tad Bantustan-ish. [...] In general I got the impression that most of the composers engaged with the *uhadi* music because it seemed like a nice thing to do rather than because it blows their socks off. [...] The Bow Project fails because it lacks a sense of being animated by a deep, unshakable necessity.⁵³

Implicit in Ramanna's critique is a correlation between the string quartet and whiteness which recalls the history of European art music and its institutionalisation by organs such as the SABC. Yet there is a further correlation between new music, enunciated here through the medium of the quartet, and whiteness. This correlation has folded into it a breadth of historical context: segregated schools and beaches, but also entire geographical regions and geo-political configurations in the form of Bantustans.⁵⁴ Thus, although Blake's project had achieved a substantial distance from the earlier politics of imported forms of music, there remained, and will remain, the white scars of association. While conscious not to ignore these scars, my aim in this thesis, however, is to explore the hermeneutic

⁵³ Nishlyn Ramanna, 'An Awkward Marriage', *Sunday Tribune*, 2 August 2009, 9.

⁵⁴ Bantustans is a term used to refer to the so-called 'black homelands' devised by the apartheid state to separate black citizenry from mainstream politics. I address Bantustan politics at length in Chapter 1.

potential of the works under discussion beyond this historical bondage. Of course, it is not possible to disregard entirely these connections, which I explore further in Chapter 1 as a type of scar tissue, but in this thesis I hope to draw them into a more complex interpretative matrix.

That said, Blake's project provides the necessary context for situating the composers considered in this thesis since they emerged from or were deeply involved in this milieu. Other than being a strong influence on Blake during and after their time together as students at the University of the Witwatersrand, Volans, whose music was heavily criticised by composers employed by state institutions at the 1983 SABC Contemporary Music Festival, would return to teach in the Growing Composers Workshop at the 2002 New Music Indaba.⁵⁵ Blake was Loveday's composition advisor for her doctoral studies.⁵⁶ Herbst collaborated with Blake on a number of projects and is one of the featured composers on the Bow Project album.⁵⁷ Khumalo was a student in the Growing Composers Workshop and received one of his earliest commissions from the Bow Project.⁵⁸ That these composers were each aligned with Blake's project, however, does not mean that they have restricted their compositional approaches to his notion of an experimentalism mediated by endogenous South African music. All these composers, as I will show in this thesis, moved beyond the integration of

⁵⁵ Rörich, 'African Style Avant-Garde'.

⁵⁶ See Loveday, 'Collusion and Collision'.

⁵⁷ Bredenkamp, 'The Bow Project', 27.

⁵⁸ Michael Blake, 'South African Compositions 2002/2003', *SAMUS: South African Journal of Musicology* 22 (2002), 88.

South African and Western musical idioms.⁵⁹ Their music, as I interpret it, speaks to broader aspects of a post-apartheid modernity.

Modernism: Out of Time, Out of Place?

Despite emerging from or being involved in Blake's new music revival, a central claim that I make in this thesis is that the composers I consider, and particularly the works of theirs on which I focus, can be defined as modernist, rather than experimental per se. To make this claim, I draw on recent definitions of modernism within Western music scholarship, thus invoking the second reading of my thesis title which brackets out the post-apartheid remit. However, using these definitions for music in the South African periphery at the start of the twenty-first century may seem spurious, if not anachronistic. After all, is modernism not a term reserved for a very specific brand of European art music of the early twentieth century? How can one label South African music of the twenty-first century, music that is temporally and geographically so divorced from, say, 1910 Vienna, as modernist? And is modernism not an elitist, anti-social, and apolitical mode of thought which is at odds with the socially conscious creative environment in which I have situated these composers? Of course, this has traditionally been the case in musicology.⁶⁰ Yet a growing body of literature, emerging

⁵⁹ Volans, in some sense, is the exception in that the piece of his that I consider in this thesis is still in some sense resounds an Africanist aesthetic in the way it draws loosely on Venda musical aesthetics. As I show in Chapter 1, however, Volans does later move away from Africanist aesthetics.

⁶⁰ To name but two influential studies which propagate such a view, see Susan McClary, 'Terminal Prestige: The Case of Avant-Garde Music Composition', *Cultural Critique*, 12 (1989), 57–81 and Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Early Twentieth Century*, vol. IV of *The Oxford History of Western Art Music* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

especially from British scholars, has in recent years reconfigured and expanded this narrow view of musical modernism in productive and interesting ways. While some have challenged the periodisation and historical containment of modernism,⁶¹ others have geographically located modernism in the peripheries of central Europe.⁶² Still others, often combining these two expansions, have drawn out the radical political potential of modernist music outside of its traditional temporal and geographical designations.⁶³

These reconfigurations and expansions have allowed for broader definitions of musical modernism. Erling E. Guldbrandsen and Julian Johnson, for instance, have proposed thinking of modernism as ‘an attitude of musical practice—in composition, performance and listening—that involves an increased awareness of its own historical situation’.⁶⁴ For them, ‘as soon as music starts reflecting upon its own language—its means of

⁶¹ Björn Heile, ed., *The Modernist Legacy: Essays on New Music* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009); David Joel Metzger, *Musical Modernism at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Erling E. Guldbrandsen and Julian Johnson, eds., *Transformations of Musical Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Julian Johnson, *Out of Time: Music and the Making of Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁶² J. P. E. Harper-Scott, *Edward Elgar, Modernist* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Daniel M. Grimley, *Carl Nielsen and the Idea of Modernism* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010); Matthew Riley, ed., *British Music and Modernism, 1895-1960* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010). For specific contributions, see Björn Heile, ‘Weltmusik and the Globalization of New Music’, in *The Modernist Legacy*, 101–19, and ‘Musical Modernism, Global: Comparative Observations’, in *The Routledge Research Companion to Modernism in Music*, ed. Björn Heile and Charles Wilson (London and New York: Routledge, 2019), 175–98.

⁶³ Alastair Williams, *New Music and the Claims of Modernity* (Aldershot and Brookfield: Ashgate, 1997); Eric Drott, ‘Spectralism, Politics and the Post-Industrial Imagination’, in *The Modernist Legacy*, 39–60; J. P. E. Harper-Scott, *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism: Revolution, Reaction, and William Walton* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Robert Adlington, ‘Modernism: The People’s Music?’, in *The Routledge Research Companion to Modernism in Music*, 216–38.

⁶⁴ Erling E. Guldbrandsen and Julian Johnson, ‘Introduction’, in *Transformations of Musical Modernism*, 1.

expression—it takes on a historical self-awareness that amounts to modernist, critical reflection. [...] In brief, [modernist music] provokes an acute awareness of the condition of historicity that has always been embedded in the present moment of musical experience.’⁶⁵ Similarly, Björn Heile has suggested jettisoning qualifications such as ‘early’, ‘high’, or ‘late’ (and thus also modernism’s chronological containment) in favour of a ‘critical modernism’ that refers to a ‘dialectical critique of modernism’ necessary for modernism’s re-appropriation, but also foregrounds the ‘foundational principle of critique’ that he regards as one of the ‘most valuable aspects of modernism’ itself.⁶⁶ Radically reconfiguring even the supposition in these definitions of modernism as still loosely designating a fixed repertoire regardless of period, J. P. E. Harper-Scott argues that the ‘definition of modernism must encompass *all music of the twentieth century*, not just a privileged group of works by a group of nominated composers’.⁶⁷ Toward these ends, he conceives of a way of framing music which extends to all music (within earshot of the political developments of the twentieth century) the dialectical responsibilities afforded to the repertoire considered by other scholars of musical modernism. Thus modernism is no longer something that is straightforwardly achieved by a work’s stylistic or epochal characteristics, but something that can (and should) be sought out in music’s relation to the world around it.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁶ Björn Heile, ‘Introduction: New Music and the Modernist Legacy’, in *The Modernist Legacy*, 5.

⁶⁷ Harper-Scott, *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism*, xiv. Emphasis in the original.

Given these broad definitions of modernism, the question is raised of how they can be deployed usefully to interrogate certain repertoires. After all, what can be productively said of modernism if all music of the twentieth century (and beyond) falls within its remit? Harper-Scott offers a useful model in this regard. Within his expanded definition of modernism, he, following Alain Badiou, conceives of three ‘subjects’ of modernism, which broadly produce three different responses to the Event of modernism: (1) the faithful subject of modernism, (2) the reactive subject of modernism, and (3) the obscure subject of modernism.⁶⁸ Harper-Scott uses the ‘emancipation of dissonance’ as the trace (something that contains a truth of what precedes it) of the Event of communism set in motion between the French Revolution and the Paris Commune, which would radically redraw the order (ideology) of tonality that had up until then dictated the possibilities of musical creation in Europe.⁶⁹ The three subjects of modernism are the things (musical material, compositions, composers, performers, listeners, discourses, etc.) conditioned in relation to this Event.

The faithful subject completely subordinates itself to the truth of the event thereby instantiating a present which is not governed by rules of the pre-Event situation any longer. He uses the examples of *Moses und Aron* and *Lulu* in the case of musical modernism, works that create the culminative force necessary to realise a post-tonal present in music.⁷⁰ The reactive subject

⁶⁸ Harper-Scott draws on Badiou’s notion of Event as an occurrence of an object that cannot be within the logic of a situation (a certain configuration of existence). Harper-Scott, *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism*, 159–69. Badiou uses the example of the Spartacus slave revolts of 73BC as an Event which is not commensurate with the rule of Rome (the situation). For Badiou’s conception of the subject, see Alain Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event*, 2, trans. Alberto Toscano (London and New York: Continuum, 2009), 51–4.

⁶⁹ Harper-Scott, *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism*, 172–8.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 178.

does not subordinate itself to this present. It instead tries to show that the present to which the faithful subject is subordinated is the wrong present. Crucially, however, the reactive subject's response requires the acknowledgement of the existence of the truth to which the faithful subject subordinates itself, and, as such, the reactive subject still carries forth this same truth, even though it is not accepted as the present.⁷¹ The reactive subject of modernism thus is the conservative subject that, while acknowledging the emancipation of dissonance, still tries to create music governed by the rules of tonality. Harper-Scott uses the example of the fifth song in Schoenberg's *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten*, 'Saget mir, auf welchem Pfade', which, despite coinciding with the emancipation of dissonance, still resounds strong cadential gestures that only complicate tonicity but do not eradicate it.⁷²

Where the faithful and the reactive subjects create a present conditioned by the truth of the Event (albeit in opposite ways), the obscure subject annihilates the possibility of such a present through the double negation of the Event and its subordinate subject. Harper-Scott uses minimalism as an example of this subject's musical manifestation. For him, many of these works outright reject the emancipation of dissonance (and thus the communism of which it is a trace) by reproducing an unchanged, purely tonal language, while at the same time eradicating the possibility of the other subjects by forcing (shocking) the listener into shifting their focus to things like its accessibility to audiences and its market sales.⁷³

⁷¹ Ibid., 163–7.

⁷² Ibid., 180.

⁷³ Ibid., 183–6.

What Harper-Scott's model shows, whether one agrees with his designations or not, is a way of making operative an inclusive definition of musical modernism. Rather than consigning modernism to a small group of privileged works determined by their stylistic characteristics, he conceives of a modernism that is inextricably linked to a broader political order of modernity (communism in his case). That is, modernism in this sense becomes functional when it is thought in relation to modernity. It is modernism in the dialectical sense proposed by Theodor W. Adorno earlier in the twentieth century, which situates modernism in relation to its totality.⁷⁴ The argument that I build in this thesis is based on the same ontological ground. However, while my project does share certain critical terrain, I do not adopt Harper-Scott's model primarily because the aim and conditions of my work differ from his. While he is concerned with unveiling the ideological grounds upon which discourses of musical modernism are founded, my aim here is to interrogate the moment in which the musical work mediates its modernity. That is not to say that his model could not be implemented in the context I am concerned with: there is certainly an argument that can be made for reading works by composers such as Klatzow, who denies the possibility of modernism and retreats to a pre-modernist idiom after the fall of apartheid, as the obscure subject. However, before such

⁷⁴ For Adorno's dialectical framing of modernism, see Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophy of New Music*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), or Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, esp. 1–20. Of course, that Adorno locates the dialectical possibilities of modernist music in material terms situates his notion of modernism (however unwittingly) within a set of aesthetic and historical coordinates. I therefore draw more strongly on the before-mentioned writings on the expansionist model of modernism, which, while often taking a strong Adornian approach, reframe the argument within more contemporary, and less bounded, terms.

a project can be pursued, the possibility of any form of modernism in this context must first be established.

Establishing this ground will be the work of this thesis. To date, there have only been a small number of studies that have considered musical modernism in post-apartheid South Africa, and these have all exclusively depended on the stylistic definition of the term.⁷⁵ For instance, in a review article of recent orchestral works, Blake mentions briefly that the dominant traditions of art music in the country are ‘neo-romanticism and modernism’, and the latter is populated by *styles* such as ‘impressionism’ and ‘neoclassicism’.⁷⁶ The form of modernism that he finds in South Africa is one that emerges ‘several decades after it ceased to be the European lingua franca.’⁷⁷ Thus for Blake, modernism is not only defined stylistically, but it is also historically (and geographically) contained. The implications of this use of the term are two-fold. First, it suggests that in post-apartheid South Africa modernism can only ever be present as an anachronistic and imported influence. That is, there can never be a form of modernism proper in South Africa. I reject this notion in this thesis on the grounds that, aside from reproducing the egregious stereotype of the regressive nature of the third-world African country, I maintain that where there is modernity, there can be modernism as an artistic response. The second implication is that if

⁷⁵ Jeffrey Brukman, ‘Aspects of Musical Modernism: The Afrikaans Song Cycles of Cromwell Everson’, *Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa* 8:1 (2011), 1–21; Veronica Mary Franke, ‘South African Orchestral Music: Five Exponents’, *Acta Musicologica* 84:1 (2012), 87–125; Huyssen, ‘Composing (in) Contemporary South Africa’; Veronica Mary Franke, ‘Klatzow Reinvented: From Modernist, Non-Tonal Activist to Tonal Art-Music Champion’, *The Musical Times* 157:1937 (2016), 87–103.

⁷⁶ Michael Blake, ‘The Present-Day Composer Refuses to Budge: Case Studies in New South African Orchestral Music’, *SAMUS: South African Journal of Musicology* 25 (2005), 127.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 133.

modernism is only ever understood as out of time and place in South Africa, then it follows that South African repertoires can never participate in global discourses of modernism. In other words, modernism as it is deployed by Blake inversely localises (and thus contains) South African music in such a way as to ensure that it can never be thought outside of the margin. This is a point that, while I do not develop it during the course of the thesis, I will return to in my conclusion. I argue that the type of modernism I detect in the works under discussion here (and thus the works themselves) needs to inform global discourses of musical modernism.

In an attempt not to reproduce these implications, I adopt the more inclusive definition of modernism in line with the recent expansions of the term mentioned before. In doing so, I follow Christopher Ballantine who calls for ‘ways of thinking about modernism that, without damaging its progressive purpose or traction, would make it more responsive to other (non-elite, non-Western) contexts’.⁷⁸ Of course, ‘labelling music as modernist or not’, as Harper-Scott posits, ‘is not a neutral aesthetic judgement but always a political act’.⁷⁹ In the context of post-apartheid South Africa, it is perhaps a political double act. On the one hand, it is to redraw the limitations and boundaries erected by a stylistic discourse of modernism as an anachronistic and imported (or even imposed) Eurocentric influence in the context of South Africa, which at once bears a certain political baggage inherited from the apartheid years and which continues to marginalise music in the post-apartheid era. On the other hand, it is to confront the recent

⁷⁸ Christopher Ballantine, ‘Modernism and Popular Music’, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 139:1 (2014), 200.

⁷⁹ Harper-Scott, *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism*, xii.

discourse of modernism in the West with the musical works, contexts, and histories from the Global South, which, despite the expansionist claims of extending the geo-political remit of the term, have otherwise been precariously absent.⁸⁰

Method I: Hermeneutic Closures

Adopting an expansionist definition of modernism, I am concerned in this thesis with the way in which the works under consideration might be interpreted as responses to post-apartheid modernity. My focus is thus the musical work and my method is decidedly hermeneutic in that through reading a text analytically, I seek to produce an interpretation which connects the musical text to its context, and which in turn creates a greater, if speculative, understanding of post-apartheid modernism. The response that the work offers to its environment is thus a response that is constructed by me as the interpreter by drawing together textual details of the work and contextual facts and theories. The contextual facts here comprise historical details from the time and place in which the works emerge, including the composers' own utterances about the pieces.⁸¹ Theories include cultural and critical theories that are related thematically to the works, and more general theories of music which are related to the compositions at hand through

⁸⁰ One of the few exceptions can be found in Heile's discussion of musical modernism in Argentina and Mexico. See Heile, 'Musical Modernism, Global', 182–4.

⁸¹ These utterances take the form of composer's notes that accompany the works in Chapter 1 and 2. The works considered in Chapter 3 and 4 do not have accompanying notes, and when asked about their own interpretations of the pieces, neither Herbst nor Khumalo was willing to furnish answers. That said, my interpretation, as I will discuss in more detail later, will not be beholden to reproducing the meanings assigned by their authors.

shared poetics (in Chapter 1, for instance, I draw on a form of Venda music theory to speak to the Venda-like music in Volans's quartet, while in Chapter 3 I draw on a poetics of *musique concrète* to better understand the sample-based tape component of Herbst's piece).

The need for using this text-centred approach arises primarily from the multiple deficits amid which these works (and I would argue most modernist works in post-apartheid South Africa) exist. These compositions have little or no documented reception in the country. Indeed, the works by Volans and Khumalo have never been performed in South Africa. Herbst's composition was only performed once and, as I show in Chapter 3, was quickly forgotten. Although the two works by Loveday have each been performed on more than one occasion, they have not been the subject of reviews or critical study. These works thus exist in a deficit of discourse. This deficit limits the possibilities of other approaches to studying this music: a study of this music's reception, for instance, would yield little. The social lives of these works also present a deficit. Unlike the proponents of new music in Europe and North America who are often affiliated to large, publicly funded institutions which in themselves invite sociological consideration,⁸² the composers under consideration in this thesis seldom or only sporadically associate with new music institutions in the country, as far as such institutions exist. The composers and their works hold little sustained presence in these or similar infrastructures and their sociological footprints are thus minute. In a deficit of discourse and social connections, there is left

⁸² See, for instance, Georgina Born, *Rationalizing Culture: IRCAM, Boulez, and the Institutionalization of the Musical Avant-Garde* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

only the material traces of these works in the form of unpublished scores and DIY recordings.⁸³ These traces are thus my focus in this thesis. However, rather than furthering the contextual vacuum in which they exist by reading them purely in terms of analytical detail, my aim here is to show that, despite a lack of empirical connections and positions in the world, these works can through interpretation be understood as powerfully responsive to their contexts.

In adopting this text-centred hermeneutic approach, I am aware of the deeply contested methodological terrain it occupies, which must be addressed in order to frame the readings that follow. The criticisms of this approach can be distilled into two main positions. The first appeals to the immediacy of music as performed or heard and argues that hermeneutics either fails to account for the experience of music or destroys it by negating its ineffability. The second position critiques (and often dismisses) the hermeneutic method for its lack of grounding in a consensual and pre-existing frame of reference. While these critiques have been important in challenging untenable and ideologically spurious notions of musical meaning as definitive and *only* immanently situated within the musical text,⁸⁴ they fundamentally misconstrue the premise, aims, and remit of interpretation as an intellectual approach. To show why I say so, I will carefully consider the most exemplary arguments in both cases.

⁸³ Volans's work is the exception here since it has been commercially published and recorded. Despite this, it is still subject to the same deficits within South Africa owing perhaps to the composer's estranged position in the country.

⁸⁴ See Nicholas Cook, 'Theorizing Musical Meaning', *Music Theory Spectrum* 23:2 (2001), 170–95.

The first position is perhaps best exemplified by Carolyn Abbate's critique of hermeneutics as a 'gnostic' study of music.⁸⁵ For her, hermeneutics misses something crucial in music's performative nature and depends too strongly on contextually contingent meanings assigned to it. Her critique hinges on the notion that hermeneutics presents music as abstract 'works' that exist apart from their performative moment.⁸⁶ By disregarding the performativity of music, hermeneutics fails to detect the most crucial aspect of music's unmediated experience, namely, its ineffability. Strongly influenced by the work of Vladimir Jankélévitch, Abbate suggests that the 'gnostic' conception of music is bleak, if not desperately at odds with the lived musical experience.⁸⁷ It forces onto music a closed meaning that is historically and culturally relative, and which lacks a sensitivity to the meanings that performers or audiences might ascribe to it in its moment of performativity.⁸⁸ Hermeneutics thus fails to account for the relativity of musical meanings (meaning as relative to context, to performance, to embodiment). More crucially, however, it does so, she argues, at the cost of excluding music's 'drastic' character which 'connotes physicality, but also desperation and peril, [and involves] a category of knowledge that flows from drastic actions or experiences and not from verbally mediated reasoning.'⁸⁹ Abbate argues that in the face of the drastic, verbally mediated meaning slips away. Using the example of her own playing of the accompaniment to an aria from Mozart's *Idomeneo*, she argues that all the contextual meanings

⁸⁵ Carolyn Abbate, 'Music—Drastic or Gnostic?', *Critical Inquiry* 30:3 (2004), 505–36.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 512.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 515.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 510.

assigned to the opera are lost as the performer (herself in this case) replaces them with the 'drastic' interpretations such as '*doing this is really fun or here comes a big jump*'.⁹⁰ In another illustrative moment, Abbate turns to a performance of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* at the Metropolitan Opera in which Ben Heppner's voice cracks early in the performance of the Prize Song.⁹¹ Heppner's courage and heroism overshadows for Abbate the hermeneutic meanings ascribed to the work in the abstract as he forges ahead with the extensive passage. Embodied in musical performance, which breaks with the discursive meanings of the opera in that moment, his sangfroid is for Abbate the form of 'drastic' knowledge that would reveal something of the 'real' music.⁹²

Although an important criticism of hermeneutics for the way it foregrounds performativity, Abbate's critique re-inscribes the reductivity she seeks to challenge. Julian Johnson makes this point when he argues that there is a fundamental relationship between textual and performative understandings of music in Western art music which are ignored in Abbate's critique.⁹³ He puts it succinctly:

As text, the score makes a proposition about the tension between embodiment and essence, text and act, particular instantiations and ideal forms. Any simple either/or [either 'drastic' or 'gnostic'] is hopelessly

⁹⁰ Ibid., 511. Emphasis in the original.

⁹¹ Ibid., 535.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Johnson, *Out of Time*, 245. It is possible to extend his argument to any musical tradition, Western or otherwise, that manifests in the relationship between a text and performance, regardless of fidelity. The crucial point is that there exists an interrelation in the first place.

reductive in respect to this tradition which has been shaped (for better or worse) by the idea that the work, as written, is more than its performance.⁹⁴

Thus to demand that ‘real’ music exists only in the unmediated moment of its performance is to negate as much of music’s meaning as the idea that music exist irrespective of its performance. A method that strives to hold open the possibility of music’s multiplicity of meanings would surely include considerations of both the ‘drastic’ and the ‘gnostic’ as permeable categories of thought.

Indeed, the central concern of the hermeneutic method—interpretation—cannot be ascribed only to ‘gnostic’ approaches. It pervades both performative and abstract understandings of music. Lawrence Kramer, who has perhaps delivered the most sustained defence of musical hermeneutics, has shown that Abbate’s notion of the ‘drastic’ potential of music itself does not preclude the form of interpretation that she identifies as the hallmark of the ‘gnostic’ method.⁹⁵

The claim of music’s preemptive sensory immediacy [which lies at the heart of Abbate’s argument] simply rewrites a certain traditional figure of disembodied sound, escaping all interpretation, as a figure of embodied sound, precluding all interpretation. But the embodiment of sound is itself

⁹⁴ Johnson, *Out of Time*, 245.

⁹⁵ Kramer’s defence of hermeneutics has been articulated most pertinently across three monographs, including: Lawrence Kramer, *Interpreting Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); *Expression and Truth: On the Music of Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); and *The Thought of Music* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016).

matter for interpretation, in part because any separation of sensation and cognition is no longer tenable; sensation is already cognition.⁹⁶

That interpretation and performativity must be understood as interrelated aspects of musical experiences and thought points to a third reductive dualism in Abbate's argument, which has to do with the immiscibility of verbal mediation and the ineffability of music. For Abbate, a key failure of hermeneutics is its apparent attempt to replicate in language aspects of music which do not yield to language.⁹⁷ In the attempt to do so, she argues, hermeneutics erases music's ineffability; words fail when confronted with the task of conveying music's meaning. And if words fail in this regard, then hermeneutics, which is essentially a verbal practice, must also fail.

This line of argument is not only reductive in the way it presents musical experience (rather than the music itself) as mute, but it also depends on a false equivalence. On the first count, it has been clearly established that musical experiences do not end in the inability to articulate, however poorly, what music means for people. Indeed, the wealth of sociological research on music is testament to this: if the musical experience terminated in ineffability, in the fullest sense of the word, then any discussion of what music does for humans, or how humans use music would also be foreclosed.⁹⁸ On the second count, the notion that hermeneutics fails to replicate the musical experience because such an experience is ineffable is, as

⁹⁶ Kramer, *Interpreting Music*, 11–12.

⁹⁷ Abbate, 'Music—Drastic or Gnostic?', 521.

⁹⁸ Consider, for instance, the importance of speaking about music in the study of music's sociological functions. See Lucy Green, 'Music Education, Cultural Capital, and Social Group Identity', in *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton (New York: Routledge, 2012), 206–16.

Kramer has suggested, ‘obvious and irrelevant. Having an experience is one thing; understanding it is another, although a certain feedback loop connects the two’.⁹⁹ In other words, the musical experience, which includes a certain degree of ineffability, is not the same thing as the understanding of music, which is not ineffable. Hermeneutics aspires to the latter, even though it is animated by the former. Kramer puts it as follows:

We rely on words to extend and enlarge our experience of such ineffable things, to make them transmissible and interpretable and communicable without, however, pretending to replicate them or capture their essence. That language cannot do the latter is neither its failure nor its limitation, but the necessary condition of what it can do, which is to maintain our proximity to the ineffable and link it to the continuous activity by which we make sense of—and have a sense of—the world.¹⁰⁰

While the purported incongruence between music’s textuality and performativity constitutes the first major critique, the second is concerned with hermeneutics’ lack of grounding within intersubjective consensus. To understand this second critique, it is useful to consider Tia DeNora’s iteration in her influential book, *Music in Everyday Life*.¹⁰¹ Her critique starts with a set of charges similar to those encountered in Abbate’s argument: music analysis is ‘insufficient as a means for understanding musical affect’; ‘it is not possible to decode the “music itself”’; music does not

⁹⁹ Kramer, *Interpreting Music*, 14.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 14–15.

¹⁰¹ Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

have some sort of immanent meaning ‘waiting to be perceived or uncovered’.¹⁰² However, DeNora then turns not to performativity as the site of ‘real’ music, but argues that music’s meaning can only be understood in the ways that it is put to use or interacted with in the domain of the social.

This turn to the sociology of music is less important here than the grounds upon which such a turn is necessitated. For DeNora, musical meaning must be understood not through the subjective lens of the analyst, but through its emergent meaning in society. Indeed, she seems to pit the subjectivity of hermeneutic approaches against the objectivity of a sociology of music, and assigns legitimacy only to the latter. For her, the former is merely a ‘framework plied upon music by the analyst her/himself’.¹⁰³ Attempting to understand a work within a broader cultural framework, she continues, ‘is an epistemologically naïve move [which] occurs when an analyst substitutes his or her own interpretations or responses to the music for more systematic evidence that the music’s semiotic properties and its affects ‘pre-exist’ analysis’.¹⁰⁴ There is a sleight of hand here, she argues, in which the analyst’s own findings are presented as coterminous with the meanings of music in broader society. She writes,

¹⁰² Ibid., 23; 28. It should be noted that DeNora, unlike Abbate, does not explicitly focus on the term hermeneutics, but instead slips between designations of ‘music analysis’ and ‘semiotic readings’. What she effectively describes in the combination of these two terms is a text-centred hermeneutic method which draws out interpretative associations and which she misconstrues as semiotics. What has properly become known as the study of musical semiotics, however, is a far more systematic approach to analysing the relationship between symbols and referents in music. See, for instance, Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*, trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); or V. Kofi Agawu, *Music as Discourse: Semiotic Adventures in Romantic Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹⁰³ DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*, 28.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

this slippage [between the analyst's findings and field of reference] is problematic because the ways in which music partakes of patterns and conventions at the moment of production (even assuming such a matter can be specified) by no means guarantees the ways in which it is appropriated and so comes to be meaningful in particular social circumstances. (The moment of production is never automatically isomorphic with the moment(s) of consumption.)¹⁰⁵

Central to this critique is the identification of a fault in the logic of the hermeneutic approach which hinges on the separation between objective and subjective modes of knowing. The claims made in the analyst's reading (the subjective form of knowing) does not reveal the ways in which people more generally understand the meaning of the same music (the objective form of knowing). Although this conflation would be fallacious as it is presented by DeNora, she misunderstands the form of subjectivity at work in the hermeneutic approach. As Kramer argues, the subjectivity involved in interpretation is not one of 'private sensation or idiosyncrasy', but a form of 'strong subjectivity' in the sense that it is an activity, not a biological contingency.¹⁰⁶

[Subjectivity] is not a state of mind but a mode of performance. It is not something one has or is but something one does. It is both a constantly mutating practice of negotiation between internal perceptions and worldly conditions and the style and rhythm of that practice. It is private only

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 29.

¹⁰⁶ Kramer, *Interpreting Music*, 2.

insofar as it is also public and historically conditioned; it depends on the power of a symbolic order that in principle it continually seeks to evade.¹⁰⁷

In this sense, the subjective claim of musical meaning in hermeneutics differs from that of the objectivity with which DeNora argues it is conflated. The claim of musical meaning in this form of subjectivity is not static nor observed, but it is transformative and constructed. Indeed, and to turn to DeNora's own locution, this form of subjectivity collapses her separation between the production and consumption of music: the meaning of music is produced in its moment of consumption and its consumption makes available its means of production.¹⁰⁸ Once subjectivity is liberated from its anodyne conception as a biological contingency, it becomes clear that such a separation between production and consumption is in itself arbitrary.

If the subjectivity of interpretation is understood as generative, then its role in creating an understanding of music within a broader context need not be limited to seeking consensus. In other words, the second critique of hermeneutics—that its findings are not necessarily corroborated in intersubjective consensus—does not point to the method's failure but to one of its most important traits. The work of interpretation is to animate understandings of music which do not rely on consensus to be meaningful. As Kramer notes, hermeneutics 'brings the interpreter as subject into contact, and sometimes conflict, with the subject(s)—both the agents and the

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 5.

¹⁰⁸ The separation of music the perception of music (consumption here) and the understanding of music (its production) has been fundamentally challenged in the vast literature on listening. To take one important example, Jean-Luc Nancy complex conceptions of listening are inseparable from the forms of meaning-making that the subject deploys in the world. See Jean-Luc Nancy, *Listening*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007).

topics—of what is interpreted'.¹⁰⁹ Interpretation does not rely on creating or bolstering a certainty of meaning. On the contrary, Kramer asserts, it relies on 'the uncertainty of meaning as a constructive force that does not open a way out of reality, but the way in'.¹¹⁰

Method II: Hermeneutic Openings

Rather than delegitimizing it, the two main arguments against hermeneutics, however flawed they may be, point to a fundamental misunderstanding of the method's purpose and remit, as well as its value as an intellectual pursuit. Thus it is worthwhile to delimit the work of interpretation, especially as it will be employed in this thesis. In doing so, I follow Kramer who has provided a more extensive list of eleven theses on what interpretation is not against counterstatements of what interpretation is.¹¹¹ I present here a condensed version of Kramer's list, which I have reconfigured into seven theses for the specific aims of my project.¹¹²

1. Interpretation is not a sedimentation of meaning in the present, but, given its relationship with uncertainty, it is a continuous animation of meaning. Even if the interpretations presented in this thesis are fixed in a textual form, which is itself static only in its materiality, they constitute a moving part in what I hope will be an ongoing discussion. What I thus

¹⁰⁹ Kramer, *Interpreting Music*, 2.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 7–11.

¹¹² The need to reconfigure Kramer's original list arises because the aims of my project differ from his. I will be interpreting music, but I will not necessarily be arguing for what the interpretation of music specifically means for interpretation more broadly, which is one of his central concerns.

present here is not the final word on the works I will be interpreting. Indeed, interpretation has no final word.

2. Interpretation does not decipher a text in the sense of pulling away a veil to reveal a hidden meaning. Interpretation instead demonstrates a meaning that can be coupled to the text. This meaning, however, is always only one of many possible meanings which arise because of the mechanics of interpretation. Interpretation is an enunciation of a meaning which emerges only after interpretation has already intervened and has changed meaning through the interpreter's own hermeneutic lens. Although seemingly circular, the meaning at the start of this process will ultimately differ from that which is reached at the end (the end being what is presented at a given time as a possible interpretation rather than a terminus of interpretation).

3. Interpretation does not reproduce abstract meaning. As a form of enunciation, interpretation can only paraphrase, reference, and reconfigure meaning. The work of interpretation is thus not to remake music in language. Music's ineffability, for instance, will not be reproduced in verbal interpretation, although it is certainly part of music's meaning.

4. Interpretation is not dependent on novelty, even though novel interpretations and interpretations of novelty do exist. While these forms of interpretation will certainly be attractive, the speculative and generative nature of the interpretation is not contingent upon the way it uncovers novelty or is novel in its own right. This is perhaps the central difference between form-immanent analysis and interpretation: the former in most cases seeks to solve the compositional enigma while the latter is speculative

and seeks to solve nothing even though it might be propelled by an enigma. This point is especially important for the works considered in this thesis, which often do not pose original compositional problems in their material alone. Their interpretations, however, will show that they can be understood as important or significant for the ways in which they are read against a broader structure of post-apartheid modernity.

5. Interpretation, as it will be used here, is not idiosyncratic nor is it private. It is subjective in that it is the product of a subject who constructs or generates an interpretative lens through which they present their reading of the work. Subjectivity is thus the central component of the demonstration of musical meaning. Indeed, there is no interpretation without subjectivity. In this sense, however, interpretation is also an act of power in which the interpreter asserts their reading onto a text. This power is itself only mediated through the possibility of another interpretation, which must thus never be foreclosed.

6. Interpretation is not responsible to an authorial source. It is not beholden to a composer's intention, their psychology, their biography, nor does it require ratification in ideologies of identity. Authorial sources provide information that can feed into hermeneutic demonstrations, but the aim of such a demonstration of meaning is not to replicate or validate this information. This is not to say that interpretation is free of responsibility as a whole. On the contrary, since its central component is subjectivity, interpretation is ethically compelled. In this sense, a text can be ethically spurious, just as a composer or an interpreter can be, even though the assignation of ethics in this regard requires interpretation in the first place.

7. Interpretation is not opposed to truth, but stands in an indirect relationship to it. If an interpretation is compelled by ethics then it can be wrong in the moral sense. It can also be factually incorrect, and thus untrue in the simple sense of truth as a descriptor of fidelity. An interpretation in this sense is not fiction. Even interpretations that manifest as imaginative programmes are fictional only insofar as music itself is fictional. A single interpretation furthermore cannot be right in the term's exclusive connotations (right in the definitive sense) because there can never only be one interpretation. However, the sustainability of an interpretation, the ways in which its generative capacity opens up the possibility of its continued interpretative movement, can be considered a medium in which truth emerges.

Given these limits on the remit of hermeneutics, it is important to explicate the value of this approach within the more general disciplinary space of musicology and specifically within South African music studies. Hermeneutics offers the possibility of three important interventions in music scholarship. First, the speculative nature of interpretation affords music scholarship a degree of play which otherwise would not be available to it. Against the definitive findings of musical sociology or analysis, speculation retains something of music's resistance to discourse. This is because of its playful character, which, following Jacques Rancière, can be understood not only as the Schillerian activity with no end, but as a critical aesthetic category of deflection which 'claims at once to sharpen our perception of the interplay of signs, our awareness of the fragility of the procedures of reading these

same signs, and our pleasure in playing with the undecidable'.¹¹³ Reading what Julian Johnson calls music's (rather than the musical experience's) 'muteness' requires an acknowledgement of the fragility of the methodological engagement with an object that resists language, but that has the ability to retain a degree of undecidability which keeps open (and alive) music's multiplicity of meaning.¹¹⁴ Speculation offers both. As will become clear in the following chapters of this thesis, issues of undecidability and fragility of meaning are exceedingly important in the music I will discuss. Indeed, this music often seems paradoxical (especially in Chapters 1 and 3) or offers meaning only in its absence (especially in Chapter 4). The result of trying to articulate this undecidability renders my own readings fragile, if not at times knotty, strange, and winding. The lack of clarity or definitive arguments are inevitable concessions that this study will have to make if it is to retain some sort of interpretative proximity to the music about which it tries to speak.¹¹⁵

As uncertain as the hermeneutic method is, it also brings with it a certainty of another kind: advocacy. Interpretation is in the most basic sense also to make a declaration about the worthiness of interpretation. As Kramer argues, this advocacy is tied to legibility: '[musical hermeneutics] seeks to show how music works in the world by interpreting both music and musical performances in language. To interpret music verbally is to give it a legible

¹¹³ Jacques Rancière, *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*, trans. Steven Corcoran (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 54.

¹¹⁴ Julian Johnson, *After Debussy: Music, Language, and the Margins of Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 76–84; 287.

¹¹⁵ This point has been made about hermeneutic readings of modernist music more broadly. See Kramer, *Interpreting Music*, 220–40 and Brigid Cohen, *Stefan Wolpe and the Avant-Garde Diaspora* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 31–2.

place in the conduct of life'.¹¹⁶ Interpretation, however, also shows the mechanics of making its object legible in the conduct of life, which is a process often taken for granted within the areas of musicology that consider the music of canonical composers. Brigid Cohen argues this point by showing that against the assumed cultural value of the canonical composers of Western art music, interpretation lays bare (and considers critically) the construction of significance of unknown or excluded composers.¹¹⁷ The sense of advocacy is redoubled in this thesis: if I had not found some sort of interpretive significance in the music I discuss here, I would not have written this study. Furthermore, amid the cultural debris left in the wake of apartheid and the uncertain place occupied by modernist music in this sphere, assertions about its value have been almost non-existent.¹¹⁸ By writing about this music, I break this silence (in scholarship at least) and advocate for its value in no uncertain terms: despite having virtually no cultural capital, these pieces are for me inseparable from post-apartheid modernity.

Lastly, and in drawing together the points on the speculation and advocacy of hermeneutics, interpretation allows for the opening up of discourse.¹¹⁹ This aspect of hermeneutics is particularly important in the context of post-apartheid modernism as a counter to the before-mentioned deficit of discourse in which this music exists. Without much else to go on, speculation

¹¹⁶ Kramer, *Interpreting Music*, 1.

¹¹⁷ Cohen, *Stefan Wolpe*, 36.

¹¹⁸ A worthy exception can be found in the reviews written by Gwen Ansell. She has also written about the lack of new music's cultural capital in South Africa. See, for instance, Gwen Ansell, 'Michael Blake and the Local Invisibility of South African Concert Music', *Sisgwenjazz* (blog), 5 August 2019, <https://sisgwenjazz.wordpress.com/2019/08/05/michael-blake-and-the-invisibility-of-south-african-concert-music/>.

¹¹⁹ Kramer, *Interpreting Music*, 6.

allows for an initial interpretation, but also an initial assignation of value, and an initial moment of ‘speaking to’ this music. Interpretation in this sense acts as a catalyst. Like with most catalysts, however, there is a certain amount of contusion that is bound to be drawn. Indeed, the types of openings afforded by interpretation, as Stephanus Muller argues in reflecting on the state of music scholarship in South Africa, are ‘messy’, they ‘burn’, ‘butcher’, and ‘lacerate’, they are ‘restitutive’, and, most importantly perhaps, they fundamentally ‘do not provide closure’.¹²⁰ The openings offered in this thesis will be more modest, but they are, as suggested by the title, disquieting in nature. My hope for this research is that it can animate an interest in this music through the uncomfortable work of hermeneutics. As I read them, and *because* I read them, these works can be rich texts for working out a form of modernism in the wake of apartheid. Conversely, without such a reading, these works would in all likelihood become the victims of their own muteness.

Overview of Chapters

I consider in this thesis musical modernism as a response to various conditions of post-apartheid modernity in four case studies. The first condition is more properly a condition of possibility in that, in Chapter 1, I am concerned with the shift from an anti-apartheid to what I interpret as a post-apartheid form of artistic expression in Kevin Volans’s String Quartet No. 5, ‘Dancers on a Plane’. Composed in the first year of the democratic

¹²⁰ Stephanus Muller, *Openings* (Stellenbosch: SUN MeDIA, 2016), 5; 7.

dispensation, I read this work as struggling, at a structural level, with a move beyond anti-apartheid art. To do so, I consider the work through two theoretical terms from post-apartheid literary studies, 'bondage' and 'interiority'. Not only do these terms draw Volans's work into a broader discourse of post-apartheid cultural theory, they also allow me to interrogate and reconfigure the notion of becoming post-apartheid in music in a way that does not hinge on the identification of reconciliatory tactics of bringing together African and European aesthetics. That is, by reading the work in this way, I use it to consider the crisis faced by composers in the post-apartheid era that has to do with the difficulties of establishing a critical musical language that moves beyond the figuration of apartheid oppression. This interpretation allows me to consider themes of subjectivity, rootedness, and ambiguity in the piece, which I argue problematise and then bypass the literal representation of apartheid oppression.

Equipped with the notion that a mimetic representation of oppression no longer produces a satisfactory response to the conditions of post-apartheid modernity, I turn to the question of how music might then come to mediate horrifying events such as the Marikana miners massacre. Chapter 2 considers two compositions, *Johannesburg Etude No. 1* and *City Deep*, by Clare Loveday. By adopting theories of the subterranean from urban geography that re-centre the migrant mineworker as the figure of African modernity, I interpret these works in the junction between the neoliberal economic order adopted by the democratic government and the continued exploitation of the working class in the mining industry as it plays out within Johannesburg's gold mines. While the etude, as I read it, shifts its representational perspective of the city from the topographical to the subterranean, *City Deep*

portrays the progressive subsumption of the mining subject into a technological state. I argue that this technological state can be understood as the dehumanised form of the mining subject by reading it against the broader historical context of mining practices in the country. Given this reading, which draws the economic conditions of post-apartheid modernity into a longer historical frame, Loveday's works in my interpretation provide the scaffolding for calling into question the shift from a bad apartheid modernity to a good post-apartheid modernity that frames events such as the Marikana massacre as a moment of rupture in these conditions.

In Chapter 3, I consider Theo Herbst's *Konka Klanke (Tunguska)*, which, by drawing on (and ultimately deconstructing) two poems by Ingrid Jonker, thematises forgetting in post-apartheid South Africa. I read this work within the context of the TRC's Amnesty Committee, which effectively had to sanction forgetting in order to reveal the truth of some of the worst apartheid-era crimes. To interpret Herbst's work within this context, I draw on theoretical conceptions of memory and forgetting offered by Heidegger and Ricoeur, thereby adapting the latter's notion of mnemonic traces as an analytic for reading the work's tape and piano parts. I argue that the work can be read as a dialectic between forgetting as constitutive and forgetting as fundamentally destructive. In setting up this dialectic, the piece allows me to consider again the fraught terrain of post-apartheid memory and forgetting as conditions of modernity.

Chapter 4 focuses on the spectralist music of Andile Khumalo, and particularly his composition, *Bells Die Out*. While Khumalo has been criticised for composing Eurocentric music, I interpret this work, by drawing on haiku theory prompted by its title, as challenging the very spectralist

paradigm from which it draws its compositional language. I read this challenge as a manifestation of a structural failure of decay, which stands in stark contrast to the spectral ideology of sound's infinite capacity for transformation. This contradistinction, I argue, can be extended to a larger critique of the absence of blackness in the colonial world order. Indeed, rather than playing into the racialised expectations that emerge in Khumalo's reception, *Bells Die Out* as I read it is recalcitrant toward assumptions of identity and draws attention instead to global conditions of modernity which have been shaped by colonial geo-politics.

The thesis ends with a short conclusion in which I address the critical terrain shared, despite stylistic differences, by the works considered here. What is common to these works, I argue, is what I interpret as a dialectical approach that does not attempt to project a utopian future, but that disquiets the present by exposing the denied future it contains. It is through this dialectic that these works can come to be understood as lenses for reading the contradictory ontology of the post-apartheid modernity mentioned at the start of this introduction. Following this line of argument, I return to the issue of Walcott's cracked heirlooms to suggest that these works represent the cracked heirlooms of a post-apartheid modernity, which is to say that they no longer should be thought of as simply derivative of European art music. Thinking about post-apartheid musical modernism as comprising the cracked heirlooms of its concomitant modernity, I finally propose, becomes the grounds upon which there emerges the possibility of through this repertoire disquieting global notions of musical modernism.

Chapter 1

Between Anti- and Post-Apartheid

Structures of Crisis in Kevin Volans's String Quartet No. 5, 'Dancers on a Plane'

I start my investigation into post-apartheid musical modernism by considering Kevin Volans's String Quartet No. 5, 'Dancers on a Plane'. Composed in 1994, it is perhaps an obvious choice given that the work emerges shortly after the first democratic elections and the formal advent of the post-apartheid era. It is perhaps not an obvious choice because Volans, who was granted Irish citizenship in this same year, makes for an awkward representative of post-apartheid South African music. As he would proclaim in a *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* interview twelve years later, he does indeed identify as Irish, rather than 'African'. 'I have lived in Europe since 1972,' he states, 'and in Ireland for twenty years. I am Irish!'¹ Yet if Volans is emphatic about his identity in this instance, it is perhaps because of his own exasperation with attempts of categorising him along national lines. Bob

¹ 'Ich lebe seit 1972 in Europa, seit zwanzig Jahren in Irland. Ich bin Ire!' Jürgen Grözinger and Kevin Volans, "'Zur Freiheit Führen Viele Wege": Der Komponist Kevin Volans Über Afrika Und Die Musikalische Avantgarde', *Neue Zeitschrift Für Musik* 167:5 (2006), 16.

Gilmore senses this exasperation when he writes that he knows ‘Volans well enough to be aware that questions about nationality are not among his favourites. [...] To Volans, categories such as “South African composer” or “Irish composer” are unacceptably simplistic and meaningless: they reduce the world’.² Of course, Volans’s life did start in South Africa. The son of a dry cleaner, Volans was born in 1949 in Pietermaritzburg, which was then the capital of the Natal province (today KwaZulu-Natal). During his undergraduate studies in music at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) in Johannesburg, he focused primarily on piano performance in which he excelled, performing concertos with the Johannesburg Symphony Orchestra and working as a recording artist with the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC).³ It was during this time that Volans met Karlheinz Stockhausen. Stockhausen visited South Africa for a tour in 1971 and, among other engagements, presented a lecture series at the SABC in Johannesburg, which Volans attended. While Stockhausen mostly had an ambivalent reception in South Africa, as I detailed in this thesis’s introduction, Volans found his lectures ‘phenomenal’.⁴ It was a seminal moment for the younger composer, who would in 1973 go on to study with and eventually become a teaching assistant to Stockhausen in Cologne.

Volans’s difficult relationship with issues of national identity starts to emerge during his time in Europe. In a 1986 essay, he writes of this time that ‘like many white South Africans of my generation I was brought up to think I

² Bob Gilmore, ‘Wild Air: The Music of Kevin Volans’, *The Journal of Music in Ireland* 6:6 (2006), 23.

³ Christine Lucia, ‘Celebrating Composer Kevin Volans, b. 1949’, *Musicus* 37:1 (2009), 3–4.

⁴ Kevin Volans quoted in *ibid.*, 5.

was European. I went to live in Europe and found this was not true.’⁵ This discomfort with a European identity was paralleled in his musical output by a breakaway moment in the late 1970s. In Cologne, Volans, along with a group of fellow students, found the stylistic strictures of the post-serialist avant-garde stifling. Together with Walter Zimmerman, Clarence Barlow, and Moya Henderson, he embarked in 1977 on a project in which each composer would gather soundscape recordings of their home countries and together develop a large-scale comparative study of indigenous folk music.⁶ Barlow, for his part, considered urban music in Calcutta, Henderson looked at Australian indigenous music, Zimmerman studied dance and folk music of Franconia, and Volans returned to South Africa where he made field recordings in rural Natal and Lesotho.⁷ Funded by Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR), the project consolidated earlier attempts by these composers to break away from the ‘institutionalisation of modernist practice’.⁸ Volans’s own field work provided him with an opportunity to immerse himself in indigenous South African musical traditions. In 1982, he moved back to South Africa to take up a position as a lecturer at the University of Natal, Durban. There he composed a number of works which would be included in his DMus portfolio under the

⁵ Kevin Volans, ‘Of White Africans and White Elephants’, *Kevin Volans: Essays*, 1986, accessed 12 March 2019, <http://kevinvolans.com/essays/of-white-africans-and-white-elephants/>.

⁶ Lucia, ‘Celebrating’, 6.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Christopher Fox, ‘Where the River Bends: The Cologne School in Retrospect’, *The Musical Times* 148:1901 (2007), 29.

title *African Paraphrases*.⁹ These important early works used transcription, quotation, and paraphrasing of South African music. Yet at this time, it became increasingly evident that Volans did not find in South Africa the sense of belonging he yearned for in Europe. In the aforementioned 1986 essay, he goes on to write, 'I returned to Africa and was disappointed to find I could not really regard myself as African.'¹⁰ He emigrated to Ireland in that same year, taking up a position as composer-in-residence at Queen's University, Belfast.

Volans's Anti-Apartheid Music

If Volans's biography does not clearly situate him as a post-apartheid composer, his compositional output provides a stronger case for his inclusion in this thesis. Such a case, however, cannot be made by only considering his works after 1994, but stems from the anti-apartheid stance in his earlier pieces. This position, although not wholly unproblematic as I will shortly show, emerges primarily in his *African Paraphrases* series, which includes works such as *Mbira* (1981, now withdrawn), *Matepe* (1982), *White Man Sleeps* (1982), *Journal: Walking Song* (1983), *Leaping Dance* (1984), *Kneeling Dance* (1984), and *She Who Sleeps With a Small Blanket* (1985). Commenting on the origins of this group of works, Volans writes that he

⁹ The *African Paraphrases* series is ambiguously delimited. Volans first used the term in the title of a soundscape installation which opened at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London in 1982. See Christine Lucia, 'Volans Chronology', *SAMUS: South African Music Studies* 29 (2009), 42. It was only later used as the title of the portfolio for which he was awarded a DMus degree from the University of Natal, Durban in 1985, which did not contain the soundscape compositions. See Pooley, 'Composition in Crisis', 31.

¹⁰ Volans, 'Of White Africans'.

‘wanted to reflect in the music an image of a multicultural society—one in which the traditions of different cultures [were] represented, honoured and, above all, shared.’ ‘No more “separate development”’, he concludes.¹¹ To do so, Volans created a gradation in the series, which starts from a bare transcription of a Shona *mbira dza vadzimu* song, *Nyamaropa*, in *Mbira*, via the paraphrasing of another Shona song in *Matepe*, to quotation (that is, limited durations of transcriptions) and paraphrasing a variety of Southern African indigenous music in *White Man Sleeps*, through to what he calls ‘invented folklore’ in *She Who Sleeps With a Small Blanket*, which, except for the title, does not have its direct source in any existent African music.¹²

The claim to multiculturalism—and the challenge to the apartheid system—in these works arises out of the fact that they set (Southern) African music for ensembles of Western instruments. The first three works, *Mbira*, *Matepe*, and *White Man Sleeps* are originally scored for two harpsichords and rattles, with the addition of a viola da gamba in the last piece. The harpsichords and viola de gamba, however, are retuned so that an octave can be divided into seven equidistant degrees, producing a tuning system that is closer to that of the *mbira dza vadzimu*. The anti-apartheid sentiment, in its most basic form, then is articulated in the setting of indigenous African music in a Western ensemble, thereby commixing cultural markers of

¹¹ Kevin Volans, ‘White Man Sleeps: Composer’s Statement’, *Kevin Volans: Essays*, n.d., accessed 12 March 2019, <http://kevinvolans.com/essays/white-man-sleeps-composers-statement/>.

¹² Ibid. For a detailed analysis of these works, see Pooley, ‘Composition in Crisis’, 31–58. On the extent of transcription, paraphrasing, and quotation in Volans’s work, see Martin Scherzinger, ‘Whose “White Man Sleeps”? Aesthetics and Politics in the Early Work of Kevin Volans’, in *Composing Apartheid: Music For and Against Apartheid*, ed. Grant Olwage (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008), 209–35.

segregated black and white communities in South Africa. Bob Gilmore recognises this when he writes that in these works,

elements of different traditions are respected, shared, and, in coming together, are allowed to generate new meanings. There is a clear political point to these pieces: a protest against the barbaric philosophy of ‘separate development’ for whites and blacks in Volans’ homeland, and a wish for each to be involved creatively in the other’s culture.¹³

Yet Volans’s provocation in these works extends to a more substantial aesthetic defiance than simply mixing black and white music: he sought to give a greater degree of agency to African music aesthetics amid the Western instrumentation. ‘By introducing some strictly non-Western aspects of African music into the European concert repertoire’, he writes in a widely quoted composer’s statement for *White Man Sleeps*, ‘I hoped to gently set up an African colonisation of Western music and instruments’.¹⁴ That is, Volans was not only interested in transgressing the apartheid state’s lateral segregation that would have blacks and whites separated (supposedly) without hierarchy. His critique was also focused on the vertical ordering of whiteness (and by extension, Western culture) above blackness (and, similarly, African culture), and recognised that music which was critical of the regime had to challenge or undo such an ordering.

¹³ Gilmore, ‘Wild Air’, 24.

¹⁴ Volans, ‘White Man Sleeps’. Volans’s turn of phrase is reminiscent of Dipesh Chakrabarty’s notion of reconfiguring circuits of cultural transmission in such a way as to disrupt the centrality of Europe within the global geo-political order. See Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

I actually did quite consciously want to elevate the status of street music and African music in South Africa. And I was convinced that the best way of doing that was to gain international recognition for it, because people there are impressed by something that has made it overseas. So I thought if I went there and promoted African music overseas, it would raise the consciousness of South Africans, particularly the White population, the people in political power.¹⁵

If Volans's phrasing here is uncomfortable or even patronising for the way it presupposes that African music *needs* elevating, Martin Scherzinger has more carefully expounded this critical potential in his work. For Scherzinger, Volans's music presents an 'effort to think African music outside the metaphors of indigenous "cultural practice"—and is, therefore, an implicit critique of apartheid thinking'.¹⁶ That is, Scherzinger is concerned with showing how Volans manages to position African music in such a way that it can no longer be relegated to the immutable and bounded position of difference in which both the apartheid cultural ideology and the Western anthropological gaze holds it. This anthropological gaze (and its doppelgänger in the apartheid state) is configured around a set of tropes or topoi imposed upon music of the African continent, which reductively promulgates, for instance, melody and harmony's subjugation to rhythm and timbre; its functionalism over its contemplative nature; its kinaesthetic

¹⁵ Volans quoted in Timothy D. Taylor, 'When We Think about Music and Politics: The Case of Kevin Volans', *Perspectives of New Music* 33:1/2 (1995), 504–36.

¹⁶ Scherzinger, 'Whose "White Man Sleeps"?', 221.

rather than formal essence.¹⁷ As Scherzinger shows, Volans denies in his music the easy re-inscription of these tropes by, for instance, highlighting the complex harmonic language of the music he quotes and paraphrases, or by drawing attention to formal rather than performative issues. Most importantly, Volans's music, Scherzinger argues, 'revitalises a sense of wonder and sensuous attention to historically buried details about African music'.¹⁸ In this sense, what Volans calls an elevation of African music might better be understood as a pulling up out of the strictures of culture that entrap it. Scherzinger eloquently summarises this as follows: 'the point is that Volans' music—effectively translating the sounds and patterns of African music in a new idiom—draws attention to values in the traditional music that uniquely menace such invented topoi. [...] It is in the recesses of its sounds, finally, that the music's political ambitions are fully understood.'¹⁹ Read in this way, it seems that Volans could legitimately consider, as he did, these early works as his own 'small contribution to the struggle against apartheid'.²⁰

It was perhaps exactly because Volans's anti-apartheid music held some form of legitimacy that it solicited such a strong response from establishment composers in the country. After a performance of *Mbira* at the first SABC Contemporary Music Festival in 1983, mentioned in this thesis's introduction, Volans was accused of 'cultural banditry' by Peter Klatzow, an

¹⁷ These topoi were exposed by a number of African musicologists during the early 2000s. Of these, Kofi Agawu's analysis is perhaps the most substantial. See V. Kofi Agawu, *Representing African Music: Postcolonial Notes, Queries, Positions* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

¹⁸ Scherzinger, 'Whose "White Man Sleeps"?', 231.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 219.

²⁰ Volans, 'White Man Sleeps'.

established composer who had been employed by the SABC in the late 1960s and early '70s.²¹ 'Black music is for black people,' Volans recalls one critic saying at the festival, 'and we have no more desire to hear mbira music on the harpsichord than we have to hear Mozart played on the mbira'.²² For his involvement with black music, and adding further substantiation to his anti-apartheid claim, Volans's music was effectively (though not officially) blacklisted by the SABC during this time.²³

Yet it was not only the establishment composers who criticised Volans's music. Since the '90s, charges of cultural appropriation have been brought against him from more liberal sectors. The earliest and most sustained of these came from Timothy Taylor.²⁴ In a 1995 *Perspectives of New Music* article, Taylor argues that while Volans sought to produce political music in opposition to the apartheid ideology of separate development by bringing together black and white music, his shift in the early '90s to speaking about his own music primarily in terms of form signalled the moment when his 'composerly individuality overrides everything "African"'.²⁵ Taylor links this shift to the Thatcher/Reagan-era ideology of emptying art of its politics, but it is also within these political coordinates that Volans now can be thought of

²¹ Lucia, 'Volans Chronology', 42.

²² Volans quoted in Pooley, 'Composition in Crisis', 56.

²³ Gilmore, 'Wild Air', 26. Of course, in the case of apartheid South Africa, the difference between *effectively* being blacklisted and *actually* being blacklisted should not be under-appreciated. Volans's works, to my knowledge, were not officially banned by the apartheid regime's Directorate of Publications.

²⁴ Taylor, 'When We Think About Music and Politics'. Other notable examples of similar critiques include Bräuninger, 'Gumboots to the Rescue', 1–16, and Christopher Walton, 'CD Review: Kevin Volans' String Quartets Nos. 1, 2 & 6', *NewMusicSA: Bulletin of the International Society for Contemporary Music, South African Section* 2 (2003), 22–4. Bräuninger's article has been thoroughly contested in Grant Olwage, 'Who Needs Rescuing? A Reply to "Gumboots to the Rescue"', *SAMUS: South African Journal of Musicology* 19/20 (2000): 105–8.

²⁵ Taylor, 'When We Speak about Music and Politics', 517.

as a composer who for his own gain steals music from his African subordinates.²⁶ While Taylor's moralising critique offers a valuable reminder of embedded and inescapable structures of power, which hold that 'no matter what Volans [as a white composer] was trying to do, Whites still dominate Blacks in South Africa',²⁷ it simultaneously entrenches (and then puts to work) the invented notion of African music as essentially socially functional. However, what seems to be at issue here, as Scherzinger has shown, is not so much that Volans appropriates South African music, but that by turning the discussion toward a defence of formalism, he denies Taylor the opportunity to use the African music in his work to attack seemingly apolitical formalism in the USA.²⁸ Put differently, Volans does not reduce African music to its social function; in turn, Taylor cannot re-appropriate Volans's music for his own criticism of what he perceives to be a musical anti-politics in the States. Volans's music must therefore be relegated to the category of musical conservatism.

Of course, this is not to say that the discussion of appropriation in Volans's music should be entirely regarded as moot or that discussions around his credibility as an anti-apartheid composer are no longer relevant. However, Taylor's critique does point toward a turning point in Volans's oeuvre. As Volans writes, 'since 1988 (with the exception of re-workings of older pieces and my opera, which is partly set in Ethiopia) I have avoided any direct reference to African music in my composition. For me, the moment for this kind of work has passed, along with the apartheid State'.²⁹ In speaking

²⁶ Ibid., 524–6.

²⁷ Ibid., 517.

²⁸ Scherzinger, 'Whose "White Man Sleeps"', 216.

²⁹ Volans, 'White Man Sleeps'.

about the works composed after this period, do we, as scholars and critics, turn with Volans away from politics in his music?

The answer demonstrated in much of the literature on the composer thus far seems to be a tacit 'yes'. Aside from some recent work on his earlier music, the only sustained scholarly engagement with Volans's later work seems to be unable to grapple with its politics.³⁰ Christine Lucia's article on Volans's string quartets, as one of the very few examples of scholarly commentary on his more recent music, reads themes of landscape as they emerge as a golden thread throughout this body of work.³¹ Despite issues of land and landscape being some of the most pressing and devastating in the post-apartheid era (as I will show in more depth in the following chapter of this thesis), Lucia fails to situate these landscape quartets within the post-apartheid locale (or even within the similarly devastated Irish locale, which Volans calls home). Indeed, thinking about the representation of landscape in Volans's output as merely a representation of untainted nature is to ignore the contested history of landscape in South Africa: landscape here, like anywhere else, is never a neutral aesthetic category.³² In contrast,

³⁰ The lone exception is Christopher Ballantine's recent keynote address in which he speaks of the politics of becoming 'undone' in Volans's *Cicada*, which I will return to later in this chapter. Christopher Ballantine, 'On Being Undone by Music: Thoughts Towards a South African Future Worth Having', *SAMUS: South African Music Studies* 34/35 (2015), 501–20.

³¹ Christine Lucia, 'The Landscape Within: Kevin Volans and the String Quartet', *SAMUS: South African Music Studies* 29 (2009), 1–30.

³² This has been demonstrated extensively in the recent emergence of critical landscape studies in music scholarship. For examples related specifically to the South African landscape, see Daniel M. Grimley, 'From Strange Rooms: Music, Landscape, and the Failure of Response', *SAMUS: South African Music Studies*, no. 34/35 (2015): 311–25; Angela Impey, *Song Walking: Women, Music, and Environmental Justice in an African Borderland* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2018). For more general writing, see W. J. T. Mitchell, ed., *Landscape and Power*, 2nd ed (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Daniel M. Grimley, *Delius and the Sound of Place*, *Music in Context* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

interpreting Volans's musical landscapes within a broader geo-politics of land offers rich (and largely unexplored) possibilities. Taking this position, I will argue in this chapter that there are aspects of his post-apartheid music that does draw these works very close to a South African environment.

Volans, despite his claims to the contrary, still situates some of his quartets written after 1988 within the realm of (South) African reference, suggesting that there remains a need to read them against political developments in the country. *Dancers on a Plane* is one such quartet, and is strongly rooted in (or bound to) the country's contested politics of landscape.³³ Originally composed as music for a film by Deborah May, *Plane Song*, the quartet version was commissioned by the Duke Quartet and premiered in London in 1995. During its composition, in 1994, Volans made field recordings with a sound engineer in Venda (a former Bantustan, or 'black homeland', that was officially reintegrated into the Republic of South Africa in 1994) and the Kruger National Park, South Africa's largest nature reserve, in the north-eastern province of Limpopo.³⁴ These recordings make up the soundscape material for the thirteen acousmatic tracks of rural Venda life and bushveld sounds that intersperse the quartet. It is Volans's only quartet to make use of an obligatory tape component.³⁵

Although the quartet references the South African landscape through these soundscape tracks, it draws its title from a series of abstract paintings by the North American visual artist, Jasper Johns, in which asymmetrical

³³ Another string quartet that makes reference to South African subject matter, for instance, is String Quartet No. 8, 'Black Woman Rising' (2004), dedicated to the South African opera singer, Pumeza Matshikiza.

³⁴ Lucia, 'Celebrating', 7.

³⁵ *String Quartet No. 6* can be performed either with a recording of the work or with a second quartet performing the part live.

forms rhythmically saturate the canvas. The paintings play on notions of surface: in one sense, the dancing forms seem to create a plane or a surface of texture; in another, the paintings' bold frames, decorated by bronzed utensils, create the sense of a concrete window as a surface or plane through which one can peer into another, abstract world. Volans was particularly inspired by the second manifestation of the plane as it emerges from the juxtaposition of the abstract and the concrete. '[Johns's juxtaposition] interests me', he writes.

In [*Dancers on a Plane*] I have inserted natural sound recordings from the landscape of my former homeland into the dance patterns of the string quartet music. This is similar to, but not the same as, what Johns has done—it's rather like making windows in the fabric of the piece and inserting photographic images of the world that gave rise to the music.³⁶

In *Dancers on a Plane* Volans reverses Johns's juxtaposition by using the concrete (the soundscape recordings) as the world seen through the window, and the more abstract quartet material as the frame through which this world is seen. The quartet material, as I interpret it and as Volans's note suggests, can be understood as relatively abstract in the sense that it is based on theoretical conceptions of Venda music, rather than on the direct transcription of Venda songs. Harmonically, the work makes use of the alternating two-chord pattern built on fourths and fifths that is employed in much traditional Venda music. Beyond using this theoretical approach to

³⁶ Kevin Volans, 'Dancers on a Plane: 5th String Quartet', liner notes for *The Duke Quartet: Kevin Volans*, The Duke Quartet, Collins Classics CD 14172, 1995, 4.

tonality, however, I hear in the piece the additive formal processes of Venda music. That is, I hear the work unfold as groups of material being appended to each other without development or a unifying trajectory. Yet the work simultaneously (and seemingly contradictorily) can be interpreted as following a formal trajectory which reaches an apotheosis in the affirmation of the C tonal centre and the horizontal composing out of the vertical harmonic intervals of fourths and fifths toward the end of the work, which is then closed by an ambiguous coda. While this second formal strategy would come to mark many of Volans's later works, I argue that in *Dancers on a Plane* it is largely enabled by a secondary structure that can be understood as emergent in the soundscape tracks. In arguing for this second sense of structure, I will read a structural crisis in the work between the double process of non-teleological design of the Venda conception of form used by Volans and the teleology of arrival onto the C tonal centre.

In this chapter, I frame what I interpret as a rooting of the quartet through the use of theoretical concepts of Venda music and the soundscape recordings, along with the double strategy of non-teleological and teleological formal design, in broader discussions of post-apartheid cultural theory. In particular, I understand the process of rooting as a musical analogue for what J. M. Coetzee called a form of 'bondage' that plagues anti-apartheid writing.³⁷ At the same time, I argue that what I discern as abstraction in the work's apotheosis can be thought of as a musical rendering of what Mbulelo Vizikhungo Mzamane termed a 'literature of interiority' that could underpin

³⁷ J. M. Coetzee, 'Jerusalem Prize Acceptance Speech', in *Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews*, ed. David Attwell (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 99.

a reconstruction of culture in post-apartheid South Africa.³⁸ The notion of interiority has been read by Lucia as a general trajectory in Volans's quartets, and it is a characteristic that can already be detected in *Dancers on a Plane*.³⁹ However, in this work, interiority, which I reframe here in the terms of the broader debate of anti-apartheid art, is still bound up with a dialectical other that I propose can usefully be thought of as bondage. While these two concepts demarcate vastly different artistic responses to the post-apartheid condition, they are both founded in the realisation that after apartheid ends, critical artistic practices are plunged into a crisis of moving beyond an anti-apartheid expression. My aim in this chapter is to show how my reading of Volans's quartet situates it in such a way that the work could be considered to grapple with this same crisis. That is, in this chapter, I argue that, while Volans might not be a straightforwardly post-apartheid South African composer, *Dancers on a Plane* strongly resounds tensions that mark the birth of the post-apartheid cultural arena. By interpreting the work in this way, I suggest that it also can be understood as representative of the difficulties of moving beyond anti-apartheid art and the conditions of possibility necessary for a critical music to satisfy in the years after the first democratic elections.

³⁸ Mbulelo Vozokhungo Mzamane, 'From Resistance to Reconstruction: Culture And the New South Africa', *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 27:1 (1996), 18.

³⁹ Lucia, 'The Landscape Within'.

Volans in the Post-Apartheid Era

To frame my analytical reading of *Dancers on a Plane*, which I will turn to in the following section, it is necessary to situate Volans's 1988 departure from anti-apartheid music within a broader movement in the South African cultural arena that recognised, and carefully articulated, the need for a similar move. This discourse finds one of its earliest exponents in Njabulo S. Ndebele. Writing in 1984, ten years before the first free elections, Ndebele questions the legitimacy of protest literature by reframing it as the 'literature of the powerless'.⁴⁰ His central contention is that, because they are so fuelled by the desire to document the spectacle of atrocities committed by the apartheid state, writers are rendered powerless to address the way in which oppression (and thus liberation) becomes functional in the ordinary interactions of daily life. He thus calls for a 'rediscovery of the ordinary', a shift away from the spectacle toward the quotidian human experience in literature as the locus of art's struggle against the apartheid regime.⁴¹ While different from Volans's statement of leaving reconciliatory strategies behind, Ndebele's pronouncement signals a need to move away from a conception of direct or literal confrontation with the regime as the sole legitimator of artistic worth to a literature which, through the everyday, exposes more acutely the depth and complexity of subjectivity. Only three years later, in 1987, J. M. Coetzee echoes this sentiment, although he articulates it in far more devastating terms. In his Jerusalem Prize acceptance speech, Coetzee

⁴⁰ Njabulo S. Ndebele, *Rediscovery of the Ordinary: Essays on South African Literature and Culture* (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2006), 42.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 51.

shows little faith in the aesthetic viability of building a literary culture around the critique of apartheid.

South African literature is a literature in bondage, as it reveals itself in even its highest moments shot through as they are with feelings of homelessness and yearnings for a nameless liberation. It is a less than fully human literature, unnaturally preoccupied with power and torsions of power unable to move from elementary relations of contestation, domination, and subjugation to the vast and complex human world that lies beyond them. It is exactly the kind of literature you would expect people to write from a prison.⁴²

A literature in bondage or of the powerless: Coetzee's and Ndebele's diagnoses are very similar. To be captured in art by the oppression of apartheid is to redouble apartheid's oppression. Bondage and imprisonment become metaphorical markers of the state of a literary culture obsessed with an excessive instrumentalisation of art in the protest against the regime. It is this danger that concerns Albie Sachs, a key figure in the resistance movement who would later become a constitutional court judge in the democratic dispensation. In 1989, he presented his controversial paper, 'Preparing Ourselves for Freedom', at an ANC in-house conference in Lusaka, Zambia. He advocated a more radical version of Ndebele's call by stating that ANC members 'should be banned from saying that culture is a weapon of struggle'.⁴³ Propelling Sachs's assertion was the contention that South

⁴² Coetzee, 'Jerusalem Prize Acceptance Speech', 99.

⁴³ Albie Sachs, 'Preparing Ourselves for Freedom', in *Spring Is Rebellious: Arguments About Cultural Freedom*, ed. Ingrid de Kok and Karen Press (Cape Town: Buchu Books, 1990), 19.

Africans, on the eve of the liberation, had not yet gained ‘sufficient cultural imagination to grasp the rich texture of a free and united South Africa’ and that they were still ‘trapped in the multiple ghettos of apartheid imagination’.⁴⁴ And if this is so, he maintained, it is because the ‘rulers stalk every page and haunt every picture’ and an obsession with ‘the oppressors and the trauma they [...] imposed’ had become pervasive.⁴⁵ Sachs’s vision, which he draws from the music of Hugh Masekela and Abdullah Ibrahim, is instead one of a culture which ‘bypasses, overwhelms, [and] ignores apartheid’ by freely expressing the human condition.⁴⁶ For him, in preparing for freedom, the role of art is to imagine a subjectivity not bound by oppression, and to create a culture which is neither instrumental nor non-dialectical. His vision for the work of art directly after apartheid is not located in the reproduction of the wounds inflicted by the regime. Rather, Sachs argues, it could be found in art’s capacity to ‘expose contradictions and reveal hidden tensions’ which lay beyond naming the oppressor and figuring hurt.⁴⁷

While largely concerned with literature and the visual arts, Ndebele, Coetzee, and Sachs’s criticisms of anti-apartheid art can be applied to music. Consider, for example, Hans Roosenschoon’s *Timbila* (1985). Doubtlessly taking its cue from Volans’s early *African Paraphrases* (especially *Mbira*), *Timbila* combines a southern Mozambican Chopi *timbila* (a form of

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 21.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 20.

indigenous xylophone) ensemble with a Western orchestra.⁴⁸ Rather than using transcription or paraphrasing, however, Roosenschoon creates a juxtaposition by having the *timbila* ensemble perform alongside the orchestra. The two entities are musically disconnected. The orchestra plays a deconstructed version of 'Frère Jacques' that is interspersed by the *timbila* ensemble's performance of a 'mitsitso', which is the first part of the *Mgodo* dance. Roosenschoon frames this inter-cultural interaction as an anti-apartheid critique by suggesting that, like the *Mgodo* which is used to raise critical issues with a Chopi leader, *Timbila* was his own way of criticising the leaders of the apartheid regime.⁴⁹ While Roosenschoon does not make his critique explicit, I interpret the structural elements in his work as suggestive of a Western domination of the African. The 'Frère Jacques' tune set in the brass as an anthem toward the end of the piece, for instance, drowns out the *timbila* ensemble, sonically erasing (subsuming) their presence in the overall soundscape. As the culminative point of the work, *Timbila*, in Sachs's words, becomes obsessed with figuring oppression, but in doing so it redoubles the subjugation of the African. Rather than being liberated in Roosenschoon's work (as indeed the anti-apartheid critique he espouses might suggest), the *timbila* ensemble is subjugated by the work's structure of whiteness and is thereby erased.

The failure of works such as Roosenschoon's is also not mitigated by the end of apartheid in 1994. Reflecting on Ndebele's, Coetzee's, and Sachs's

⁴⁸ Like *Mbira*, *Timbila* was also brokered by the ethnomusicologist, Andrew Tracey. Hans Roosenschoon, 'Timbila: Programme Note', *Hans Roosenschoon: My Music*, n.d., accessed 23 May 2019, http://www.roosenschoon.co.za/roosenschoon_files/pnotes/timbila.html.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

positions eleven years after the first democratic elections, Ashraf Jamal notes that, despite their calls, little has changed in the post-apartheid era; the oppression of apartheid still ‘dominates and disfigures cultural production and reception’.⁵⁰ For him, part of the reason for this stems from the failure to take up Sachs’s call: the oppressive presence of apartheid still haunts cultural artefacts. Simultaneously, however, the radical vision of transformation held at the end of apartheid has also not been achieved and the trauma of inequality continues to dominate the country. Thus Jamal, echoing Coetzee’s notion of bondage and Ndebele’s designation of the powerless, argues that artists are caught in a double bind of epistemic and psychic entrapment in the post-apartheid cultural arena.⁵¹ On the one hand, the liberation artist is gripped by a sense of ennui in the posthumous criticism of the regime, which risks anachronistically reproducing the spectacle of atrocities.⁵² On the other hand, there emerges the failure of what he terms a post-apartheid art: the effects of apartheid—the lingering economic and social inequality—are still palpable and as such artists are not offered a tabula rasa on which to cultivate a form of expression that forgets the past. For in forgetting, artists risk creating forms of expression that are complicit in the structures of inequality that have not yet been undone.⁵³ Observing this double bind, Jamal suggests that the solution is not wholly to reject anti-apartheid art. Nor does he propose abandoning the attempt to become post-apartheid in art. Rather,

⁵⁰ Ashraf Jamal, *Predicaments of Culture in South Africa* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2005), xi.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ I explore this theme at length in Chapter 3.

Jamal cryptically suggests that art's critical work must manifest in the suspended moment between anti- and post-apartheid forms of expression.

While the crisis of anti-apartheid art and its redoubling of oppression can be heard in work's such as Roosenschoon's *Timbila*, Jamal offers little by way of describing what a post-apartheid art might comprise. He is emphatically drawn, however, to the ending of Coetzee's *Life & Times of Michael K*, when the novel's protagonist K, 'a squatter in systems' and 'a condemned man who is strangely free', finally settles near a well amid the ruins of a bomb-blasted site.⁵⁴ Posing the question through the metaphor of ruin of how to find life after apartheid has reduced the country to rubble, K answers by lowering a bent teaspoon into the well to retrieve single bowls of water. Jamal takes from this an allegory of hope, but it also points to a more concrete approach to dealing with the shift to the post-apartheid in art, which has to do with a form of tracking down into the well of subjectivity⁵⁵ and slowly, spoon by spoon, building art-life from within the deep reaches of the human condition. Indeed, it is such a turn inward that Mzamane detects in the shift toward the post-apartheid in literature.

The move from protest to challenge to reconstruction in South Africa has been accompanied at the literary level by a shift from the literature of surface meaning—dependent entirely upon spectacular events—to the literature of interiority with its concern with introspection and the inner life. The literature of interiority is concerned, too, with the entire human personality in all its complexity—and not only with the status of victim and

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵⁵ I explore the idea of the subterranean and subjectivity at length in Chapter 2.

victimizer. It is this turn away from the surface and the venture into the interior which will usher a new dawn for South African literature and society.⁵⁶

Mzamane's analysis, which is also a prescription, reads like an antidote to Coetzee's diagnosis: where Coetzee understands literature in apartheid South Africa as devoid of human complexity, Mzamane finds exactly that same complex humanity emerging in post-apartheid literature. That said, Mzamane's antidote, once confronted by Jamal's distrust of wholly leaving behind the anti-apartheid in art, seems too easy. Can one, without an erasure of history, simply leave the surface behind and find an unmarked sanctum in the interior? What of the space between surface and inner subjectivity? Is there not a scar tissue that extends down between these two regions that must be contended with? Indeed, it is exactly such a scarring that Jamal grapples with: the tissue between skin and penitentialia is perhaps not as permeable as Mzamane makes it out to be. Yet his reading is useful because it provides a point toward which the critiques of anti-apartheid art seem to be directed. And when read against Coetzee's notion of bondage, it is a useful dialectical pole to erect on the far side of the interregnum. In other words, the moment of transition can be thought of as a dialectical moment in which artistic production is caught between bondage and interiority.

Music's place within this context is uncertain to say the least. While Jamal uses Volans's opera, *Confessions of Zeno* (2002), as an example of an artistic response that productively grapples with the post-apartheid condition, his

⁵⁶ Mzamane, 'From Resistance To Reconstruction', 18.

analysis is entirely focused on the libretto by Jane Taylor. Volans is given nothing more than a cursory mention when Jamal writes of ‘a theatre production [...] with music by Kevin Volans’. Yet in what follows, I will argue that Volans’s work, and *Dancers on a Plane* especially, can be interpreted as enacting the dialectic between Coetzee’s and Mzamane’s notions. Read in this way, the piece provides a unique insight into the structure of crisis that emerges out of the dialectic between bondage and interiority. This dialectic provides me with an interpretative frame for understanding the work’s structure which I hear as cut through with (and perhaps cut up by) various tensions produced by the incommensurable forces of rooting in and moving away from the South African soundscape. Pursuing this argument will require two seemingly contradictory analyses, which, toward the end of this chapter, I will consolidate through a third analytical turn that hinges on and produces ambiguity.

Analysis I: Music of Bondage

In attempting to read a structure of crisis within the work, it is necessary to first consider how *Dancers on a Plane* can be understood as a music of bondage. Drawing together strands from Coetzee, Ndebele, Sachs, and Jamal, but also including an inversion of Mzamane’s reading, bondage here can be understood as emerging out of the documentation and the representation of the literal, the over-inscription of rootedness (as the desire against homelessness), and a domination of surface. I hear all these strategies in *Dancers on a Plane*, but, as I will show later, they do not constitute the work’s totality. Rather, there are only certain aspects of the

work that for me resound bondage in these ways. That said, in what follows I consider two aspects of the work that I want to suggest evoke a sense of bondage: (i) the soundscape recordings which document Bantustan politics, and (ii) the quartet part's rootedness in theoretical principles of Venda music and a musical surface dominated by the restrictions imposed by the work's underlying additive structure.

i) Documenting the Literal

As a marker of bondage, a process of mimetic representation through documentation can be heard most apparently in *Dancers on a Plane's* soundscape part. As mentioned before, the string quartet is interspersed with thirteen soundscape tracks of material recorded in Venda and the Kruger National Park (summarised in Table 1.1). Although not easily separated, I hear the two locations of the recordings as evoked in two distinct sets of sounds. The first are human sounds, presumably recorded in a rural village in Venda. They include the voices of people (tracks 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 13), the sounds of agricultural infrastructure such as a farm gate turning on its hinge (track 2 and 3) and a water pump (track 6), and the sounds of livestock signalled by the cowbell (track 1 and 12) and hooves beating the ground (track 2). The second group, which creates a sense of an uninhabited landscape of a nature reserve, includes various bird calls and the chirping of cicadas (tracks 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12). These groups of sounds are not kept entirely separate in the work, and are often presented in close proximity to each other. At the start of the third track, for instance, there is a call of a ring-necked dove, a natural sound, superimposed upon the sounds of

human voices. Similarly, in the sixth track, the sounds of a water pump and children’s laughter slowly dissolve into the sound of cicadas chirping. That said, there is a difference between these sounds that is made audible in recordings which isolate the sounds of human occupation (track 2) and the sounds of uninhabited landscapes of birdcalls and cicadas (track 4).

Track No.	Track bar entry	Approximate duration	Description
1	Bar 18	0’19”	Cow bells, voices, cicadas
2	Bar 39	0’57”	Farm gate being opened, voices, hoof sounds
3	Bar 89	0’51”	Ring-necked dove call, voices, sounds of water, gate being shut, ends with only voices
4	Bar 102	0’36”	Cicadas, distant birdcalls
5	Bar 117	0’28”	Cicadas
6	Bar 153	1’40”	Water pump, children’s laughter, fades into cicadas
7	Bar 214		Football match, referee whistle, cock crowing in the background
8	Bar 232	1’59”	Woodland kingfisher and ring-necked dove
9	Bar 266		Cicadas with distant birdcalls
10	Bar 284		Cicadas with distant birdcalls
11	Bar 296	2’12”	Only cicadas
12	Bar 325	3’30”	Emerald spotted wood dove and other birds, fades into cicadas, soft/distant cow bells, fades into just cicadas
13	Bar 505	2’40”	Distant sounds of voices and a turning axle

Table 1.1: Soundscape tracks and timings, *Dancers on a Plane*.

The commixing of these groups of sounds provokes for me a political reading. While the landscape suggested by these recordings is at times uninhabited, marked only by the sounds of birdcalls and cicadas, human sounds of agriculture are never far away. The landscape rendered from the outset is one worked by people. These are not figures who are indistinguishable from nature, and who thus are erased by it. Rather, land here can be heard as occupied and the ground upon which the inhabitants become present. Such a reading contradicts the colonial/apartheid vision of rural land as an empty frontier,⁵⁷ or alternatively as a geographical space in which to exercise strategies of separate development. The latter conception is of special importance here. At the time these recordings were made, Venda's illegitimate designation by the apartheid state as a Bantustan, which was enforced upon it since 1979, had been abolished for a few months.⁵⁸ Before its re-integration, inhabitants of Venda were stripped in law of their South African citizenship. The idea propagated by the regime was that so-called 'natives' required a homeland in which to realise their own (cultural, political, economic) development apart from the development of whites. The reality of black homelands was, however, probably closer to what Steve Biko diagnosed as 'the greatest single fraud ever invented by white politicians'.⁵⁹ What Biko recognised in his now famous essay, 'Let's Talk About Bantustans', was a desire on the part of the apartheid regime to cripple, both economically and socially, broader dissent by the black population of South

⁵⁷ Bantustans such as Venda have often been likened to apartheid-era frontiers. See Steffen Jensen and Olaf Zenker, eds., *South African Homelands as Frontiers: Apartheid's Loose Ends in the Postcolonial Era* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017).

⁵⁸ Venda was officially reintegrated into the Republic of South Africa in April 1994.

⁵⁹ Steve Biko, *Steve Biko: I Write What I Like* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1987), 83.

Africa by fostering tribalism and artificially separating black communities from mainstream politics.⁶⁰ Indeed, Biko writes, ‘these tribal cocoons called “homelands” are nothing else but sophisticated concentration camps where black people are allowed to “suffer peacefully”’.⁶¹

Read within these political coordinates, Volans’s soundscapes can be interpreted as laying bare, through the juxtaposition of uninhabited and inhabited landscapes, the apartheid logic that would equate the homeland to a kind of reserve, an untouched land to be used for the distant settlement of black South Africans. In this sense, the soundscape recordings reflect closely the type of documentary impulse that authors such as Ndebele and Coetzee wish to move beyond: what is heard is a documentation of the literal which suggests that there are people on this land, but, aside from brief references to laughter and a football match, they remain superficial figurations, devoid of subjectivity.

ii) Rootedness

Yet as much as the soundscape recordings act as a type of political documentation, they can also be interpreted as markers of place. They situate

⁶⁰ Biko’s position reflected much of liberal academia in the 1970s and 1980s, which often opposed the development of homelands as violent acts of segregation on the part of the state. A recent resurgence in scholarship on the development of the homelands offers a more balanced view. While still highly critical of the practice, authors such as William Beinart have argued for a reading of the cultural and historical advances which subvert the notion of the rural hinterland, but which are also ignored in critiques of homeland policy. See William Beinart, ‘Beyond “Homelands”’: Some Ideas about the History of African Rural Areas in South Africa’, *South African Historical Journal* 64:1 (2012), 5–21. See also Shireen A. Ally and Arianna Lissoni, eds., *New Histories of South Africa’s Apartheid-Era Bantustans* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017).

⁶¹ Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 86.

or root the work firmly within the context of Venda specifically, and South Africa more broadly, especially when they are read against Volans's composer's note for the work: these soundscapes are recordings of his 'former homeland' and sonic images of the 'world that gave rise to the music.'⁶² Following Coetzee, however, the sense of a former homeland, coupled with the mimetic representation of the South African landscape, might suggest not a *homeliness*, but a *homelessness* borne out by the over-inscription (an inscription in the terms of excess and even obsession used by Coetzee) of being rooted in place. That is, while the soundscapes, as I interpret them, could locate the quartet within the South African landscape, they also signal a desire for that landscape, a yearning that speaks of a home lost and the will to conjure it in representational form. Much like the immigrant or exile who looks to photographs of their former homeland with yearning, the soundscapes here can be understood as the figuration of a world left behind.⁶³ Indeed, these soundscapes are cut through with nostalgia, evoked by the romanticised imagery of laughing children, the rush of a football match, and cowbells sounding in the distance.

Yet as a marker of homelessness, the over-inscription of rootedness is not only evoked in the soundscape recordings. It also pervades the quartet material. As suggested by Volans's composer's note, the instrumental part does have a strong grounding in Venda traditional music, but unlike his

⁶² Volans, 'Dancers on a Plane', 4.

⁶³ In this sense, the soundscapes are reminiscent of the photographs used by W. G. Sebald in his novel, *The Emigrants*. Inserted as interjections within the text, the images in the novel seem to punctuate and structure (perhaps at points where words fail to do so) the sense of longing and yearning that the various emigrants experience, giving some sense of a material trace (and thereby credence) to their memories. W. G. Sebald, *The Emigrants* (London: Vintage, 2003).

earlier works, there is no attempt here to quote or paraphrase specific songs. Rather, the quartet seems to reflect closely theoretical precepts of Venda music, particularly as they have been expounded by John Blacking. To be sure, Blacking's work should not be taken as unquestionably representative of Venda musical practice. Bruno Nettl most famously pointed out that while Blacking tries to produce an emic description of Venda music, his work ultimately (and artificially) goes 'beyond the culture's own way of describing itself'.⁶⁴ Indeed, the Vhavenda do not have a formalised system of music theory that governs their extensive canon of endogenous works, but Blacking, through the transcription and analysis of hundreds of songs, found melodic, rhythmic, harmonic, and structural principles that underpin much of this vast body of music, which, as I will show shortly, clearly inspired Volans's own music and can be a productive point of departure in interpreting the tonal organisation in *Dancers on a Plane*.⁶⁵

While his theory of Venda music is too expansive to expound here in detail, one of the important aspects which is present in the quartet is the

⁶⁴ Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Twenty-Nine Issues and Concepts* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 98.

⁶⁵ Blacking's first substantial publication toward the analysis of Venda music considered issues of pitch and harmony in ocarina duets. John Blacking, 'Problems of Pitch, Pattern, and Harmony in the Ocarina Music of the Venda', *African Music* 2:2 (1959), 15–23. His major publication in this regard, however, emerges from his doctoral work on Venda children's songs, in which he first systematised many of his own ideas of a theory of Venda music. John Blacking, *Venda Children's Songs: A Study in Ethnomusicological Analysis* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1967). He then went on to further develop these ideas by considering the music used in girls' initiation schools. John Blacking, 'Tonal Organization in the Music of Two Venda Initiation Schools', *Ethnomusicology* 14:1 (1970), 1–56. His final extensive study was published a year later and was concerned with issues of structure and form. John Blacking, 'Deep and Surface Structures in Venda Music', *Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council* 3 (1971), 91–108. All these ideas would eventually inform one of Blacking's most important publications, John Blacking, *How Musical Is Man?* (Washington, D.C.: University of Washington Press, 1973).

harmonic language used in creating Venda songs. Using the *Tshikona* dance, the national dance of Venda and what he describes as ‘the most important item of all Venda music’, Blacking establishes that Venda music is primarily constructed out of two modes shown in Figures 1.1 and 1.2.⁶⁶

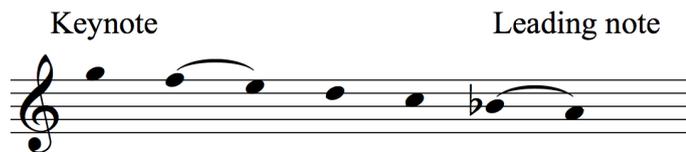


Figure 1.1: Dorian-like Venda mode.

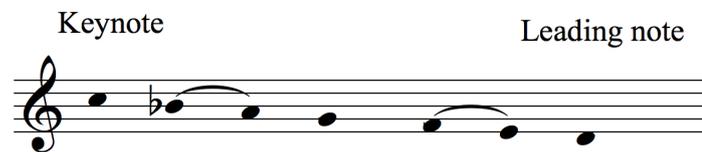


Figure 1.2: Mixolydian-like Venda mode.

While these respectively resemble Dorian and Mixolydian modes in Western music, Blacking emphasises the fact that in Venda music, they do not comprise two tetrachords but end instead on the seventh degree without a repetition of the octave, thereby creating only one tetrachord and three notes within the range of a minor third.⁶⁷ That is, while the modes start on their root note, they do not end on it. Furthermore, these two modes are governed by the intervallic relationships generated by their descending form, rather than the ascending relationships as is often the case with liturgical modes. In this sense, what would generally be termed the second scale degree acts as a leading note to the root. Indeed, Blacking identifies the two most

⁶⁶ Blacking, *Venda Children's Songs*, 179.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

important harmonic notes in Venda music as the root note, which he calls the 'keynote' (called the *phala* in Venda) and the supertonic, which he calls the 'leading note' (in Venda, the *thakhula*).⁶⁸ While the former acts as a tonal centre, the latter is used to 'lift' the melody back onto the tonic.⁶⁹ Chords are derived from what Blacking calls harmonically equivalent tones either a fifth above or below the melody note, where the fifth below engenders a harmonically stronger chord and the fifth above a weaker one.⁷⁰ Using these principles, Blacking creates a model harmonic reduction of the *tshikona* dance of four chords which alternate between a keynote and a leading note root and which he argues encapsulates the core of the Venda harmonic language (Figure 1.3).

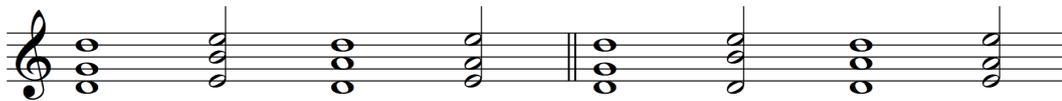


Figure 1.3: *Tshikona* harmonic reduction.

I hear these same theoretical principles in the opening of *Dancers on a Plane*. The work starts with a lively dance-like motive comprising alternating chords rooted on C and D produced by hocketing between three of the instruments set against an ostinato created by bowing across the strings in a circular motion (Example 1.1). With the first chord emphasising a D-rooted sonority, it is not at first entirely clear that the passage gravitates toward the lower C root as its tonal centre. However, the tonal material in the opening

⁶⁸ Blacking, 'Tonal Organization', 12.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 16.

bars does seem to be drawn from a Dorian mode on C, reflecting the primary mode used in Venda music. Furthermore, by bar 7, which marks the start of the second phrase of the opening dance, the C dominates the cello's bass line, suggesting that, much like an extended anacrusis, the initial emphasis on the D-rooted sonority acts to 'lift', in the sense described by Blacking before, the opening phrase harmonically onto the C, affirming it as the root. The interplay between the C and D sonorities continues until the first major shift in texture in bar 38. Here, the dance material that makes up the opening of the work shifts to three sustained chords, which starkly contrasts the hocketing texture heard earlier. The shift is achieved by way of a 'walking' motive (Example 1.2), which, although set in a different rhythm, could be understood as drawn from the moment in the *tshikona* dance when the dancers use a 'walking' step to form a circle around a central group of women drummers.⁷¹ Like the walking step in the dance, which has a transitional function between the huddled group of dancers at the start of the dance and the expansive circle that is formed by its end, the walking motive here acts as a transitional passage between the dance motive and the chordal material heard in bar 38. Harmonically, the walking motive momentarily presents a new keynote and leading note (G and A), related to the dancing material's tonal centre by the equivalence of a fifth above, which sets up a cadence onto the F-based sonority in bar 38.⁷² Following Blacking, this F-region might be thought of as the secondary Mixolydian modal region.⁷³ Yet the chords

⁷¹ Blacking, *Venda Children's Songs*, 26.

⁷² Blacking notes that, while cadences are rare in Venda music, a falling major second (in this case G to F) often marks cadential moments. *Ibid.*, 170.

⁷³ If one uses F as the root of a C-Dorian mode, the new mode that is formed is Mixolydian.

presented here, while based on an F root, are not composed of F-Mixolydian tonal material (for instance, there is both an E \flat and a B \flat). The F rather might be thought of as an abstract secondary tonal centre: like the *tshikona* dance and indeed much of Venda music, which harmonically draws on two modal centres separated by a fourth, much of the quartet material in *Dancers on a Plane* is based on two roots separated by a fourth (C and F).

*Finger D, play with circular motion, the bow slack, and held in the middle. Touch notes occasionally.

Example 1.1: Dance-like material, *Dancers on a Plane*, bars 1–5.

Example 1.2: Walking motive transitioning to chordal material, *Dancers on a Plane*, bars 36–9.

The alternation between the dance-like material with a C tonal centre and the F-rooted chordal material broadly makes up the rest of the work, with the notable exception of the extended passage toward the end of the work which makes use of a C-major tonal centre, and to which I will return later in this analysis. As such, I interpret the quartet part of *Dancers on a Plane* as expounding a double sense of rootedness. On the one hand, it is rooted in theory of Venda music, which, although a form of musical poetics, is also a marker of place in as much as place is linked to this form of poetics. Much like the soundscape recordings that I interpret as evoking auditory images of a rural Venda landscape, the quartet part reproduces, albeit relatively abstractly, the Venda music from which Volans suggests it originates. On the other hand, and perhaps in a more literal sense, the quartet material is rooted in the Venda modal language and becomes bound by the alternating C tonal centre and the F-rooted chordal material. Restricted by these two poles, the focus of the work shifts toward the changes in surface texture. Indeed, the work unfolds, as I read it, in broad terms as repetitions of three surfaces: the dance-like material, the sustained chordal material, and the soundscape ‘windows’, with transitional passages using the ‘walking’ motive.

I understand the repetition of particularly the two main surfaces produced in the quartet part (the dance-like and chordal materials) as the main components of the work’s additive structure. With additive structure here I mean the way in which form is evoked through the process of adding materials without necessarily creating a sense of development or deploying a teleological trajectory. The emphasis here is not so much on the aspect of return (hearing the same material again) inscribed by repetition, but on the idea of form as the continuous addition of parts. (Indeed, strictly speaking

there is not one entire section of music in the piece that is exactly repeated, except in the coda which I will address later).

My reading here is again prompted by Volans's own writing on Venda music in his 1986 essay. Writing about the difference between Western and African conceptions of form, Volans argues that what is heard in traditional South African music as repetition is an error in perception on the part of the Western listener.⁷⁴ Instead, and paraphrasing Blacking, he argues that this music should be heard in the way that the Vhavenda hear their own music; that is, to hear it in a way that does not recognise the repetition of parts, but a continuous stream of music with no beginning or end.⁷⁵ Blacking, in his own work, uses the analogy of a waterfall. 'The repetition of short patterns, with only minor variations within the total structure, gives to Venda music the character of a waterfall: it is for ever moving, and yet its overall pattern never changes, and from a distance it even appears as solid and immovable as a stone statue'.⁷⁶ Responding to this analogy, Volans, in arguing against the notion of additive form as merely repetition, asks, 'how baffling would we find someone asking us what section of water in a waterfall is being repeated?'⁷⁷ He then goes on to summarise his idea of additive form.

The music I have described is additive—it has no concept of pauses, it is conceived of as a flowing, unbroken movement. It, too, is not to be listened to subdivisively. It is not measured in proportioned sections, as Western

⁷⁴ Volans, 'Of White Africans'.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Blacking, 'Venda Children's Songs', 18.

⁷⁷ Volans, 'Of White Africans'.

music is. This would mean that there is no feeling for what one would call ‘directed form’ in the piece.⁷⁸

If in *Dancers on a Plane* an additive form can successfully be argued, as I have tried to show, such a structure could be seen to encapsulate the notion of bondage criticised by Coetzee and Mzamane. In saying so, however, I do not want to suggest that Venda music is in and of itself a music of bondage, given that the elements that engender in the quartet an additive structure are mostly drawn from it. Ultimately, Venda music breaks free from the bondage generated by form because of the way, as Blacking suggests, that musical time is subverted, or even negated, in its deep structural dependence on non-musical elements such as its social function.⁷⁹ Rather, my reading of bondage in the quartet is made possible in the first instance exactly because, in any given context, *Dancers on a Plane* should comprise five hundred and forty-five bars and last a set duration in performance. Of course, that the work is a fixed musical text is not what evokes bondage. It is instead that bondage can be read in the work at various levels. The first level is that of the documentation of the literal occasioned by the soundscape recordings, which mimetically situate the work within the fraught politics of Bantustans. The second, which continues from the first, occurs in the quartet part, and can be summarised as a literal bondage that is created by the restricted harmonic design of the work which is trapped between the C- and F-rooted poles. Together with the first level, I understand this sense of bondage through the notion of being rooted in place, by virtue of its over-inscription, as analogous

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Blacking, ‘Venda Children’s Songs’, 17. See also Blacking, ‘Deep and Surface Structures’, esp. 104.

to the sense of homelessness pointed out by Coetzee. The third level of bondage, which following Mzamane has to do with dominance of surface meaning, is an aggregate of the first two levels in that I understand it as a result of the emphasis on musical surface that is engendered by the additive process of form. That is, because the work, as I read it, is based on a formal principle that ultimately emphasises the repetition of surfaces, its structural meaning, beyond the principle of addition, is seemingly negated.

Analysis II: Music of Interiority

I say seemingly because I simultaneously—and paradoxically—read in *Dancers on a Plane* a second structure that I interpret as suggestive of a sense of interiority. This second interpretation of the work's structure does not negate the first, but, as I read it, is coterminous with it. While the work could be interpreted as evoking bondage in the ways that I have detailed before, I want to argue that it also evokes the type of complex introspection sought by Mzamane and Coetzee and which is the inverse of bondage. This form of introspection, however, is concerned with locating subjectivity in a way that does not only designate it as a place-holder or a proxy for the anti-apartheid struggle. That said, the type of introspection presented in the quartet is not exactly the same as that found (or at least striven for) in post-apartheid literature. For instance, reading works such as Coetzee's fictional biography of Dostoevsky, *The Master of Petersburg*, which was also published in 1994, it is apparent that writing the complexities of the human world quite literally translates for him into a writing out of the subject's

psychological state.⁸⁰ In contrast, I interpret introspection in *Dancers on a Plane* as a process of distillation present in the stripping away of the musical subject.⁸¹ The form of introspection that I read in the piece is thus not the representation of the inner psychological workings of the subject, but instead it is a turn toward the inside and the presentation of what might be found when a musical exterior is reduced to reveal that which is at its core.

i) Cicadic Metamorphosis

This reading of the quartet, however, cannot alone be predicated on the work's additive structure I described before. Such a structure, as Volans describes it, does not contain the sense of directedness required by the movement *toward* an interior.⁸² The sense of directedness, which is equally a sense of change, is suggested in way in which the soundscape recordings are structurally deployed. Indeed, I locate the notion of change, which can be understood as a further predicate for an inward turn, in the symbolic gesture that can be read in the chirping cicadas in these recordings. Cicadas have long been rich symbols in Western culture, starting perhaps with their figurative presence in Homer's *Iliad* when two old men commenting on

⁸⁰ Besides for provoking debate around its historical accuracy, this novel's psychological focus has dominated its critical reception. See, for instance, John Bolin, 'The Sinister Mirror: Desire and Intensity in J.M. Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg*', *The Review of English Studies* 65:270 (2014), 515–35; or Anthony Uhlmann, 'Excess as Ek-Stasis: Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg* and Giving Offense', *The Comparatist* 38 (2014), 54–69.

⁸¹ Lucia describes a similar stripping away of musical content as a trajectory across Volans's string quartets. I am, however, interested here in how this distillation occurs in the space of a singular work. See Lucia, 'The Landscape Within'.

⁸² Directedness should not be conflated here with the general imperative of music to unfold or play out in time. Rather, as I use it here, directedness is an unfolding in time with the added notion of being responsive to its own temporal process.

Helen's longing for her husband are likened to cicadas perched on a tree.⁸³ As they appear in *Dancers on a Plane*, however, I read the cicadas as symbols of metamorphosis and change. The cicada as a signifier of change also has an extensive history, which can be traced to Aristotle. His description of the cicada's lifecycle from muddy nymph to singing beetle in *Historia Animalium* strongly associated the insect with notions of metamorphosis.⁸⁴ It is in this sense that poets such as Federico García Lorca later invoke the cicada; it functions, as Martha Nandorfy has argued, as 'the very sign of transfiguration' in Lorca's poetry.⁸⁵ The cicada as a symbol for metamorphosis is also found in Volans's *Cicada* for piano duo, which was written in the same year as *Dancers on a Plane* and which, like the quartet, draws its title from a work by Jasper Johns. In Johns's eponymous work, as Barbra Rose has noted, the carapace of the cicada is a marker of transfiguration.⁸⁶ However, rather than depicting transfiguration (with its connotation of the spiritual) in *Cicada*, the cicadic connotations are evoked in the subtle timbral shifts of two chords over the course of twenty-five minutes. That is, the cicada is represented in an extended process of change.

In *Dancers on a Plane*, the cicada sounds are also a symbol of change which mark shifts in the quartet part's chordal material (summarised in Table 1.2). With, for instance, the entry of track 4 in which there is an

⁸³ 'Cicada', in *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols*, Michael Ferber, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), accessed 3 April 2019, <https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/litsymb/cicada/o?institutionId=8498>.

⁸⁴ Rory B. Egan, 'Cicadas in Ancient Greece: Ventures in Classical Tettigology', *Cultural Entomology Digest*, 3 (1994), accessed 3 April 2019, <https://www.insects.orkin.com/ced/issue-3/cicadas-in-ancient-greece/>.

⁸⁵ Martha Nandorfy, *The Poetics of Apocalypse: Federico García Lorca's Poet in New York* (Lewisburg, Pa. and London: Bucknell University Press, 2003), 118.

⁸⁶ Barbara Rose, 'Jasper Johns: The "Tantric Details"', *American Art* 7:4 (1993), 69.

extended passage of cicadas singing, which coincides with the longest section of chordal material heard since the start of the work. These are also not the same long, sustained chords presented earlier in the work, but have a faster harmonic rhythm, changing on each beat of the bar. Track 5, which comprises only cicada sounds, starts toward the end of this section as the quartet drops into silence before returning to a brief passage of five chords in bar 119. The next significant passage of cicada chirping occurs toward the end of track 6, after the sounds of children laughing. Here, starting in bar 160, the cicadas do not usher in soft, diaphanous chordal material. The insects instead accompany a shift toward an angular passage of intermittent and punctuating chords cast in a *fff* dynamic, which, like the material accompanied by the cicadas in tracks 4 and 5, mark a significant change in texture from the general sustained nature of the chordal material heard before. Tracks 9, 10, and 11, all played concurrently and ending in only cicada sounds, affirm the cicadas' chirping as a marker of change. The cicada sounds coincide in bar 287 with the introduction of an ostinato figure in the cello, which underpins sustained chords in the other three instruments. When the cicadas of track 12 enter, the chordal material does not only return to its initial sustained presentation. Instead, the prolonged chords are exaggerated as sonorities are stretched out for between fifteen and twenty-one beats and interrupted by extensive periods of silence. This exaggeration perhaps marks a form of augmentation which cannot be sustained and toward the end of the track, in bar 351, the chords fracture into a hocketing ostinato between the viola and the cello in a *pppp* dynamic.

Cicada appearances	Resultant shift in texture
Track 4	Extended passage of chordal material
Track 5	Silence, passage of five chords
Track 6	Punctuating chords
Tracks 9, 10, 11	Ostinato beneath chordal material
Track 12	Extended passage of chords held between fifteen and twenty-one beats; interjections of silence

Table 1.2: Summary of cicada sounds and resultant textural transformations, *Dancers on a Plane*.

The cicada sounds do not only mark change in the quartet part's chordal material, but evoke for me a broader structural trajectory in the work's soundscape tracks. Returning to the dialectic between the natural and human sounds, it is possible to map an arch structure across the soundscape recordings, which reaches a climax in the sounds of the football match in track 7. I hear in this track the peak of human activity in the recordings, but it also marks a turn toward a steady dissipation of sonic intensity and a receding human presence). Track 8, which follows on directly from the sounds of the football match, returns to the prominent sounds of the woodland kingfisher and the ring-necked dove, and in turn is followed by more distant birdcalls and cicadas in tracks 9, 10, and 11. In track 12, the longest track, there is an even further thinning out of the soundscape material with the human presence only hinted at in the far away cowbell sounds, before lapsing entirely into the sounds of cicadas. With track 13 at the end of the work, the human sounds are distant and barely audible, like a

faded aural memory of a landscape once inhabited. I understand this sense of return to a landscape in which the human has been removed (leaving only a distant trace) as further substantiation for the argument raised earlier regarding the superficial figuration of the subject in the soundscape recordings. That is, the human is not only rendered devoid of subjectivity throughout the work; rather, any subjectivity that might have been borne by the mere presence of the human is systematically erased.

In contrast to the non-teleological process of the additive structure I read in the quartet part, the soundscape recordings do seem to produce a sense of directedness then, with a climax in track 7 and a gradual thinning out of material toward a sense of return in track 13. Yet it is not only the departure from and a return to human sounds that for me engenders the arch structure in the soundscape recordings. Rather, I want to suggest that it is also a departure from and return to the soundscapes' documentation of the literal and its sense of mimesis. Again, this loosening of mimetic representation originates in the cicada sounds. While I do hear a cicada, I also hear the symbolic order in which it comes to represent metamorphosis. With this shift to the symbolic, the cicadas are disassociated from their place in Venda and are transferred to Lorca's poetry or the city of Troy. The cicada sound, by evoking this rich symbolic and historical content, thus can be split from the time and place of the recorded soundscapes that make up the work, perhaps even in a way which is less achievable in, for instance, the sounds of the rural football match. If this is so, then what thus can be heard in tracks 9–12 is a disassociation with the mimetic order provoked by the earlier soundscape recordings, but also a return to the documentation of the literal in track 13's distant voices and worldly sounds such as the turning axle.

ii) Musical Interior

If the soundscape recordings can be interpreted as evoking an arch structure and a sense of directedness, they do not do so in isolation from the quartet part. Indeed, extending the metaphor of these recordings as windows into the world from which the music originates, they can also function as windows back onto the quartet music. That is, in using the structure of the recordings as a lens, I can consider the quartet part in a way that perhaps does not resound so straightforwardly the additive structure I have read in it; it prompts me to read a sense of directedness in the instrumental part too. Read against the soundscape recordings' arch structure, there is a sense of trajectory that emerges in the changes to the chordal material marked by the cicada sounds. It is a trajectory that aims toward a clarification of the quartet's tonal centre. After the soundscape recordings become mimetically loosened from the world with the cicadas at the end of track 12, the soft hocketing ostinato is curtailed by punctuating chords similar to those accompanied by the cicadas of track 6 in bar 160. The chords here, however, are set against the viola's circular bowing figure present at the start of the work, which here sets up a return to the original dance material in bar 405. However, upon its return, the dance material's harmonic construction differs from its earlier presentations, insofar as the leading-note harmonies on D have now been replaced by keynote C harmonies. There is still a sense of shifting between two chords, but the second chord now seems to be based on B \flat . While this might at first suggest that the tonal centre has now shifted down a tone, the B \flat sonority has an E \flat root in the cello, which weakens it as a secondary (or even primary) root. This, along with the fact that the material

here is still drawn from the C-Dorian mode, means that the C-based sonority thus retains its function as the keynote. However, it now no longer shuttles to the leading note harmony, and therefore C, as the only remaining root, is strongly affirmed as the tonal centre.⁸⁷

The dance material ceases in bar 448, and gives way again to sustained chords. The chords here are not as exaggerated or drawn out as those that accompanied track 12, but with the introduction of a D below the F in the cello, there is a sense that this passage perhaps sits tonally between the C-Dorian harmony of the dance material and the F-rooted modal region that have come to be associated with this sustained material. That is, rather than espousing a secondary tonal centre, the sonorities here seem, by virtue of the strong presence of the D, to yearn back to the C-Dorian keynote of the dance material. It is perhaps for this reason that this passage of chordal material has a relatively short presentation, which lasts only until bar 463. What follows, however, is not a return to the dance material. Instead, in bar 465, an apotheosis in the distillation of the tonal centre is achieved when the chordal material is replaced by a melodic line of rising fifths cast in a slow, metrically regular minim rhythm (Example 1.3). This line starts repeatedly from the same C in the first violin, and is harmonised predominantly by intermittent sustained fifths and unisons in the other instruments. Furthermore, there is a soft *hocket* which is introduced in the viola, and drifts, as the tempo periodically decreases, to the cello, which gradually introduces the D leading-tone harmony. The C tonal centre of the work is laid bare, along with the Venda principle of a harmonic language based on fifths

⁸⁷ Indeed, it is not until bar 417 that the D returns as part of a 'walking' motive in the first violin, which is offset by a C in the cello.

and the modal tension produced by the D leading note, which ultimately affirms the C tonal centre again. Yet, strangely perhaps, it is no longer C-Dorian, but what appears to be an unabated passage in C major. Of course, within the context of the C-Dorian centre employed throughout the work, it is possible that the passage here still bears a strong resemblance to the C tonal centre heard at the start of the work. Indeed, the use of the E \sharp and B \sharp that now come to define this passage as C major could be understood to emphasise the intervallic perfect fourths and fifths used in Venda music, rather than tonal markers of the major mode.⁸⁸ In this sense, there is a linear composing out of the vertical principles of Venda harmony. Following this line of argument, I want to suggest that what is heard here thus is a distilled (and emphasised) presentation of the core harmonic and rhythmic principles that underpin the work. It is a presentation in this sense of what I suggest is the work's musical interior, stripped of surface excess.

⁸⁸ This point is further substantiated by the fact that the B \flat is reinstated thirteen bars later in bar 478 as a harmonic pedal tone in the cello.

13

465 ♩ = 132 *Tranquillo*

The musical score consists of four staves. The first staff is in 4/4 time, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second staff is in 4/4 time, starting with a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic. The third staff is in 7/4 time, starting with a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic. The fourth staff is in 2/4 time, starting with a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines.

Example 1.3: Distilled material, *Dancers on a Plane*, bars 465–8.

It is here that I detect the interiority sought by Mzamane and Coetzee; an interiority that is stripped of its worldly connotations of dance and which presents the kind of deep structural principles veiled by the music's surface textures. Of course, the allusion here is still to Venda music, but I want to suggest that it is no longer Venda music as a marker of political bondage. That is, it is no longer Venda music as a figure of the African that is to be reconciled with the European. It is a move toward the universal in Venda music in that it is a presentation of a musical theoretical core that underpins much of Venda music. And interestingly, this process of distillation, which I understand as suggestive of a sense of directedness that should stand in opposition to Venda notions of additive process, is not achieved in the quartet part through the negation of Venda form. Indeed, the idea of Venda form still emerges, when the quartet part is considered on its own, as the additive structure which juxtaposes different surface textures. The turn

toward the interior rather occurs simultaneously as a product of the directedness afforded by the soundscape recordings and the cicadas that act as harbingers of change and metamorphosis. As I interpret it, there thus manifest in *Dancers on a Plane* a turn to the interior as well as a structure of bondage. It is a process that is best summarised in contradictory terms as a reduction of subjectivity through bondage that occurs at the same time as a turn toward a deeper sense of a subjectivity of the interior.

Analysis III: A Coda in the Structure of Crisis

Having argued that there exists in *Dancers on a Plane* both an additive and a directed structure, and that the former is derived from Venda musical practice and that the latter suggests a move toward a post-apartheid sense of interiority, I want to return to Volans's assertion that in 1988 he left behind the aesthetics of reconciliation as a strategy for anti-apartheid music.

Through my analysis of the soundscape recordings, I have shown that it is possible to read an anti-apartheid critique in the work, which has to do with the representation of the Venda Bantustan and the figuration of rural landscape as uninhabited. However, it is not entirely clear that this critique also emerges in the quartet part. Where Volans's earlier works, for instance, used paraphrasing and quotation to suggest a multicultural merging of African and Western aesthetics in defiance of apartheid ideology, the quartet material in *Dancers on a Plane* does not seem to follow a similar strategy. Although suggestive of Venda music in its theoretical construction, I do not read the quartet as an attempt at writing African music per se. Yet this is not to say that there is a clear break here with Volans's earlier work. While it does

not necessarily employ techniques of paraphrasing or quotation, the coda at the end of *Dancers on a Plane* does seem to bear a strong resemblance to his earlier work, and I want to suggest that this connection makes it a productive moment in the piece for considering how the move away from the anti-apartheid aesthetic might be understood here.

Starting in bar 505 and coinciding with the entry of track 13, the coda mostly comprises a series of one-bar long repeated figures (Example 1.4). Unlike the preceding section in which a melodic line built on fifths was heard in the first violin, here the melodic line is eschewed and replaced by a hocket between the first and second violins set against a three-note figure in the viola marked *ricochet* and sustained notes in the cello. The viola's *ricochet* figure, which is perhaps a reduced version of the circular bowing ostinato heard earlier in the piece, grounds the section in the same C-Dorian modal material used throughout the quartet by sounding the D-C stepwise movement indicative of the movement from leading note to keynote in Venda music. However, set against a sustained B \flat in the cello, there is a marked sense of bi-modality, which is affirmed in bar 517 when an F, suggestive of the F-Mixolydian secondary mode, is introduced below the B \flat . Indeed, this sense of bi-modality is maintained until the close of the work, with the last bar sounding a stepwise movement from G to F in the first violin against a B \flat (the fifth below), which on its own might suggest a close in F-Mixolydian, but which is also set against a D-A dyad between the second violin and the cello, suggesting a leading-note harmony in C-Dorian, which in Venda music would reflect the end of a phrase on the keynote C. The coda, then, does not provide a sense of harmonic closure in the way a coda in Western art music might do.

Rather, it points to an ending grounded in the theoretical principles of Venda music used throughout the work.

TRACK 13

14 ♩ = 176

505

ppp *ppp* *ppp* *ppp*

sim.

Example 1.4: Repeated figures in coda, *Dancers on a Plane*, bars 505–8.

While harmonically close to the rest of the work, the coda differs remarkably in terms of texture and form. Instead of drawing on the established chordal or dance-like material from earlier in the piece, the coda comprises small, repeated figures in counterpoint. While perhaps a microcosm of the additive form heard throughout the piece, these figures resemble more closely an additive textural process heard in Volans's earlier *African Paraphrases*. In the fifth dance of the quartet version of *White Man Sleeps*, for instance, one hears the same repetition of one-bar figures which then go on to create the structure of the entire movement (Example 1.5). In this sense, the coda in terms of musical surface seems to reflect this earlier writing more than the additive underlying structure in *Dancers on a Plane*,

which is created through the repetition of larger sections of music rather than single bar fragments. Although mainly differentiated through this shift in texture, the coda also seems to contradict the larger additive structure which the earlier quartet writing followed. As a coda, this section is a structural subdivision often associated with teleological musical designs. As such, the coda strangely aligns with the structure created by the soundscape recordings, rather than the structure produced in the quartet part. Read as partly detached from the quartet part, but also representative of Volans's *African Paraphrases*, I interpret the coda as harking back to the aesthetics of reconciliation of his earlier work and the anti-apartheid sentiment it evoked. It would thus seem that, despite what Volans says about leaving behind references to African music in 1988, the coda in *Dancers on a Plane* suggests a less clean break with his earlier music.

Example 1.5: One-bar figure, *White Man Sleeps*, 'Fifth Dance', bars 1–3.

If the coda does not signal a break with Volans's anti-apartheid music, it does suggest a paradoxical structural close in crisis. The coda uses at once an additive structure on a micro-level to create a sense of subdivision in the global design of the work; it is at once rooted in the harmonic language of the

work and detached from it in its surface construction; it speaks both of a music bound up in the struggle against apartheid and of a music that tries to move beyond this struggle. Cut through with these paradoxes, it perhaps provides the perfect conclusion to a work that simultaneously manifests two seemingly contradictory structures. But that it does provide a satisfactory close is not to say that it resolves its paradoxes. The last bar of the work, which is left suspended between unresolved C and F roots, is indeed emblematic of the ambiguity and contradiction inscribed in the coda. Left suspended, then, in a state of irresolution, the coda articulates in *Dancers on a Plane* the collision of a desire to move beyond an anti-apartheid music of bondage and the achievement of a post-apartheid musical interiority.

The emergence of this paradox shows that an emphatic answer to the question of whether Volans actually managed to break with his own anti-apartheid music is less important than the artistic consequences that arise from an attempt to figure the post-apartheid in music. It allows, for instance, a return to Sachs's critique, which, while perhaps important for setting a critical discourse around the place of anti-apartheid art in motion, was also naive in its offer of a post-apartheid art that freely expresses the human condition. As I read it, the coda in *Dancers on a Plane* suggests instead that no human condition can be entirely free after apartheid; it is a condition that is still intimately bound up with the past. In this sense, *Dancers on a Plane* is perhaps a prescient work for the condition of trauma that would emerge shortly after the first democratic elections in South Africa, the trauma that would only be registered to its full extent by Coetzee in his famous novel on the post-apartheid condition, *Disgrace*, in 1999. And if the coda in the work can be interpreted as suggestive of the paradox of the post-apartheid

condition, then, given the fact that it does so by recalling his earlier work, it reveals that something of this paradox has always been present in Volans's oeuvre. It is akin to the crisis around identity articulated by Volans in his 1986 essay quoted at the start of this chapter in which he speaks of the difficulty of being a white South African who does not identify as European, but who is at the same time not African.⁸⁹ What is different in *Dancers on a Plane*, however, is that apartheid can no longer be used as a stopgap that explains this crisis of identity. In 1994, it seems, this crisis is laid bare and must be negotiated anew against the backdrop of reinvention. Christopher Ballantine calls this negotiation the 'undoing' of the listening subject, and suggests that Volans's work, and especially *Cicada*, offers the post-apartheid listener a blueprint for a future which, by being undone, eschews the artificial demarcations of identity erected by the apartheid state.⁹⁰ If *Cicada* offers a vision of being undone by music through its shifting forms, then the reading of *Dancers on a Plane* I have given here presents a recalcitrant reality, pervaded by contradiction and paradox.

Conclusion

Returning then to Jamal's notion of a critical art emerging after the advent of democracy in the space between anti- and post-apartheid, *Dancers on a Plane* provides us with a substantial example of the type of music that might productively, yet paradoxically, exist in this moment. It would seem, as I suggested before, that, as much as this zone of inbetweenness is a site in

⁸⁹ Volans, 'Of White Africans'.

⁹⁰ Ballantine, 'On Being Undone by Music', 515–6.

which the emancipation of art in South Africa might be realised, it is fraught with contradiction. It is a space realised in the incomplete movement away from the anti-apartheid strategy of documenting the atrocities of oppression and the inability to conceive of a post-apartheid subjectivity that is not marked by apartheid. In *Dancers on a Plane*, traces of the politics and aesthetics of documentation can still be heard in the soundscape recordings and in the notion of bondage produced through the work's various surfaces. At the same time, I read a shift toward an interiority that speaks more of figuring the complex subjectivity in which the post-apartheid conditions of art might be realised. In my reading, however, the piece seems to suggest in the end that these two seemingly contradictory worlds are, and perhaps even have to be, intimately bound up with one another: it is in the necessary collision of these two conceptions of the role of art in democratic South Africa that crisis emerges.

That this collision is significant, however, perhaps speaks of a misconception around the expectations tied up with the end of apartheid more broadly. This misconception holds that the society formed by apartheid would be replaced as a whole with a reinvented one with the advent of democracy, or, as Graham Pechey writing about Coetzee's work puts it, that 'apartheid was an instance of "bad" modernity which the "good" modernity of democracy would in time come to redeem and replace'.⁹¹ This is perhaps the great shortcoming of Sachs's argument for the jettisoning of struggle culture for imagining a new, post-apartheid subjectivity. There seems to be an assumption that when democracy arrives a new world will emerge, freed of

⁹¹ Graham Pechey, 'Coetzee's Purgatorial Africa: The Case Of Disgrace', *Interventions* 4:3 (2002), 374–83.

the trappings and scars of history. The problem, however, is greater than only a naive projection of a future untainted by oppression. It is that there does not seem to emerge a significant shift in the conception of art's role in such a world. Art that documents struggle or art that imagines the emancipated subject are both ultimately forms of the instrumentalisation of art, which require a sense of settlement or what Jamal calls a 'basis of permanence' that negates the sense of liberation envisaged after the fall of apartheid.⁹² If *Dancers on a Plane* is cut through with contradiction and crisis, however, it avoids exactly in its contradictions any basis of permanence or indeed instrumentalisation.

Herein lies the conditions of possibility for music's critical traction in the post-apartheid era. If, as I have now suggested, *Dancers on a Plane* provides an instance of the negotiation of post-apartheid cultural expression that is not bound again by its instrumentalisation, it does so by mediating its context in uncertain terms. Unwittingly, perhaps, it shows us that this type of mediation cannot occur through the mimetic representation of the world. That is, post-apartheid music cannot reveal something of the world around it by producing a literal figuration of it, for to do so, in this context, is again to produce a form of bondage. Nor does total abstraction suffice. The scar tissue is too dense, and history too close. The type of mediation suggested in *Dancers on a Plane* is instead one that rejects ideas of stability and resolution. Again, as a microcosm of its totality, the final bars of the work seem powerfully to allude—because ultimately, there can only be allusion here—to this by the way it closes the piece in ambiguity.

⁹² Jamal, *Predicaments of Culture*, 17.

If mediation does not reside in the creation of certainty or permanence, then how might it be achieved, especially when the object of mediation is no longer the moment of transition, as it is in *Dancers on a Plane*? As modernity rolls on, denying a discernible shift from bad to good, what is it that a musical modernism can tell us, or, what is the thing it is telling us something about? This seems to be the question that could not have been asked in the years around the end of apartheid, and, was replaced by the hopeful call to imagining a world free of oppression. In the following chapters, however, I argue that the post-apartheid era would deliver its own veiled substance to be exposed by modernist music. That is not to say that apartheid drifts from focus. Rather, the music I consider in the rest of this thesis seems acutely responsive to the lingering tissue of the regime, but simultaneously, it is concerned with a more immediate reality thrown up by post-apartheid modernity.

Chapter 2

Mining and Modernity

Subterranean Subjectivities in Clare Loveday's
Johannesburg Etude No. 1 and *City Deep*

On the other side of the interregnum, Graham Pechey's postulation that the 'bad' modernity of apartheid could not simply be replaced by a 'good' post-apartheid modernity quoted in the previous chapter was painfully realised when, on 16 August 2012, thirty-four miners were gunned down by state security forces on the dusty foot of a *koppie* (hilltop) near a small mining town called Marikana.¹ It was the first mass shooting since democracy was inaugurated in South Africa, and the deadliest since the Sharpeville massacre when sixty-nine people were shot dead by police on 21 March 1960. The Marikana massacre, as it came to be known, was the brutal terminus to a strike which started at Marikana platinum mines operated by Lonmin, a London-based mining company, when management failed to meet with mineworkers over their demands for a living wage of R12,500 (£680) per

¹ Pechey, 'Coetzee's Purgatorial Africa', 375.

month and a housing allowance.² The dispute was exacerbated—and ultimately left unprotected—by growing tensions between the established National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU). Political collusion between Lonmin executives and members of the governing ANC who had stakes in the company was also said to have increased pressure on the police force to ‘act decisively’.³ With the noncompliant mineworkers unable to turn to their unions or government for protection, their strike was deemed illegal and paramilitary troops were called on to dismantle it. That miners were shot dead in the process suggests perhaps that corporate capital interests trumped the right to life of the workers, thereby totally subjugating them to capital production.

The subjugation suggested in the harrowing events at Marikana, however, was not confined to one group of mineworkers. Rather, the Marikana massacre marked a breaking point in the growing desperation of a disenfranchised and exploited working class. As Patrick Bond and John S. Saul have argued, the embrace of neoliberal capitalism by the ruling ANC since the early 1990s had left the South African economy fragile, vulnerable to capital flight, and dependent on the sporadic over-inflation of asset

² I.G. Farlam, P.D. Hemraj, and B.R. Tokota, ‘Marikana Commission of Inquiry: Report on Matters of Public, National and International Concern Arising Out of the Tragic Incidents at the Lonmin Mine in Marikana, in the North West Province’, 31 March 2015, accessed 3 January 2019, <https://www.sahrc.org.za/home/21/files/marikana-report-1.pdf>, 50–1.

³ I am referring here to the role of President Cyril Ramaphosa, then member of the National Executive Committee of the ANC, who was a board member at Lonmin at the time. Other Lonmin executives appealed to Ramaphosa to ensure a strong government intervention on the grounds that the trade dispute had deteriorated into criminal activity. Ramaphosa did voice these concerns to the Minister of Police, but was ultimately found not to have been responsible for the escalation in force used by the police against the miners. See *Ibid.*, 438.

prices.⁴ Economic growth was stilted further between 1993 and 2008, eventually leading to a formal recession. The extent of the damage done by the neoliberal approach manifested in the 2009 recovery from the recession when there was a continued rise in mass unemployment, manufacturing stagnation, and the emergence of a trade deficit with London-based financial firms.⁵ Amid these conditions, the existent inequality between the rich and the poor in the country rapidly grew. The dire economic conditions, however, were also frustrated during Jacob Zuma's presidency by a slow rot within trade unions that left workers vulnerable, and which manifested in the split between so-called 'sweetheart' unions (so named because they were seen to be co-opted by employers) and the class-struggle unions within the Congress of Trade Unions (Cosatu).⁶ 'After a long period of below-inflation wage settlements and sub-contracted ultra-cheap labour that left workers far poorer in relative terms in the years after 2000,' Bond and Saul write, 'desperation created a new sense of militancy' among the poor.⁷

Yet the desperation experienced by the poor in 2012 had another dimension to it, one which stems from the initial turn toward neoliberalism in the post-apartheid era. This turn originates in what Ari Sitas called the Grand Compromise⁸ upon which the transition to democracy was brokered. While the full picture of this compromise is complex, at its core it centred on a settlement between the ANC and the National Party which effectively held

⁴ John S. Saul and Patrick Bond, *South Africa – The Present as History: From Mrs Ples to Mandela & Marikana* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2016), 213.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 220–5.

⁷ Ibid., 213.

⁸ Ari Sitas has developed this term in Ari Sitas, *The Mandela Decade 1990-2000: Labour, Culture and Society in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2010).

that a system would be put in place that would limit the liability of those who profited economically under apartheid and that would encourage free-market growth after the transition. That system was neoliberalism,⁹ which was bolstered in the interim constitution by stringent clauses enshrining property rights and government liability, which would make economic redistribution, as Adam Hochschild argued, ‘agonisingly, glacially slow’.¹⁰ Not only would the terms agreed to during these negotiations negate possibilities for non-white South Africans’ economic restitution, but they also contradicted many of the labour movement and socialist principles upon which the struggle was won. These principles were heavily guided by the Freedom Charter, which was adopted by the South African Congress Alliance in 1955 in Kliptown and posited socialist tenets including that mineral and agricultural resources would be nationalised, the state would provide free health care, and that education would be free for all. At the urging of the NUM, the Freedom Charter was adopted in 1987 by Cosatu, which would prove itself to be an integral body for amassing and organising the enormous numbers of workers who through coordinated strike action and stayaways forced the apartheid government to capitulate to negotiations.¹¹

Yet the ‘dreams of a socialist future that many in the ANC/SACP had once professed to harbour’, Saul argues elsewhere, were jettisoned in favour of a

⁹ Patrick Bond, *Elite Transition: From Apartheid to Neoliberalism in South Africa* (London and Sterling, Va.: Pluto Press, 2000).

¹⁰ Adam Hochschild, *Lessons from a Dark Time and Other Essays* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2018), 113.

¹¹ Cosatu was responsible for organising stayaways during the late 1980s, which at their height during June 1988, were observed by up to three million workers. For a detailed history of the role played by Cosatu in ending apartheid, see Jeremy Baskin, *Striking Back: A History of Cosatu* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1991).

neoliberal post-apartheid order.¹² The sections of the Freedom Charter dealing with equality of races and languages were all adopted in the democratic dispensation's constitution; the sections dealing with nationalisation and social responsibility became collateral in the negotiations with industry. 'In the teeth of high expectations arising from the successful struggle against a malignant apartheid state,' writes Saul in 2001, 'a very large percentage of the population—among them many of the most desperately poor in the world—are being sacrificed on the altar of the neoliberal logic of global capitalism'.¹³ His metaphor would eleven years later become horribly literal on the killing grounds outside Marikana, and, with the massacre, the extent to which the ideology of the Freedom Charter (in which the vision of a post-apartheid state had been inscribed) had been abandoned would be brought into brutal relief. Indeed, as Greg Marinovich, one of the foremost writers on the massacre, put it, 'it was as if the mist of the utopia promised in 1994 was blasted clear by the automatic rifles of the paramilitary police units on that autumn afternoon.'¹⁴

Thus what was revealed when the utopian mist cleared was indeed not a good modernity. Rather, it was a modernity bound by the tendrils of neoliberal capitalism and in which the worker was sacrificed to the extractive industry. My concern in this chapter is with two instances of post-apartheid musical modernism's mediation of this modernity. In attempting to look beyond the documentation of the literal problematised in Chapter 1, I will not

¹² John S. Saul, *A Flawed Freedom: Rethinking Southern African Liberation* (London: Pluto Press, 2014), 87.

¹³ John S. Saul, 'Cry for the Beloved Country: The Post-Apartheid Denouement', *Review of African Political Economy* 28:89 (2001), 429.

¹⁴ Marinovich, 'Marikana, One Year Later'.

consider direct musical responses to the massacre.¹⁵ I am instead interested in a form of musical modernism which could be interpreted as engaging with the massacre's conditions of possibility. To this end, I will consider the musical mediation of the subjectivity at the heart of this modernity, which, as I read it, can also be thought of as the figure of African modernity more broadly.

The Figure of African Modernity

There is a grim irony in the fact that, given their role in Cosatu's initial adoption of the Freedom Charter in 1987, it was with the death of mineworkers that the lie of post-apartheid emancipation for the poor was revealed in its totality. Yet this irony also points toward the significant role that miners played in forming the post-apartheid state and South African modernity. Mining has in many ways been a central—although at times under-acknowledged—nexus in the civil and ideological architecture of twentieth-century South Africa: propelled by figures such as Cecil Rhodes, it lay at the heart of the colonial mission of consolidating the country under British rule,¹⁶ while apartheid political thought first gained traction among

¹⁵ Not many of these exist, but *Marikana: The Musical* directed by Aubrey Sekhabi, with music by Mpho Matome, would be an example of such a response. The musical received a mixed response: it won five Naledi Theatre Awards in 2015, but a number of critics pointed out the 'morally and politically dubious' decision to cast the massacre in an upbeat musical. Nduka Mntambo, 'How "Marikana: The Musical" Has Contributed to Cultural Amnesia', *The Conversation*, 17 August 2017, accessed 3 October 2019, <http://theconversation.com/how-marikana-the-musical-has-contributed-to-cultural-amnesia-82651>.

¹⁶ This consolidation took place under the auspices of what has been termed the 'mineral revolution'. See Saul and Bond, *The Present as History*, 28–35.

disenfranchised white Afrikaner miners.¹⁷ The mining industry was also responsible for producing one of the country's most important figures in labour: the migrant worker. New taxes imposed on rural housing during the late nineteenth century forced people who often only engaged in small scale trade and subsistence farming to seek out wages in metropolises.¹⁸ People from villages in what are now known as the Eastern Cape, Lesotho, and KwaZulu-Natal, as well as from Mpumalanga, Limpopo, and the North West moved to centres such as Johannesburg and Kimberly where they took up residence in labour hostels and found employment on the mines. In time, however, migrancy would not only be the fate of those travelling from rural areas, but, with the introduction of first the Natives Land Act in 1913 and later the Group Areas Act of 1950, for any non-white person to be on white-owned land such as the mines was to be a migrant; someone who did not belong, who had no right to ownership, and whose presence was temporary.¹⁹

The migrant worker, however, was not only a position of alienated labour, but became a central cultural figure during the twentieth century. Nowhere

¹⁷ Indeed, the Malan regime, which was responsible for the instigation of apartheid in 1948, emerged in response to the violent oppression of white Afrikaner miners during the Rand revolution in 1922. See Keith Breckenridge, 'Fighting for a White South Africa: White Working-Class Racism and the 1922 Rand Revolt', *South African Historical Journal* 57:1 (2007), 228–43.

¹⁸ While this was certainly not the only reason of the emergence of the migrant worker, taxation, along with other forms of economic manipulation, are often cited as one of the main drivers of migrant labour. See J. S. Crush, Alan Jeeves, and David Yudelman, *South Africa's Labor Empire: A History of Black Migrancy to the Gold Mines* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991). For an overview of the emergence of migrant labour in South Africa, see Peter Delius, 'The History of Migrant Labor in South Africa (1800–2014)', in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*, accessed 10 April 2019, <http://oxfordre.com/africanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.001.0001/acrefore-9780190277734-e-93>.

¹⁹ On the relationship between migrancy and these acts, see William Beinart and Peter Delius, 'The Historical Context and Legacy of the Natives Land Act of 1913', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 40:4 (2014), 667–88.

was this more evident than in the rise of the ‘Jim Comes to Jo’burg’ literary genre, which typically thematised the experience of the black man moving to the white industrial city and becoming embedded in its disorientating order. The genre is named after a popular 1949 film of the same title, but came to retrospectively describe works such as Alan Paton’s 1948 novel, *Cry, The Beloved Country*, and later, Peter Abrahams’s *Mine Boy*, which is referred to as ‘the first modern novel of black South Africa’ by its publishers.²⁰ These novels in many ways paved the way for the so-called ‘Drum generation’ of writers who would further develop and explore the trials and imaginative experiences of the black urban population. Even as themes of urban moral degradation and survival evolved, migrancy, as Stephanie Bosch Santana has shown, remained at the core—both in theme and form—of much of the writing from the 1950s.²¹ That it did is no surprise considering, as Stephen Gray has, that

most of the literature [of this time would] record not only how ‘Jim comes to Joburg’, but why he stays there; we are talking about the saga of several million people who, within a period of only three generations, have transformed their lifestyle—or have had it transformed for them—in previously unimaginable ways. It has been the burden of the ‘Jim Comes to Joburg’ chroniclers to record this, to make the event be felt imaginatively as one of the main experiences of modern South African life.²²

²⁰ Peter Abrahams, *Mine Boy* (London: Heinemann, 1997 [1946]).

²¹ Stephanie Bosch Santana, ‘Migrant Forms: African Parade’s New Literary Geographies’, *Research in African Literatures* 45:3 (2014), 167–87.

²² Stephen Gray, ‘Third World Meets First World: The Theme of “Jim Comes to Joburg” in South African English Fiction’, *Kunapipi* 7:1 (1985), 61–80.

The figure of the migrant worker thus came to represent both a form of labour and a cultural institution that defined South African—and in particular black South African—modernity. It is in the name of this figure that unionisation would be fought for, new forms of labour relations would emerge, and eventually political emancipation would be achieved. Yet it is also in this figure, split from his rural home and familial life, that new moral orders would have to be negotiated, new tensions between traditional, rural culture, and the emergent, urban cultural practices would have to be confronted, and, ultimately, from (and for) whom new aesthetic forms would emerge.

Of course, the migrant worker should not be wholly conflated with the mineworker. Migrant labour during the twentieth century describes a huge array of vocations, many of which stem from the need to service growing migrant populations in the metropolises' adjoining townships. The *shebeen* queen, as portrayed by the Drum-generation writers, is a case in point. She was responsible for brewing beer and running unlicensed drinking establishments, often in her own backyard. *Shebeen* queens were figured as powerful women of authority who also assume a key role in the township's social ordering as carers for both their children and their communities.²³ She too was a figure of migrant labour, bringing knowledge of traditional beer brewing from rural communities and adapting it to the urban quotidian.

²³ See Anne Kelk Mager, *Beer, Sociability, and Masculinity in South Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010). Christopher Ballantine has also written extensively on the role of *shebeen* queens in township musical life. See Christopher Ballantine, *Marabi Nights: Jazz, 'Race' and Society in Early Apartheid South Africa*, 2nd edition (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2012).

That said, the miner has come to represent an important manifestation of the migrant worker, one that is central to the emergence of an African modernity but one whose work in the underground mining shafts and stopes remains hidden from the surface world. It is the miner that Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall refer to when they write that, ‘seen from beneath, the migrant worker [...] is the paradoxical cultural figure of African modernity—the one who is both beneath the city and outside of its orders of visibility’.²⁴ Yet it is also this same figure that becomes hyper-visible during the Marikana strike action, and that upon doing so is shot down. It is therefore the figure of the miner to whom I shall return in my attempt to understand how music might be interpreted as a mediation of this modernity.

Coming to Johannesburg

In this chapter, I will consider how works of musical post-apartheid modernism can be read against the plight of the miner within the contradictory orders of visibility and invisibility brought about by the occupation and traversal of the surface world and the subterranean domain of labour. Nowhere has this tension manifested more clearly or on as great a scale as in the city of Johannesburg. South Africa’s largest conurbation, Johannesburg was built on gold mines after a reef was discovered on the Witwatersrand in 1886. Within only a few decades, the enormous wealth generated from the reef saw the tents of the mining camps replaced by skyscrapers, high-rise apartments, and luxurious shopping districts. A

²⁴ Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall, ‘Writing the World from an African Metropolis’, *Public Culture* 16:3 (2004), 364.

surface of opulence and economic power was established while all the time the miners' bodies were being depredated as they laboured in the world below the city.

For my reading of musical modernism within this context, I turn to the music of Clare Loveday. Her music is deeply invested in thematising various aspects of the city. Where its aggressive, fast-changing morphology is audible in works such as *Blink* (2007), the city's quietude—the settled suburban sprawl, the man-made forestry, and the calm expansiveness—is sonically conjured in *Fever Tree* (2013), *South View* (2013), and *Three Portraits of Intimacy* (2014). *Johannesburg Etude No. 2* (2015), as I have argued elsewhere, sits between these two figurations, offering a view from above that surveys the sense of loss incurred in a city fractured by decentralisation.²⁵ These works, however, mainly portray Johannesburg's surface, offering little perspective on the subterranean and its miners. It is rather in her *Johannesburg Etude No. 1* (2011) and *City Deep* (2018) that the move to below the surface is thematised. These works provide two perspectives on the subterranean: *Johannesburg Etude No. 1*, as I interpret it, is suggestive of a descent into the world of mine shafts and stopes below the city only to reveal, through the work's tonal design, a disjuncture in the section between surface and subterranean; in *City Deep*, named after one of the city's largest mines, I hear the dehumanisation of the mining subject as it is subsumed into a technological state. To be sure, these works do not portray these readings in literal terms: they do not programmatically suggest stories of people descending into the mines or narrate the processes by which a specific miner

²⁵ William Fourie, 'Splinter and Loss: Reading Clare Loveday's *Johannesburg Etude No. 2*', *SAMUS: South African Music Studies* 36/37 (2017), 464–90.

comes to be subsumed by technology. Rather, because of their opacity, these works can be interpreted by me as suggesting traces or affective understandings of aspects of these processes. Even though my readings are processional or narrativistic in structure, they should not be misconstrued as a hidden programme which I am drawing out through analysis. They are readings which I speculatively and provisionally impose in the hope of situating these works within a broader discursive and interpretative field.

I will provide readings of these two works in this chapter, framed by the tension between surface and subterranean. I do so by first turning to Mbembe and Nuttall's theorisation of the subterranean as the site that reveals the nature of the relationship between capital and labour upon which the city is founded.²⁶ This view stands in contrast to traditional readings of Johannesburg, to which I turn shortly, which have often relied heavily on the city's racialised topography and its decentralisation from the 1980s onwards. Shifting from the topographical bird's eye view to the cross-sectional, side-on view reveals another ordering of space which is dominated not only by the difficulties of traversing the city's segregated geography, but by a vertical order in which the labour upon which the city is built is rendered invisible.

I then use this theoretical shift in perspective as a frame of reference through which I interpret the two works mentioned before, arguing first that *Johannesburg Etude No. 1* draws into the subterranean and that in *City Deep* the mining subject, who stands here for the figure of African modernity, is subsumed by structures of the extractive industry. Read through the themes

²⁶ Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall, 'Introduction: Afropolis', in *Johannesburg: The Elusive Metropolis*, ed. Sarah Nuttall and Achille Mbembe (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 1–33.

of subterranean life and the mining industry, the form of dehumanisation to which the mineworker is subjected is also a process whereby they are turned into a technology of the neoliberal economic logic which scripts the post-apartheid modernity which I described in this chapter's introduction. Marikana is the apotheosis of this logic, but its architecture, my interpretation of Loveday's works suggest, stems from strategies of disciplining the migrant worker in the mid-twentieth century. That is, Loveday's works as I read them can be thought of as representing a nexus in which the migrant mineworker, forms of extractive labour, and historical practices of discipline are connected. My analyses of her works will show how this nexus is mediated within the subterranean world where the making technological of the subject occurs most acutely, but also occurs in an otherwise hidden or invisible order. In doing so, I argue that these two compositions can be read as grappling with the post-apartheid condition that allowed for the Marikana miners to be sacrificed on the altar of neoliberalism.

Below Johannesburg

The disorientating and overwhelming pace of Johannesburg's topographical changes has often been foregrounded in critical and artistic geographies of the city. Whether in the unbridled mid-century reconstruction of the inner city or the apartheid restrictions on movement across its surface, the

topographies of the city have been a crucial aspect of its identity.²⁷ The disorientation and alienation of this topography in music was thematised in twentieth-century *isicathamiya* (a choral style that emerged from migrant workers' hostels) while the city's townships, as racially demarcated zones, were crucial sites in the emergences of jazz styles such as *marabi*.²⁸

Yet as much as its topography has come to determine how Johannesburg is understood, there is another crucial aspect of the city that goes missing in these representations: its sectional geography. Johannesburg, after all, stems from the complex network of underground tunnels, mining shafts, and stopes from which the gold that financed the city was extracted. This vertical interest emerges in Christopher Ballantine's research on twentieth-century jazz in the city, although it is left relatively unexplored in comparison to the surface spatial dynamics of the city. Doc Bikitsha, a respondent of Ballantine's, recounts how in listening to recordings from the 1940s, he still hears the effect Johannesburg—as a city built on gold mining—had on the music: 'I cannot miss the mine eeriness in it—in the melody, the rhythm, in its structure, in its entirety'.²⁹ Bikitsha's hearing is less suggestive of a city

²⁷ For critical topographical studies of the city, see Martin J. Murray, *City of Extremes: The Spatial Politics of Johannesburg* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2011) and Lindsay Bremner, *Writing the City into Being: Essays on Johannesburg 1998-2008* (Johannesburg: Fourthwall Books, 2010). For literary responses to these topographical changes and restrictions see Stephen Gray, 'Introduction', in *Bosman's Johannesburg*, ed. Stephen Gray (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 1986), 7–12; Megan Jones, 'Urbanism and Black Mobility in Peter Abrahams's *Mine Boy*', *Journal of South African Studies* 38:1 (2012), 206; Mongane Wally Serote, *Yakhal'inkomo* (Johannesburg: Ad. Donker, 1983).

²⁸ On *isicathamiya* in Johannesburg, see Veit Erlmann, *Nightsong: Performance, Power, and Practice in South Africa* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), esp. 123–4. On the township and *marabi*, see Ballantine, *Marabi Nights*, 33.

²⁹ Ballantine, *Marabi Nights*, 138.

determined by the navigation of its streets. Rather, it digs down to locate the city in terms of its relationship to its own subterranean world.

This shift in perspective—a shift in the view from the city’s surface to that of its underground—has recently gained traction in urban studies. Mbembe and Nuttall’s theorisation of the modern African metropolis has been pivotal in this regard. Writing about the history of Johannesburg, they show, following Keith Beavon,³⁰ that the steep descent of the gold-bearing seams forced miners to sink deep shafts and excavate complex systems of passages and drives shortly after the first mining camps were established on the Witwatersrand. For Mbembe and Nuttall, ‘it is at these deeper levels and in the way the world below interacted with the surface and the edges that the origins of the city as a metropolis are located’.³¹ Locating Johannesburg’s origins within its mining underworld, however, is not only an attempt to reconsider the geography of the city’s history. Rather, they read in the underground mining infrastructure ‘a testimony to the way in which, in the production of this Southern Hemispheric modernity, the world of race and systematized human degradation became part of the calculus of capital and dispossession, technology, labor, and unequal distribution of wealth’.³² That is,

in the case of Johannesburg, the underground is not simply a technological space emptied of social relations. It does not exist only in the abstract realm of instrumentality and efficiency. In fact, it always was

³⁰ Keith Beavon, *Johannesburg: The Making and Shaping of the City* (Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 2004).

³¹ Mbembe and Nuttall, ‘Introduction’, 17.

³² *Ibid.*

a space of suffering and alienation as well as of rebellion and insurrection.³³

That the subterranean world of mining in Johannesburg has not always been viewed as such is a product of the same ideological machinery that carved up the surface of the city in such a way that the black poor and working class would be relegated to the outskirts. Just as the township was a space apart from the city, Mbembe and Nuttall argue that ‘the work of apartheid was to make sure that these lower depths of the city, without which its modernity was unreadable, were made to appear as strangers to the city, apart from the city’.³⁴ Turning toward the underground thus opens the possibilities for a new order, or at least for revealing a pre-existing false order, of visibility. ‘Beneath the visible landscape and the surface of the metropolis,’ write Mbembe and Nuttall, ‘its objects and social relations, are concealed or embedded other orders of visibility, other scripts that are not reducible to the built form, the house facade, or simply the street experience of the metaphorical figure of the flâneur’.³⁵

The agents within these ‘other scripts’ are the migrant mineworkers. Theirs are the bodies of an African modernity rendered invisible by the apartheid state and supplanted by capital’s surface architecture and geography. For sociologists Nick Shepherd and Christian Ernssten, writing on Mbembe and Nuttall’s proposition, it is the ‘army of labour that disappears into the earth and is disgorged at the shift’s end’ and the underground

³³ *Ibid.*, 21.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

infrastructures they occupy that not only form a foundational world, but a ‘reminder of the reality of sweat and toil’ upon which the world above is built.³⁶ ‘If capital achieves its apotheosis in the airy fantasy of the skyscrapers and shopping malls,’ they continue,

then its grounding reality (its deeper reality) remains the sweated labour of the workers on the darkened stopes. It is in this context that they [Mbembe and Nuttall] propose the migrant worker as the exemplary figure of African urbanism and modernity. The vortex of the mines draws in workers from across the subcontinent, and returns them—if it returns them—broken in body and spirit or newly powerful, freighted with new goods and ideas; at any rate transformed, and in turn transforming.³⁷

If the subterranean constitutes the grounding reality of the surface and the mineworkers the labour force upon which capital manifests the built structures of the commodity industry, then these two worlds are intrinsically bound up with one another. Nuttall, writing elsewhere, argues that, ‘in Johannesburg, it is [...] the intertwining of surface and depth—in its historical and psychic senses—that defines the life of the city’.³⁸ That is to say, while the city originates in the subterranean, life in the city must be thought in the interaction between these two strata. ‘Surface and depth exist in a set of relations in which each relies on the existence of the other,’ she

³⁶ Nick Shepherd and Christian Ersten, ‘The World Below: Post-Apartheid Urban Imaginaries and the Bones of the Prestwich Street Dead’, in *Desire Lines: Space, Memory and Identity in the Post-Apartheid City*, ed. Noëleen Murray, Nick Shepherd, and Martin Hall (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 215.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Sarah Nuttall, *Entanglement: Literary and Cultural Reflections on Post-Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2009), 83.

writes, ‘in which they are entwined or enfolded, suggestive of each other, interpenetrating, and separating out at different points’.³⁹ Bremner, departing from her earlier focus on the surface mobility of Johannesburg, acknowledges this entanglement in an article on the political life of rising acid mine water in the city. As mine shafts closed down in the 1980s, the heavy metals and sulphates released in the oxidation minerals such as pyrite leached into the ground water. Since mining operations had ceased, the highly acidic solution that resulted from this leaching would accumulate and rise to the surface. Combined with cyanide effluent released during the process of gold precipitation, this acid mine water steadily crept up until it started decanting into surface water sources in 2002, sparking an ecological (and political) crisis.⁴⁰ For Bremner, the rising levels of acid mine water ‘reorganised surface and depth into a sludgy, contested, fluid continuum, making it impossible to act as if what had formerly been two distinct realms—above and below, [...], the visible and the invisible [...]

—do not belong to the same sphere’.⁴¹

Musical Depth

Reconfiguring the orders of visibility at work in Johannesburg in the ways proposed by authors such as Mbembe and Nuttall opens up the possibility of considering musical representations of the city beyond the topographical discussed before. As Willemien Froneman has argued in her work on music

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Lindsay Bremner, ‘The Political Life of Rising Acid Mine Water’, *Urban Forum* 24:4 (2013), 473.

⁴¹ Ibid., 478.

and borehole drilling in South Africa's arid Karoo region, such a shift takes into account the 'vertical and volumetric alignments between subject and world' allowing a more acute consideration of the relationship between figures such as the migrant mineworker and their environment.⁴² This alignment, however, stands in contrast to general conceptions of verticality and the subject in Western musicological discourse. While metaphors of subjectivity and depth have since the nineteenth century dominated much critical and analytical writing about Western art music,⁴³ they have often acted to simultaneously dislodge the subject from the world through an inward turn.⁴⁴ Holly Watkins has shown that metaphors of depth stemming from nineteenth-century music criticism often are concerned with a turn toward the subjective interior, a digging down into the self through digging down into the deep structure of the piece.⁴⁵ As an analogy for this approach to music, she turns to Friedrich von Hardenberg's (writing as Novalis) novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* in which the protagonist and his mother come upon an old miner telling stories of his expeditions into the subterranean.⁴⁶ It is in the world below, an allegory for the interiority of the subject but also

⁴² Froneman, 'Music and Landscape', 719.

⁴³ This is particularly evident in analytical work informed by or based on Heinrich Schenker's system of analysis. See Holly Watkins, 'From the Mine to the Shrine: The Critical Origins of Musical Depth', *19th-Century Music* 27:3 (2004), 180. Analytical and critical writing that make use of broader methods of structural analysis also use this metaphor. An example of this latter form of work can be found in Adorno's musical criticism, and his notion of structural listening. On the link between subjectivity and structural listening see Richard Leppert, 'Music "Pushed to the Edge of Existence" (Adorno, Listening, and the Question of Hope)', *Cultural Critique* 60 (2005), 92–133.

⁴⁴ There are numerous exceptions of course. J. P. E. Harper-Scott's use of Schenkerian analysis alongside Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, for instance, serves often to resituate the musical subject in the world, albeit through an initial turn inward. See J. P. E. Harper-Scott, *Ideology in Britten's Operas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 175–214.

⁴⁵ Watkins, 'From Mine to Shrine', 181.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 179.

for a zone disconnected from the world proper, that truth can be found. ‘In the solemn, quiet company of the primeval rocks inside nature’s dark and marvellous chambers’, Von Hardenberg writes, ‘it seemed they were equipped to receive heavenly gifts and to be joyfully elevated above the earth and its difficulties.’⁴⁷

While this allegory shows the link between subjectivity and depth in nineteenth-century Western art music, it can also serve as a point at which that same metaphor breaks down in the South African context. The difference emerges in the aural experience of the mine. Revisiting Marikana a year after the massacre, Marinovich descends into the Lonmin mine to document the underground working conditions. He accompanies a group of drill operators as their shift commences.

Bent double, they start their drills and bedlam ensues. An infernal din that drowns out every other sound takes over the cramped stope. Even the rudimentary Fanagalo⁴⁸ is useless, and all human communication recedes to hand signs and the rapid shake of headlamps to attract one another’s attention.

[...]

The psychic shock of [the] noise as it cascades for hours cannot be anticipated. It cannot be imagined. It feels as if one could lose a finger and not notice, so consuming is the constant cacophony and the vibration.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Friedrich von Hardenberg quoted in *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Fanagalo is a pidgin language based primarily on isiZulu, but incorporating English and Afrikaans, developed by miners.

⁴⁹ Marinovich, ‘Marikana, One Year Later’.

Where the mine for Von Hardenberg's miner is a space of quietude, in which the rock face allows for inward reflection and the discovery of the subject, the mine as experienced by the migrant mineworker is a space in which, through sound, all subjectivity is stripped away to such an extent that even the awareness of the body seems compromised. Indeed, interiority seems nugatory in this zone saturated by intense external stimuli. Instead, the world, as the space in which the subject is placed or located, becomes overwhelmingly present; the world seems to supplant the subject. Yet this is not just the world of drilling noise, but extends to the world of the capital production of extractive industries. Noise cascades for hours because miners must reach quotas of rock quantities drilled and blasted.

Metaphors of depth in the South African context thus act to reassert, as Froneman argues, the alignment between subject and world. It is a realignment that occurs in the excessive nature of drilling sounds. Rather than following Western conventions of thought around musical depth as an escape from the world into the interior spaces of the subject, in this chapter I will use the vertical occasioned by the migrant mineworker's sonic experience (and which aligns subject and world) as a lens for reading Loveday's pieces. That is, within the context of mining in South Africa that I have sketched briefly here, a context Loveday's works are situated within by virtue both of their historical position and by the authorial interventions such as the pieces' accompanying composer's notes and titles, I will interpret register and other musical parameters such as pitch, rhythm, and indeed, timbre, in terms of the subterranean economy of extraction. Of course, designations such as high and low, surface and depth, driving rhythms and stasis do not universally index issues of mining, but, in these two works, they can serve as useful

discursive tools for reading these works within the context of post-apartheid modernity.

Johannesburg Etude No. 1

Johannesburg Etude No. 1 was commissioned in 2010 by pianist Jill Richards.⁵⁰ The piece was completed in 2011 and received its premiere on 23 October 2012 at the annual Potchefstroom new music festival at North-West University. ‘The etude’, reads the accompanying composer’s note, ‘explores the full range of the piano, from highest to lowest and its outer extremities, in this celebration of the relentless and creative energy of Johannesburg’.⁵¹ Indeed, the whole range of the piano is used in the piece: it starts in a relatively high register (predominately between E4 and E6) that splits into three registers (around B1, B3, and B5), moving to the outer edges of the piano (A0 and B8) before closing in a low register (between E2 and A0). The piece hurtles through these registers in a near- ceaseless semiquaver rhythm offset by irregular metric changes. In one way, I read form as generated on the musical surface (shown in the upper line of Figure 2.1). In the first part of the work (bars 1–185), alternating dyads comprising intervals of fourths and fifths are set to a semiquaver rhythm, moving to a thinner texture of single notes in the middle section (bars 186–264), and closing again with alternating dyads in the final section of the work (bars 265–328).

⁵⁰ The work was titled *It* at the time of commission, but was subsequently renamed. ‘Clare Loveday: Compositions’, *Clare Loveday: Composer*, accessed 1 March 2019, <http://clareloveday.co.za/compositions.html>. I draw the historical details of the piece from an interview I conducted with the composer in 2015. Clare Loveday, interview with the author, 17 September 2015.

⁵¹ Clare Loveday, *Johannesburg Etude No. 1*, unpublished score, 2012, i.

Though the musical surface can be read as unfolding in three distinct parts, the work is cast in four modal regions (shown in the bottom line of Figure 2.1): it starts in B-Mixolydian (bars 1–181) before moving to B-Phrygian (bars 197–260), followed by a return to B-Mixolydian (enharmonically written as D \flat Aeolian) (bars 265–312), and ending again in B-Phrygian (bars 322–28).⁵² Coalescing these sections is the pitch class B (spelt enharmonically in the third section as C \flat) to which momentarily divergent melodic and harmonic lines constantly return. While the composer’s note draws attention to the etude’s musical parameters, it also suggests that the piece responds in some way to the ‘physical and creative forces’ inherent to Johannesburg. Based on the following analysis, I interpret these ‘forces’ as tensions that arise in the difference between the surface form and the form produced by the harmonic design below. In the end, however, I read the descent in register coupled with the return of the Phrygian mode as suggestive of a terminus in the subterranean.

Dyadic texture, high register Bars 1–185	Single-note texture, High and low register Bars 186–264	Dyadic texture, low register Bars 265–328	
B-Mixolydian Bars 1–181	B-Phrygian Bars 197–260	B-Mixolydian Bars 265–312	B-Phrygian Bars 322– 328

Figure 2.1: Double structure of *Johannesburg Etude No. 1*.

⁵² Tonally indeterminate areas act as modulatory material between these modal regions.

i) Surface Register

Read against the composer's note, the relentless energy of Johannesburg seems to emerge in the etude in the continuous semiquaver rhythm that pervades the work's surface. Surface motion is also emphasised by the alternating dyads (in the first and the last section) and the repetitive single notes (in the middle section), which further create a sense of propulsion. In the opening of the piece, alternating fifths and fourths mark the first 34 bars with brief interjections thereafter of intervals of a sixth, second, and very rarely a third. Cast in the upper register, I hear here the glistening sounds of the city's fleeting 'architecture of light and advertising'.⁵³ In this sense, the opening of the work still resounds the surface dynamics of Johannesburg.

In bar 153 the first single note is heard, though it is still alternated with a dyad. The use of single notes and dyads in almost equal measure continues until bar 185 when the first consecutively repeated notes are heard alone in the form of three D \flat , marking the start of the middle section of the work. A central line of a repeating B is interrupted by momentary leaps into registers two octaves below and above it before splitting into two lines, which move climactically toward the outermost registers of the piano. While alternating dyads create a sense of propulsion in the first section of the work, smaller stepwise movements, offset by two-octave leaps, foster dynamism amid the single-note lines in the second part of the work (Example 2.1).

To be sure, the thinner texture of these lines and the prominence of successively repeated notes engender for me a different sense of dynamism,

⁵³ Mbembe and Nuttall, 'Introduction', 21.

one that seems more fragile, if not erratic. I hear in these errant lines the uncertain precipice between surface and subterranean, a partitioning that does not settle into the clear realities of above or below. This sense of errancy and precipice is exacerbated by the end of the section when in bar 248 the repeated B drifts into the extremes of the high and low registers (Example 2.2). Here, the literal edge of the piano is brought into focus, but as much as edge and precipice is evoked in this way, the edges, with their connotations of high and low, also can be understood as an invocation of above and below. What makes it fragile and precarious, however, is the missing middle register: it is an excursion to the edge with none of the certainty provided by a clear partition between above and below.

The image shows a musical score for Example 2.1, consisting of four systems of music. Each system has a treble clef staff (right hand) and a bass clef staff (left hand). The time signature is 7/8. The first system starts at bar 198 and ends at bar 200. The second system starts at bar 201 and ends at bar 203. The third system starts at bar 204 and ends at bar 206. The fourth system starts at bar 208 and ends at bar 211. The melody in the right hand is a series of eighth notes, with some notes marked with 'l.h.' and 'r.h.'. The bass line consists of a series of eighth notes, with some notes marked with 'l.h.' and 'r.h.'.

Example 2.1: Single-note dynamism, *Johannesburg Etude No. 1*, bars 198–211.

Example 2.2: Outer limits of register, *Johannesburg Etude No. 1*, bars 248–59.

The sense of fragility fostered in the extremes of register in the middle section is, however, revoked in the last section of the work with the return of the dyadic texture. While alternating dyads mark the start of the final section of the etude, they briefly give way in bars 292–315 to stepwise and arpeggiated lines in fourths or fifths before being reinstated, now in the piano’s low register, for the close of the piece. Here the world below the city emerges. Yet it is not necessarily a moment of arrival occasioned, for instance, cadentially or by tonal design.⁵⁴ It is through a rhythmically propelled modulation in register that there is a movement down into the subterranean.

⁵⁴ With the exception of the two breaks mentioned above, there are no clear, tonally determined cadential moments in the piece.

Although the rhythmic and intervallic material of the etude generates for me a sense of drive into the subterranean, it is not a smooth trajectory across the surface of the work. Rather, I hear what Martin J. Murray identifies as the ‘dysrhythmic’ lateral development of post-apartheid Johannesburg,⁵⁵ particularly in the etude’s irregular metre, abrupt textural modulations, and registral fragmentation. Throughout the work, there is an unpatterned change in metre. Metric groupings range between two and eight quaver beats, with irregular groupings of five or seven being the most common. The irregularity and frequency of these changes (occurring in almost every bar) does not only create a sense of metric flux, but also serves to interrupt any developing metric patterns. This can be heard, for instance, between bars 122 and 127 (Example 2.3) where a figure consisting of a short rising line of dyads occurs four times. Metric regularity is foreclosed when the metre here shifts in no discernible pattern between 8/8, 4/8, 6/8, 7/8, and 5/8.

The image shows a musical score for two staves, numbered 122 and 125. The music is written in a complex, irregular metre, with time signatures changing frequently between 8/8, 4/8, 6/8, 7/8, and 5/8. The notation includes various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Hand labels 'rh' (right hand) and 'lh' (left hand) are placed above the notes to indicate which hand plays them. Dynamic markings such as 'ff' (fortissimo) and 'L' (piano) are also present. The score illustrates a 'rising dyad' figure that repeats four times across the bars.

Example 2.3: Rising dyads, *Johannesburg Etude No. 1*, bars 122–7.

Unlike the foreclosure of regularity caused by the rapid metric shifts, texture and register condition a less acute sense of transformation in the first part of the work. As noted before, there is a progressive thinning out of

⁵⁵ Murray, *City of Extremes*, 85.

texture that starts in bar 153, which lasts until the dyadic material of the opening is reduced to single-note material in bar 185. This texture is maintained until bar 264. The initial dyadic texture returns here, but with a notably different feel. Despite the fact that the dyadic texture is ostensibly the same as that of the opening section, its low-register incarnation makes it harder to discern individual pitches, and creates a sense that the music has become denser. The change here is also sudden, moving in the space of a bar from the fragile, thin texture of the material at the end of the middle section to the far more compact material that marks the last section. The density of the material further enforced by its *f* dynamic marking creates a sense of aural saturation which I understand as symbolically close to Marinovich's sonic experience of the Lonmin mine. Yet far from offering a uniformly saturated register throughout the last section, abrupt leaps into the high register from bar 312 to 322 disrupt any textural consistency that may occur here. It is almost as if something of the transition between surface and subterranean has remained, suggesting a connection between the two realms.

ii) Tonal underworld

Though the etude's rhythmic, textural, and registral aspects relay a sense of propulsion and jagged structural descent, its tonal design simultaneously—and paradoxically—offers a reading resistant to the dysrhythmic surface. The etude is based on two different modes (Mixolydian and Phrygian), both centred on the pitch class B. For the first 58 bars of the piece there is a B₅ in the alternating dyadic line's upper part. Yet despite its overwhelming occurrence at the start of the etude, the fact that the B is the lower interval of

the upper dyad (effectively situating it in the middle voice) obscures its presence to a certain extent. Furthermore, I understand its position here as bound up with the upper note of the lower dyad often only a third apart, making it more opaque (Example 2.4). It is only when the upper dyad inverts in bar 15 that the B, now in the upper voice, is emphasised for the first time. In bar 59 the B in the upper and lower dyad shifts down a whole tone to A, reverting in the next bar to B again. This type of momentary drift and return occurs for the remainder of the first section, but, interestingly, it is only in bar 122 that the B takes on a root function. Here, a brief rising line interrupts the alternating dyad material, and it does so by starting from B₃, which is the lowest note heard up until this point.

The image shows two staves of musical notation for piano. The top staff is labeled 'Piano' and begins with a dynamic marking 'f'. The music consists of a series of dyads (two-note chords) in a 7/8 time signature. The notes are primarily B and A, with some chromatic alterations. The bottom staff continues the pattern, starting with a measure number '5'. The notation includes various rhythmic values and accidentals, creating a dense, textured sound.

Example 2.4: Veiled middle voice, *Johannesburg Etude No. 1*, bars 1–8.

Toward the end of the first section, there is a brief modulation that occurs when the B moves down again a whole tone to A in bar 182, after which it returns for two bars before shifting to B_b. Coupled with the textural thinning that marks the shift to the middle section, the loosening of the B's prominence suggests that the following section might be grounded in a different pitch class. However, this insinuation is checked almost as soon as it occurs when the B_b returns to B in bar 197, via A in bar 195. Far from continuing the ambiguous trajectory set up at the end of the first section, the

middle section of the etude, now in B-Phrygian, completely disambiguates the centrality of the B. Here, the B is repetitively hammered out in the single-note lines, with only a few diversions from it. Furthermore, there is a downward movement of a perfect fifth in the bass from F# to B that reoccurs between bars 199 and 214 (respelled later as Gb to B), which reaffirms the B in the bass as well. Approaching the end of the middle section, during the climatic excursion to the outermost registers, the assertive centring of the B pitch class diminishes slightly. While the note is maintained in the upper register, it is offset by a repeated A in the lower register. Instead of creating a directional, modulatory effect similar to the one heard at the end of the first section of the work, the A might be better understood here as having a destabilising effect that compounds the sense of fragility brought on by the thinning texture, which evades resolution when the middle section closes on a sharp downward line from B5 to D1.

A half-step descent then shifts the Phrygian region down to what first reads as a Db, Aeolian mode in bar 265, initiating the final section of the etude. However, here the B, couched again in the middle voice of the same alternating dyadic texture heard during the opening of the work, returns again, although it is now sounded four octaves lower and enharmonically respelled as Cb. The prevalence of the B (Cb) soon makes it clear that the piece has indeed return to a Mixolydian mode, rather than an Aeolian mode. However, rather than closing the work in the Mixolydian mode, I understand the G-D dyad introduced in bar 318 in the high register as setting off a movement back to B-Phrygian via passages containing pitch classes common to both B-Mixolydian and B-Phrygian (B, E, F#, and A). B-Phrygian is

confirmed in the final six bars of the work with a B minor seventh chord split between the upper and lower voices.

The specific work that I understand the B tonal centre to do in the etude is to act as a gravitational constant against the transformational, fleeting rhythmic, textural, and registral material. This is apparent in the first and the last section of the work where the irregular metre offsets the hurtling semiquaver rhythm. In contrast, the B pitch class remains static, limiting the possibility for tonal movement. Similarly, the constant reversion to the B tonal centre after the modulatory passages accompanying the textural shifts in the work suggests not only a curtailment of tonal development, but also an inhibitor of a fuller sense of transformation between these sections. That is, the dramatic changes in texture are constantly underpinned (or even undermined) by a rootedness in the pitch class B. Yet in constantly returning to this pitch class, there also emerges for me two different formal strategies in the work, one at the level of register and the other at the level of tonal design. In the case of the former, I hear a linear trajectory broadly charting a course from the high register into the low register, via a fragmentation of register in the middle section. In the latter, I hear a cyclical strategy in the presentation and return of the B-Mixolydian and Phrygian modes. I understand the difference here as the difference between surface and subterranean as it manifests in Johannesburg. And even though these two worlds are connected, there is a constant, almost ontological pull to the world below represented for me by the subterranean B tonal centre.

My understanding of the etude's tonal design is further supported by the descent in its register which quite literally moves down into the lowest reaches of the piano. Moving from high to low, or surface to subterranean,

there is for me a movement in the etude down a sectional view of the city, rather than across its topography carved out by streets, buildings, geological ridges, rivers, or urban forests. I thus read the etude prompting a rotation in perspective, twisting the city around an axis located in the stopes and shafts of the gold mines. Thinking back to Froneman's theoretical understanding of depth, this turn in perspective could represent the vertical alignment of subject and world. Yet I find it difficult to locate the subject of this subterranean world in the work. Perhaps the subject in *Johannesburg Etude No. 1* is not necessarily the mineworker that descends into the mine. Such a reading would only account for the transformation of register in the work, which charts a course that could be analogous to that of the mineworker descending underground. Such a reading, however, does not account for the way that this registral descent is bound by the restrictive cyclical tonal design.

To account for the coterminous nature of the cyclical and linear structural designs of the work, I want to suggest that the subject here is the very interconnectedness—if not the impossibility of separation—between surface and subterranean, rather than the figure of the mineworker. Read in this way, the work resounds for me a condition of possibility for the city in that, as a city etude, it portrays Johannesburg as a manifestation of the intertwined worlds of surface and subterranean. It is in this sense that the work reflects its title: it is a study of Johannesburg, which proposes the city's founding conditions and extrapolates on the creative forces to which these give rise. Yet as such, it is also a somewhat alienated rendering of the city, one that is not necessarily inhabited and one in which the figure upon whose

labour the complex relationships between above and below are built is curiously absent.

City Deep

If the figure of the mineworker is missing in *Johannesburg Etude No. 1*, it emerges clearly in *City Deep*. Commissioned as part of the Sounding Cities project,⁵⁶ the work was premiered by Luke Newby (clarinet) and Naomi Sullivan (baritone saxophone) on 16 August 2018 at the Centre for the Less Good Idea in Johannesburg where it was accompanied by a film by Nandipha Mntambo.⁵⁷ The work draws its title from one of the city's oldest deep-level mines. City Deep started operations around 1910⁵⁸ and closed its shafts in the late 1970s.⁵⁹ During this period, the mine became infamous as a site where mineworkers were subjected to heat tests in an attempt to condition them to better resist the extreme temperatures of deep-level mining.⁶⁰ The mine was also the site of experiments in the covert disciplining of the migrant labour

⁵⁶ This was a collaborative initiative between composers and performers in Johannesburg and Birmingham that took place in 2018. The aim of the project was to produce concerts of music that responded to these two cities. 'Sounding Cities', *Sounding Cities*, accessed 20 January 2019, <https://www.soundingcities.com/>.

⁵⁷ The Centre for the Less Good Idea is an experimental arts centre started by William Kentridge. The centre is housed in the Arts on Main complex in Maboneng, a development area on the eastern fringe of Johannesburg's central business district. See Laurice Taitz, 'Kentridge's Idea Lights Up Jo'burg', *The M&G Online*, 28 February 2017, accessed 20 January 2019, <https://mg.co.za/article/2017-02-28-00-kentridges-idea-lights-up-joburg/>.

⁵⁸ It is likely that City Deep started operating before this date, but the first mention of deep-level operations appears to be in 1910. Financial Observer, 'Our Letter from the Stock Exchange', *The Academy*, 22 October 1910, 404.

⁵⁹ Claire Benit-Gbaffou and Malachia Mathoho, 'A Case Study of Participation in the City Deep Hostel Redevelopment' (Johannesburg: Planact, 2010), 4.

⁶⁰ One such experiment is written up in J. S. Weiner, 'Observations on the Working Ability of Bantu Mineworkers with Reference to Acclimatization to Hot Humid Conditions', *British Journal of Industrial Medicine* 7 (1950), 17–26.

force through arranging the workers compound in a panoptic configuration.⁶¹ Like Marinovich's description of the Lonmin mine, the history of City Deep stands in stark contrast to the romanticised underground space in Von Hardenberg. Unlike the cool interiority of his rock surfaces, City Deep would have been a mine which expelled temperatures in the region of 60°C and the lack of efficient ventilation would have destroyed the mineworker's body.⁶²

Loveday makes reference to the mine in the composer's note accompanying the piece.

City Deep is one of the largest and deepest mines on the Witwatersrand. Above the scarring layers of the mine shafts that forever chase the reef of gold deeper and deeper underground lies the enormous African metropolis of Johannesburg. It's a city of boom and bust, wealth and desperate hardship, within which the constantly mobile population negotiates its way, seeking human connection and moments of respite in the sharp angles of this fast-changing city.⁶³

This note is far more extensive than the one accompanying *Johannesburg Etude No. 1*. Where the etude's note only mentioned the 'forces' generated by the city, here the human subject is brought into focus. The note alludes to this figure in relation to the city's racing topography ('the sharp angles of this fast-changing city'), but drawing on the following analysis, I interpret the

⁶¹ Although this design would become the norm for mining compounds in the 1940s, City Deep used this method as early as 1914. Jonathan Crush, 'Scripting the Compound: Power and Space in the South African Mining Industry', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 12:3 (1994), 309.

⁶² M.J. Martinson, 'Heat Stress in Witwatersrand Gold Mines', *Journal of Occupational Accidents* 1:2 (1977), 171–93.

⁶³ Clare Loveday, *City Deep*, unpublished score, 2018, 2.

work as resounding the process whereby the mining subject is subsumed into a form of dehumanised technology. The process is one of depletion which, I argue, is charted across a brief introduction and five ensuing sections of the piece (summarised in Table 2.1), separated by structural breaks marked by contrasts in expression. The premise of my reading is that the mining subject can be identified as the singular scale upon which the work is based, which is divided into four pitch-class sets that are each eventually emptied of pitch content over the course of the work. There is no programmatic link between the scale and the desolation of the miner per se, but the indication, I would argue, of the ‘human population’ in the composer’s note, framed by the title of the work, prompts a reading that seeks out a form of mining subjectivity in the work. If this subjectivity is then understood as a singular entity, even if composed of many individual bodies, then it could be speculatively understood as represented by the scale that underpins the work’s content and which has a similar collective function. Yet relating the scale to the figure of the mineworker is also contingent upon the way in which the former is treated throughout the piece, on which I will expatiate in the analysis below, and the way this treatment becomes an analogue for the treatment of the mining subjectivity as a figure of labour. Over the course of the piece, this scale is systematically reduced until the pitches themselves dissolve into the mechanical and unpitched sounds of the instruments’ keys and airflows, suggesting a process by which the miner is both desolated in the process of mining and becomes a form of technology in the extractive industry.

Introduction and A	B	C	D	E
1–77	78–102	103–184	185–290	291–363

Table 2.1: Formal division, *City Deep*.

i) Pitch Material

The pitch content of the entire work is drawn from a single scale shown in Figure 2.2.⁶⁴ While the scale does appear in its totality in section D, it can be understood as the generative source for the work’s pitch content. This is revealed when the pitch material of the work is reduced to a single prime form set.⁶⁵ As it is presented in the work, this single set, however, is broken up to produce four main pitch-class sets.⁶⁶ The first, shown in Figure 2.3, is heard in the clarinet in the introduction, and can be reduced to the prime form (labelled P1) P(0 2 6). The second (Figure 2.4, labelled P2) is presented against the first by the baritone saxophone in the piece’s opening, and can be

⁶⁴ The composer initially pointed this out to me, and I was able to corroborate it in my analysis. Clare Loveday, email to the author, 21 January 2019.

⁶⁵ I use the term ‘prime form’ in the sense that Allen Forte used it originally as an ordered form with the first element set to 0 and the set compacted to the left. Although this formulation was traditionally used to describe more abstract base sets in serial music (it resembles Schoenberg’s *Grundesgestalt*), it is useful here for the way it shows the equivalence suggested by the work’s generative set, but removes issues of transposition and ordering which make sets difficult to identify. For Forte’s idea of prime forms, see Allen Forte, *The Structure of Atonal Music* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 5.

⁶⁶ That I consider the piece in terms of pitch-class sets might be misconstrued as an attempt on my part to produce a pitch-class set analysis of the work. Conducting such an analysis in its fullest implications is, however, not my intention here. While such an analysis would be possible, the relative simplicity of the pitch-class set relationships in the piece would yield little of interest in these terms. Rather, I simply use pitch-class sets here to map out the various materials in the work to facilitate my interpretative discussion.

reduced to P(0 2 5). The third is contained in the opening motive of A (Figure 2.5, labelled P3) and is represented in prime form as P(0 1 3), which, when taken with the rest of the motive produces the fourth set (Figure 2.6, labelled P3a), P(0 1 3 4). P3 is properly speaking a subset of P3a, but, as I will show, the former comes to gain a greater presence, seemingly unlinked to the latter, in the work, and therefore justifies its semi-autonomous designation. These four sets are derived from the ordered form of the original scale in a complex way, which I map in Figure 2.7. P1 is derived from the first, second, and fifth pitch classes (where 4 is understood as the inverse of 2). P2 can be derived if the third, sixth, and eighth pitch classes are transposed down three semitones (4 is again taken as the inverse of 2). P3 and P3a make up the first pitch classes of the ordered form of the original scale. When mapped as such, it shows that together, P1, P2, P3, and P3a make up the original scale.

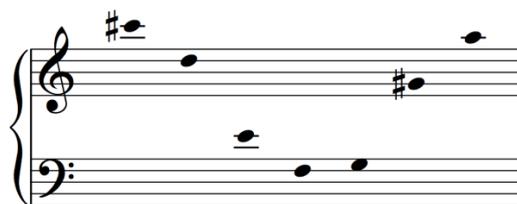


Figure 2.2: Original scale for *City Deep*.

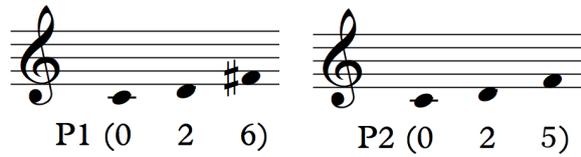


Figure 2.3: P1 set.

Figure 2.4: P2 set.

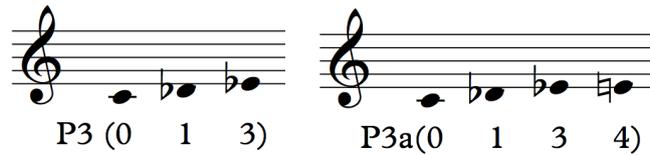


Figure 2.5: P3 set.

Figure 2.6: P3a set.

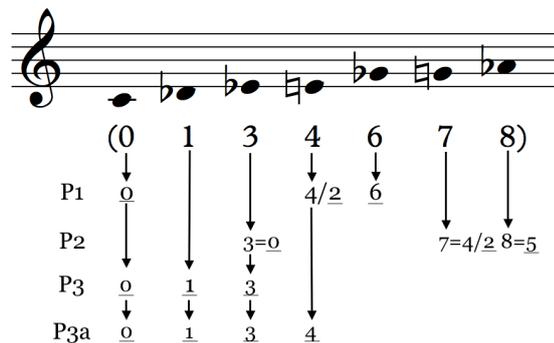


Figure 2.7: Interval content of original scale.

Despite being derived from the original scale, the four sets are used as four different pitch-class motives in the work. That is, I understand these sets as producing their own identity, with only P3 and P3a being bound up with one another given their shared interval content. This strategy of differentiation occurs from the outset of the work, where, as shown in Example 2.5, P1 and P2 are presented respectively in the clarinet and saxophone, with P3a and P3

presented in the saxophone in bar 2. P3 and P3a make up the main material of section A and is heard in a driving, angular line in the saxophone. The sounding of these two sets in the low register of the saxophone, in contrast to the high-register runs of bar 1's introduction, suggests a plunge into the subterranean from the start of the work. Against this driving line, and emphasising the below/above division, the clarinet plays arpeggiated runs using predominately P2 material that act as flowing interjections in the high register during moments of cadential respite.

The first of these interjections (Example 2.6) shows, however, that although the four pitch-class sets appear at first as discrete musical units, their origin in a single scale allows for considerable interconnectedness. That is, their interconnectedness presents for me a sense of a singular subject negotiating the subterranean world. In bar 16, for instance, the clarinet presents an arpeggiated run that starts with P2 but that transforms into P1 just before its apex, which it maintains for the descent. Yet similar transformations do not occur again until the end of section A. Starting in bar 72, for instance, a figure in the clarinet is heard which comprises two P3 sets followed by a P2 set, each overlapping by a single pitch, and framed within the first pitch class of the first set (F) (Example 2.7). The P2 set is then echoed in the saxophone while including the F, which is properly part of the first P3 set, is heard in the clarinet. Section A then ends with a figure in the clarinet and saxophone that superimposes P2 and P3, again perhaps emphasising the singularity of the subject in the mine depths.

P1

Cl. *p*

P2 *ff*

Bari sax

ff P3

2 ♩ = 168 aggressive, rhythmic

Bari

P3a *ff*

Example 2.5: Four opening pitch-class sets, *City Deep*, bars 1–7.

15

Cl. *p*

P2

P1

Bari *p*

Example 2.6: P1 and P2 interjections, *City Deep*, bars 15–16.

Example 2.7: P2 and P3 combinations, *City Deep*, bars 72–73.

Where a driving line based on the P3 set is emphasised in section A, the focus is shifted to the ethereal P1 and P2 arpeggiated runs in section B. Here, in a marginally slower tempo, and marked ‘light, gentle’, the P3 material in the saxophone is stretched out and fragmented. The arpeggiated runs in the clarinet, which earlier functioned as interjections, now is heard above the P3 material creating a sense of vertical expanse. I do not, however, read this sense of the vertical as a movement out of the depths of the mine. Rather, it serves for me as an unfulfilled suggestion of space that is negated by the P3 set, which, with its anchor tone in the lower voice, constantly pulls the material back down into the world below.

Yet there are also for me the first hints of a process of erosion in this section. While Example 2.8, the opening of B starting in bar 78, shows overlaps in the pitch-class sets akin to those heard in A, it also shows the fragmentation of the P3 set in the lower voice. The saxophone starts with a rhythmically interrupted rendition of this set with the clarinet playing an ascending arpeggiation that starts on P2 but uses P1 for its last three notes. In bar 79, the P2 set is echoed in the saxophone, but the last two notes of this

figure also act to complete a P3 set in the following bar when the clarinet plays two descending lines of the P1 set. This same process is heard throughout the section until the P3 material in the saxophone completely dissipates (erodes) and the descending arpeggiations of the P2 set in the clarinet are all that remain.

The musical score shows two staves: Clarinet (Cl.) and Bari saxophone. The Clarinet part starts with a rest, followed by a descending arpeggiation labeled P2, then another descending arpeggiation labeled P1, and finally a long descending arpeggiation labeled P1. The Bari part starts with a descending arpeggiation labeled P3, followed by another descending arpeggiation labeled P2, and finally a descending arpeggiation labeled P3. Dynamics include piano (p) and fortissimo (f). The tempo is marked as 152 bpm and the expression is 'light, gentle'.

Example 2.8: Opening bars of section B, *City Deep*, bars 78–82.

Yet rather than it being jettisoned, the P3 set returns to almost exclusively make up the material of section C, which reverts to the tempo and expression markings of section A. With its driving tempo and the downward motion of the lower anchor tone, this section suggests for me again the concentrated situating in the subterranean evoked in the first part of the work. Unlike the opening, however, transpositions of the P3 set now appear between voices. At the start of section C in bar 104, two permutations of the P3 set are heard. A complete set starting on E constitutes the first three notes in the saxophone. The second permutation can be heard as a P3 set starting on F, the second note in the saxophone line, which is completed in both the saxophone and clarinet parts. In bar 106, a third permutation is added, starting on G in the clarinet (Example 2.9). Not only are sets now shared between the voices, but the earlier approach of texturally offsetting the two lines is replaced by

rhythmical unison later in the section, which more acutely shifts the focus to the singularity of the P3 set. Thus what is heard here is a tight contraction into the P3 set as a kind of focusing in on the subject, but also as the start of a subtractive process in which tonal excess is stripped away. Coupled with the fragmentation of section B, the process of subtraction in section C affirms for me the desolating course upon which the mining subject has been set since entering the subterranean world in section A. Indeed, what was earlier heard perhaps as the P3 set's dialectical others, P1 and P2, seem to have been all but erased in this section.

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Clarinet (Cl.) and Baritone (Bari). The score is for bars 104-6 of a piece. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 168. The dynamics are marked as *ff* (fortissimo). The music is described as "104 aggressive, rhythmic". The P3 set is circled in both staves. The Cl. staff has a treble clef and the Bari staff has a bass clef. The P3 set is circled in both staves, showing interlocking permutations of the set.

Example 2.9: Interlocking permutations of P3, *City Deep*, bars 104–6.

Continuing then the trajectory of subtraction, section D presents for the first time the scale from which the work's four pitch-class sets are drawn. There is a shift here back to the ethereal texture of section B, which is now compounded through the use of soft, sustained multiphonic chords in the saxophone. Above these chords, the arpeggiated runs in the clarinet that marked section B are heard again. Yet unlike this previous section, which used an intervallically dense and compounded scale, here the arpeggiated run is sparse and fragments with each iteration. After an initial multiphonic

chord in the saxophone, the first iteration of the original scale is heard (Example 2.10). This is followed by sets, which, while maintaining the descending-ascending shape, are only fragments of the original scale. I interpret the presentation of this material here as a distillation of the work's tonal subject. Yet, rather than representing a stable or rooted subjectivity (which might have been the case if the subterranean was the locus of the kind of inner subjectivity proposed by Von Hardenberg's miner), the subjectivity here is fragile, and intimately bound up with the worldly process of extraction.

Indeed, the process of subtraction or distillation which reveals this subject does not stop once the original scale is heard. As the subject erodes even further, desolation proper manifests. I hear this process in the fragmentation that unfolds in the rest of section D. In the first eight bars of this section (bars 185–192), fewer notes of the original scale are heard until, in bar 192, there are only two P₃ sets (which share the note E) before the next multiphonic chord is sounded. This process of subtraction is pushed even further in the next phrase when a two-note, semitone figure is emphasised for the first time. As a subset of P₃, it perhaps resounds the disintegration of the set, which in itself is presented here as a fragment of the original scale. This second level of erosion is further emphasised until the end of section D. The section ends with three descending E-F iterations, which seem disconnected from the D in the previous bar that is required to complete the P₃ set. What thus started as a presentation of the original scale that marks the mining subject at the start of this section succumbs even further to the processes of subtraction and fragmentation to suggest desolation as the emptying out of the subject (the scale) in the subterranean world.

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Clarinet (Cl.) and Bari (Baritone). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 48. The Cl. part is marked '185 legato, floating' and features a circled melodic line. The Bari part consists of sustained notes with fermatas.

Example 2.10: Presentation of original scale, *City Deep*, bars 185–6.

The trajectory of desolation is confirmed in section E. Starting in bar 291, the pitched content that has made up the piece thus far is replaced by the sounds of clarinet and saxophone keys being depressed in arpeggio-like runs reminiscent of the passage that opens the piece. Indeed, what is notated here (but what is not produced as sounded tones) is close to the P1 and P2 sets heard before. Now, however, the interval class 2 in the original prime form is contracted to a semitone, and what is notated can be broken up into the prime forms P(0 1 6) and P(0 1 5) (Example 2.11). Of course, this change significantly alters the identity of the set, but given that the ascending and descending scalar gestures heard in the opening of the work are retained, one could hear the keys sounds here as an emptied out figuration of the earlier sets and thus as the confirmation of the mining subject's desolation.

Example 2.11: Prime form fragments, *City Deep*, bars 291–3.

The sense that it is the mining subjectivity that is presented here in a desolated form is further suggested by sounded traces of the P3 set. While only the eerie shell of the P1 and P2 sets are heard in the opening bars of section E, two pitched notes (D and F) are present in the second half of bar 292 in the saxophone, and a third (E) in bar 293 in the clarinet. Dispersed amid the dry clicks of the instrumental keys, these three notes make up a fragmented P3 set. A little later in bar 295, a G and A are sounded between the two instruments. Set against the emptied versions of the P1 and P2 sets, these notes could be heard as whole-tone (interval class 2) fragments of the original sets. Such a reading is substantiated in bar 303 when the P(0 1 5) set occurs as pitched notes between the clarinet and saxophone with the notes E, F, and A, which suggest that the P2 set, although altered, is not entirely absent. In this sense, I interpret these small sounded fragments amid the unpitched instrument sounds as the depleted version of the mining subjectivity.

Example 2.12: Motivic distillation, *City Deep*, bar 303.

Yet the breakdown of the original pitch-class sets inheres not only in fragmentation into and replacement with the sounds of instrument keys. In bar 310, the sets are further reduced to the sounds of airflows created by the players blowing through the instruments without creating any discernible pitches or notation. Unlike the articulated key sounds, any traces of the sets are now lost. What is heard until the end of the piece is the sound of air flowing over the metal and wood that makes up the instrument bodies. For me, these airflows have a double character. First, as air flowing through the bodies of instruments, this part of the work offers an intimate presentation of subjectivity. In this sense, I hear these airflows as breath sounds and the respiratory processes of inhalation and exhalation. Without pitch or other markers of a more complex subjectivity, however, the subject that I hear here is starkly depleted, if not exhausted. Yet in another, and not wholly unconnected sense, the airflows here, which resound the technological bodies of the instruments, might be heard as the underground mine winds. Without pitch as a mediator of identity, these airflows resound an unpopulated infrastructure: the empty mine. Both these readings fit my larger

interpretation of the work's subtractive process and the desolation of the mining subjectivity, but taken together, they also suggest that the exhausted subjectivity and the technological infrastructure are perhaps the same thing. In other words, what I hear through the double character of these airflows is an ambiguous delimitation between the mining subject and technology. Indeed, the end of the work for me suggests that the mining subject, first represented in terms of pitch, has here been made indiscernible from the very extractive infrastructure in which they are put to work.

If what can be heard in the work is a subtractive process as a form of mining, then I would like to posit, by way of returning to my original argument, that what is being mined here is not necessarily the earth, but that the scale outlined in Figure 2.2 might be thought of as a musical subject that represents the mining subjectivity that is being mined. Understood in this way, and read against the work's ending, what is heard is not only the depletion of the mining subjectivity, but a depletion that leaves in its wake the sonic markings of technology in the form of the sounds of the instrumental keys and the resonance of the air being breathed through the instrument. That is, the miner is not only mined in the sense that their body is broken down by labour. There is also a psychic deterioration here that has to do with the subjugation into the technology of the mining industry. The mining subjectivity's desolation thus is as much a wasting away as it is an absorption into a larger extractive system.

Disciplining the Mining Body

The double process of extraction and subsumption that I read in *City Deep* has a long history in twentieth-century mining practices, and can be discerned in the mining medicine which played an important role in constructing the African migrant mine worker's body as both a technology and a site for extraction. Alexander Butchart's *Anatomy of Power* is instructive in this regard. While Butchart builds a longer genealogy of the construction of the African body in European medical history, his work on developments in mining medicine in early twentieth-century South Africa shows the acute link between capital production and technological biopolitics.⁶⁷ Following Foucault, Butchart locates this link in the bifurcated process whereby the technological developments that made a growing labour force productive also accelerated capital accumulation.⁶⁸ One such development, employed at City Deep among other mines, came as a response to the growing crisis of heat exhaustion among miners in the 1930s. To mitigate this crisis, an experimental chamber was developed to test the heat tolerance of miners. Stripped naked, the miners would enter the heated chamber and perform tasks such as shovelling rocks from one end of the chamber to the other. Their temperatures would be taken intermittently to gauge their heat tolerance. Miners were then allocated to working groups defined by level of acclimatisation in the hope of preventing (costly) injuries or death at deeper levels in the mines.

⁶⁷ Alexander Butchart, *The Anatomy of Power: European Constructions of the African Body* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 1998), 92.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Butchart, however, points out that the heat chamber's function was not only limited to gathering medical information. Rather it performed two other tasks as well. 'First,' writes Butchart, the heat test 'was a ritual of debasement that demonstrated the mining industry's power over its African recruits'.⁶⁹ Mine supervisors and medical officers had the power to force migrant workers to perform artificial acts of labour and thereby initiate them into the culture of dehumanisation that would pervade their working lives on the mines. Second, Butchart continues, the heat test was 'also an instrument of discipline, a clinical Panopticon that produced the individuals and bodily attributes it observed through the techniques deployed to monitor the workings of African bodies'.⁷⁰ Miners came under surveillance in the chamber, which was constructed in such a way that the medical supervisor could see the miner but that the miner could not necessarily see the medical supervisor. As a tool for observing the body, the chamber became a micro technology of discipline.⁷¹

Butchart argues that the model of discipline through surveillance present in the heat chambers was recreated in two other important mining medical technologies: the medical examination and the mining compound.⁷² The former had been routinely used during early mining operations by recruiters to select workers deemed physically capable, but from 1916, with the introduction of the Miners' Phthisis Act of that year, regular medical examinations were instituted throughout a miner's career to insure that

⁶⁹ Ibid., 94.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Butchart understands the heat chamber as a Panopticon in that it is a technology of surveillance, but the metaphor is flawed in that the Panopticon's function of self-surveillance is missing.

⁷² Ibid.

tuberculosis sufferers did not leave the mines for their native homelands.⁷³ These routine tests, however, also became a way to place miners in detention or to retain or reject their services based on the will of the medical officer, while exposing the miners to similar forms of dehumanisation to those experienced in the heat chamber. It was a process of disciplining through the surveillance of the African body.

However impersonal, whenever the medical examination occurs it renders those inspected forever subject to the knowledge that they have been observed and cannot know what about them has been seen, heard and recorded, or how such information may be used. It is this silent induction by the medical examination of its objects into ceaseless surveillance that remains hidden.⁷⁴

The purview of this micro-surveillance was extended in the design of the mine compound, which housed migrant mine workers. As with the heat chamber and the medical examinations, the compound's design was predominantly determined by medical-disciplinary concerns. Indeed, Butchart likens it to Foucault's asylum as a 'total institution' in which the ordering of space became a disciplinary technology.⁷⁵ City Deep played a crucial role in the development of the compound to these ends. While earlier compound designs focused primarily on mitigating the spread of disease through limiting air contact between miners, City Deep officials attempted to use surveillance as a deterrent against 'unsanitary' behaviour among the

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

miners. As such, at this mine the compound deviated from the typical square configuration and instead a fan-like layout for the miners' huts, with the supervisor's post at the centre, was adopted. As Butchart notes, this design would have enabled a 'maximisation of surveillance' through the almost exact architectural realisation of Bentham's famous Panopticon.⁷⁶ The City Deep compound was the only of its kind when it was erected in 1923, but by the 1940s the panoptic design had become the norm for mine workers' housing around Johannesburg.

Surveying this early history of mining medicine, discipline becomes the nexus between extractive labour and a subsumption into technology. By being subjected to the heat chamber, medical examination, and the surveillance of the mining compound, the body of the African mineworker in the first half of the twentieth century became a measurable tool in the mining industry. Little changed in the second half of the twentieth century, except that these mechanisms of discipline became more covert. Butchart continues to show how medical examinations lost little of their earlier functionality, although the brazen strategies of dehumanisation were replaced by more sophisticated means of technological subjugation. He argues that 'the examination remains a key component in the machinery by which the bodies of individual miners are graded, allocated and monitored'.⁷⁷ Similarly, mine compounds have only grown more advanced in their methods of surveillance. Guards and towers, Butchart argues, have now simply

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 108.

been replaced by the computer, the barcode and the swipe card, through which it is possible constantly to monitor the movement and location of every worker, both above and below ground [... E]very development represents a conscious attempt to increase the intensity, intimacy and invisibility of the monitoring gaze by which disciplinary power articulates itself within the individual and pervades the social.⁷⁸

If the nexus between technological subsumption and extraction historically emerges in the disciplining of the mining body, I would like to suggest that the subtractive process heard in Loveday's *City Deep* exposes a similar process. More precisely, what is heard in the work is not only the erosion, but the disciplining of the original scale that the piece is based on. This scale at first throws up four pitch-class sets. While P₃ and P_{3a} are connected, P₁ and P₂, in the way that they act initially as external interjections, can be thought of as forms of subjective excess. However, over the course of the work, these forms of excess are first drawn in close to the P₃ set, before being stripped away entirely. Similarly, the pitch class 4 in the P_{3a} set, which might also be understood as a form of excess when read against P₃, is also eventually removed. What can thus be heard in the first four sections of the work is distillation, which leaves in its wake the presentation of the original scale as a marker of the mining subject. In the fifth section, even this distilled subjectivity, is finally reduced to the technology of instrumental keys and the resonances of the instrument bodies, and, analogously, the subject is disciplined into a technological state.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

In my interpretation, *City Deep* tells a staggeringly different story of the migrant mineworker as the figure of African Modernity to the those read in the Jim Comes to Jo'Burg genre. While the work does at first explore this figure's multi-faceted subjectivity, it suggests not a psychic change that sees the migrant worker adapt to urban life, but a material change of the mineworker's body. That is, I hear the subject reduced to a form of technology to be put to work in the mines. That is not to say that the figure of African modernity in its earlier literary incarnations was not subjected to processes of discipline and dehumanisation. These processes were often painfully and brutally present.⁷⁹ The difference is perhaps that in *City Deep* these processes are not brutal, but systematically covert. The subject in this piece is not reduced through violent moments of fragmentation or rupture. Rather, the process of disciplining into technology is gradual and lies perhaps just below the perceptible surface threshold. Indeed, this process becomes apparent only when the musical material is reduced to its underlying pitch-class-set identity.

Conclusion

Thinking back then to the context of neoliberal capitalism as it emerges after the fall of apartheid, *Johannesburg Etude No. 1* and *City Deep* can be read as offering two important mediations. First, these works can be interpreted as suggesting that the city, and the extractive industry upon which it is built,

⁷⁹ Recall, for instance, the fate of Johannes in Abrahams's *Mine Boy*, who is eventually killed in a mining accident, or the execution of Absalom Kumalo in *Cry, the Beloved Country*.

manifests as an inseparable double world of surface and subterranean. Yet it is in the world below that the otherwise hidden mechanics of capital production as they are brought to bear on the human body can be traced. Second, and especially in *City Deep*, the effect of these mechanics on the subject can be read as a process of subsumption into technology and the subsequent emptying out, the desolation, that comes with it. However, there is also a third mediation which emerges out of the interpretation of these works, rather than being explicitly alluded to in them. As I have read these pieces, there is a straddling of colonial-era mining practices and contemporary Johannesburg. *City Deep*, with its title reference to a twentieth-century mine, suggests a link between contemporary issues in mining and earlier practices of disciplining the black mineworker in the interest of capital production. By drawing these into the remit of the contemporary city that Loveday composes, there is an erosion of the differentiation between colonial/apartheid and post-apartheid worlds of capital production, as if to say that perhaps the extractive industry of the earlier twentieth century and mining today are not entirely separated. They seem to hold a common denominator in the subject that is reduced to technology.

This historical traversal reveals how Loveday's works can be interpreted as representing the conditions of possibility of the Marikana massacre and the modernity of which it becomes a marker. Rather than situating Marikana as a purely post-apartheid event, there seems to be a suggestion here of a longer history in which dehumanisation through discipline is strongly thematic. Yet this link also suggests that the neoliberal conditions that subjugate the miners on the killing fields of Marikana to capital interests have precedents

in earlier forms of subjugation inflicted upon miners during the first half of the twentieth century. Thinking then of the conditions of possibility of the massacre, it becomes clear that what is at stake here is not only the processes by which workers are offered up on the altar of neoliberal industry, but the longer historical trajectories of disciplining practices and the turning of the subject into technology upon which they are founded. Unfolding in the subterranean world, however, these additional conditions are relegated to the order of invisibility. Like the acid mine water described by Bremner earlier in this chapter, these conditions only exit this order when they break the surface, when they indeed become hyper-visible as on the occasion of the massacre. My reading of Loveday's works, however, suggests that these conditions continue to unfold even within the invisible zone below the surface.

Yet these works also suggest for me that the figure of African modernity upon whom these conditions are brought to bear—the migrant mineworker—is caught in the contradictory orders of hyper-visibility (during moments of rupture such as the Marikana massacre) and invisibility (in the quotidian experience of the mining industry below the surface). It is this subject that, as I suggested is portrayed in *City Deep*, is subsumed into a form of technology and desolated in the interest of capital production. But I do not hear subsumption here as enacted upon the visible surface. Rather, I hear the systematic erosion of the subject as it plays out in the subterranean stopes and shafts. As stated before, it is the covert nature of this erosion that perhaps sets the subject in *City Deep* apart from earlier incarnations of the migrant worker in the Jim Comes to Jo'burg genre. And that it does is made possible perhaps by the fact that what is presented here is an aural trace of

the miner which is not reliant on the scopic orders of visibility. That is, the conditions of invisibility in which this form of desolation occurs can be rendered while at the same time bringing the hidden subject into (sonic) focus.

As I read these works, *Johannesburg Etude No. 1* and *City Deep* present a complex, and indeed disquieting (in the anti-utopian sense of the word) framing of post-apartheid modernity, which foregrounds the destructive calculus of labour and capital that reaches a breaking point with the Marikana massacre. Of course, it is a distinctly urban modernity, coupled to and unfolding in Johannesburg.⁸⁰ The city becomes a concentration of the tensions of this modernity in the way that the migrant worker, the mining industry, and the infrastructures of invisibility all collide there. It is perhaps exactly because of this concentration that the city becomes such a potent locus in Loveday's work: by composing its contradictory forces that mould the lives of its inhabitants, but also by rendering these inhabitants, however abstractly, her work becomes a powerful modernist response to the post-apartheid condition.

⁸⁰ An alternative to this urban focus can be found in Zakes Mda's famous novel, *The Heart of Redness*. It interestingly subverts the urban focus by locating many of the same tensions of modernity that I have highlighted in this chapter in a rural village in the Eastern Cape. Zakes Mda, *The Heart of Redness* (New York: Picador, 2000).

Chapter 3

Hearth Songs in Amnesiac Times

Forgetting in Theo Herbst's *Konka Klanke*
(*Tunguska*)

An inclusive remembering of painful truths about the past is crucial to the creation of national unity and transcending the divisions of the past. [...] This means that one must guard against such simplistic platitudes as 'to forgive is to forget'. It is also crucial not to fall into the error of equating forgiveness with reconciliation. The road to reconciliation requires more than forgiveness and respectful remembrance.¹

The Difficulties of Remembering and Forgetting

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was crucial in establishing the architecture of collective memory in post-apartheid modernity. Mandated by the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act of 1995, the TRC was set up to investigate gross human rights violations between 1 March

¹ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*, vol. 1 (Cape Town: Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1998), 116–7.

1960, the month of the Sharpsville massacre, and 10 May 1994, the inauguration of Nelson Mandela, and to provide recommendations toward the reparations of these atrocities. It comprised three committees: (1) the Human Rights Violations Committee, (2) the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee, and (3) the Amnesty Committee. In carrying out their mandate between 1995 and 1998, the three committees investigated over fifty thousand cases of human rights abuses and twenty-one thousand people came forward to provide statements.² These statements served as evidence in the lacuna left by what the Commission found to be a ‘systematic purging of official memory’ between 1990 and 1994 by the apartheid government in an attempt to deny any incoming government access to the former state’s machinations.³ Not only were these statements recorded by the TRC, but public hearings, nationally televised and broadcast on radio, served to disseminate the memories of both perpetrators and victims.

The Amnesty Committee played a particularly important, albeit contentious, role in the recovery of memory. In attempting to produce a full record of the human rights abuses committed under apartheid, the Commission offered perpetrators the option to apply for amnesty in exchange for the disclosure of their crimes.⁴ These testimonies led to some of the TRC’s most astounding and horrifying findings, which arguably would otherwise have been forgotten. A poignant sentence from the TRC report states, for instance, that, because of the Amnesty Committee’s work, the

² Ibid., 170.

³ Ibid., 235.

⁴ It should be added that the record produced through the amnesty applications was primarily intended to foster reconciliation rather than adding to the other investigative functions of the Commission.

Commission was able to ‘exhume the remains of about fifty activists who were abducted, killed and buried secretly’.⁵ With their murders officially undisclosed, their bodies, but also the iniquity of their killers, would have been lost to the recesses of time.

Yet while the Amnesty Committee performed important work, it also provided the grounds for much of the disagreement around the Commission.⁶ Victims and their families often felt that amnesty would negate their rights to laying civil claims or seeking punitive justice against those who had wronged them.⁷ Perpetrators feared that disclosure would lead to informal forms of justice being acted out upon them.⁸ The complaints of both sides pointed to an underlying fear regarding the amnesty process, which had to do with forgetting. Despite the Commission’s best intentions, there remained the possibility that amnesty would too stringently or not stringently enough reflect its etymological origin: amnesia. That is, on the one hand, there was a fear that the amnesty process would result in the amnesia and total erasure of the crimes committed. On the other hand, there was a fear that the amnesia would not entirely erase every trace of guilt or accountability. The second of these fears manifested especially prominently in the legislative language around the Commission. Ingrid de Kok, writing

⁵ Ibid., 7.

⁶ One of the most cogent critiques of the TRC with regards to amnesty can be found in Mahmood Mamdani, ‘Amnesty or Impunity? A Preliminary Critique of the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa (TRC)’, *Diacritics* 32:3/4 (2002), 32–59.

⁷ Anthony Holiday, ‘Forgiving and Forgetting: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission’, in *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa*, ed. Sarah Nuttall and Carli Coetzee (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 47.

⁸ Therese Abrahamsen and Hugo van der Merwe, ‘Reconciliation Through Amnesty? Amnesty Applicants’ Views of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission’, Research Report (Johannesburg and Cape Town: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2005).

shortly after the report of the TRC was published, locates this fear in the debates around the founding of the Commission.

The first [grammar in the debates around the TRC] is represented by the amnesic rhetoric of Danie Schutte, at the time the bill was passed the leader of the National Party's justice committee. Schutte eventually supported the bill in the hopes of 'getting the past out of the way'. This is the bureaucratic vocabulary unconscious of its resonance, forgetting what else was put 'out of the way'. The language of the 'clean break' turns into the apparently ethical consideration of 'forgive and forget' and 'life must go on'. It expresses a terror that, if we take one glimpse backwards, we may be dragged back into the apartheid underworld.⁹

In the wake of this amnesiac rhetoric, De Kok argues for the importance of the role of memory and remembering in the post-apartheid state. Echoing the lines quoted in the epigraph to this chapter, she concludes that, 'for the project of reconciliation to succeed, individuals and the nation require the physical evidence of our suffering and complicity to be displayed as part of a new pattern. Made visible again, they need to restore to us the vocabulary of the past'.¹⁰ That is not to say that there was no place for forgetting in the project of reconciliation. Indeed, the work of the Amnesty Committee showed that crimes had to be placed outside the reach of civil-judiciary memory in order for the remains of activists to be found and their bones, as markers of the crimes committed against them, to be exhumed. It is this shuttling back and forth between remembering and forgetting that has come to characterise

⁹ De Kok, 'Cracked Heirlooms', 59.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 71.

much of societal memory in the post-apartheid era. Civil forms of forgetting have manifested primarily in purging of symbols left over from the apartheid years. Streets and buildings have been renamed, ‘whites-only’ signs have been stripped off walls,¹¹ and the memorialisation of apartheid demagogues have on many occasions been challenged.¹² In contrast, forms of remembering South Africa’s past have manifested in the construction of the harrowing Apartheid Museum, the annual honouring of activists and struggle icons such as O. R. Tambo and Chris Hani, and the constant attempts to recover the apartheid archive for study.¹³

Remembering and forgetting emerges in various ways in post-apartheid music. In a recent example, Antoni Schonken’s 2017 orchestral work, *To Be : To Know*, which bears the subtitle ‘Remembering Life Esidimeni’, presents a memorialisation of the psychiatric patients who had died in outsourced state

¹¹ Or, at times, not been stripped off, but only covered over. Such was the case at Stellenbosch University’s Department of Music where the ‘non-whites’ sign above the cleaners’ bathroom had been covered over by a sticker. Chris Walton, ‘Konservatorium 1905-2005. Die Departement Musiek En Die Konservatorium Aan Die Universiteit Stellenbosch by Geleentheid van Die Eeufees 1905-2005 by Izak Grové’, *Notes* 64:2 (2007), 319.

¹² The earliest and possibly most significant of such challenges after the 1994 elections came during the renaming of Verwoerdburg, a satellite city to the south of Pretoria which is today known as Centurion. The city was named after the architect of apartheid, H. F. Verwoerd, and its renaming signalled the start of an ongoing process of challenging the memorialisation of apartheid politicians through place names. See Elwyn Jenkins, *Falling into Place: The Story of Modern South African Place Names* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2007), 148–50. These challenges have also gone on to inform, albeit to an unsatisfactory extent, policies around public heritage in the country. Indeed, it is around these debates that issues of memorialisation often crystallise, bearing witness to the stilted position of government on the treatment of past politicians. See Sabine Marschall, *Landscape of Memory: Commemorative Monuments, Memorials and Public Statuary in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 19–40.

¹³ See *Ibid.*, 118–9. For a thorough account of the memory work of the Apartheid Museum, see Lindsay Bremner, ‘Memory, Nation Building and the Post-Apartheid City: The Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg’, in *Desire Lines: Space, Memory and Identity in the Post-Apartheid City*, ed. Noëleen Murray, Nick Shepherd, and Martin Hall (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 85–104.

mental healthcare institutions.¹⁴ The work was commissioned and premiered by the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra in February 2018.¹⁵ It comprises passages of news coverage of the event read out by members of the orchestra set against permutations of an E-minor triad. In its structural design, with readings set over one another within thick orchestral textures, the stories of the victims are, however, sonically erased (forgotten) and replaced by an ameliorative soundscape of consonant tonality. Rather than a memorialisation, thus, the work can be read as effectively erasing the memory of the victims it sought to memorialise.

Another important example is Philip Miller's *REwind: A Cantata for Voice, Tape and Testimony* (2006; reworked 2011). The work, which uses recorded testimony taken from the TRC hearings, recalls the voices of the victims of apartheid crimes, but it does so in a manner that is undermined by its musical framing. Evocations, for instance, of the title song's sense of lament through gestures as literal as the musical sigh (the descending semitone) and larger falling glissandi meant to represent weeping banally render difficult issues of transitional justice, trauma, and memory. Yet this sense of banality is also transferred to the treatment of the archival samples themselves when they are cut through with the sounds of literally rewinding magnetic tape. It is a work in which the archival trace becomes an object

¹⁴ Known as the Life Esidimeni tragedy, in October 2017 news broke of one hundred and forty-three psychiatry patients who had died in the care of the state. These patients were placed in contracted non-governmental care programmes which did not provide patients with proper care, and, in some cases, directly contributed to their deaths through negligence. For an analysis of the tragedy, see A. Dhali, 'The Life Esidimeni Tragedy: Moral Pathology and an Ethical Crisis', *South African Medical Journal* 108:5 (2018), 382–5.

¹⁵ See Barry Ross, 'Society in the Mirror', *Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra*, 15 February 2018, http://www.cpo.org.za/new/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/CPO_Summer_Concert-3_15-Feb.pdf.

stripped of its symbolic content. As Carina Venter has argued, *REwind* is riddled with ‘musical cliché as the materialisation of deficit, a materialisation through music of having nothing to say whilst having at one’s disposal all the tools of composition and dissemination to facilitate signification’.¹⁶ What Miller’s and Schonken’s works make of collective memory and musical memorialisation in the post-apartheid era amounts to little more than sentimental kitsch which papers over and thus erases the horrors they seek to address.¹⁷

If musical memorialisation fails so drastically in the works mentioned above, is there another way in which issues of post-apartheid memory can be addressed in music? In this chapter, I will argue that there is an alternative, and that such an approach requires thematising memory and forgetting rather than trying to remember or forget something specific in music. My argument stems from a reading of a work that has itself been forgotten. I consider in this chapter *Konka Klanke (Tunguska)* for tape and piano composed by Theo Herbst in 2010. The work never received a second performance after its premiere on 28 March 2010 at Stellenbosch University’s Department of Music. No review was ever written and the only critical engagement with it that I have been able to uncover is a recording of an unpublished discussion between musicologist Stephanus Muller, filmmaker Aryan Kaganof, and Herbst in which they speak about the piece. When I contacted the pianist who was responsible for the work’s premiere to

¹⁶ Carina Venter, ‘Experiments in Postcolonial Reading: Music, Violence, Response’ (DPhil Thesis, University of Oxford, 2015), 261.

¹⁷ They are, however, not alone. David Rief has suggested that this is more often the nature of artistic memorials in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. David Rieff, *In Praise of Forgetting: Historical Memory and Its Ironies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 80.

find out whether he had a score of the piano part (which the composer at the time thought might have been lost), I received the following response:

As I remember there was some talk indeed of me performing a work of Theo Herbst. But I cannot recall having actually played it, I will check my music library [to see] if there is a score and will let you know, but I think he never wrote this piece.¹⁸

Rather than only being a forgotten work, I interpret *Konka* as a work in which forgetting is explicitly thematised. In contrast to the works mentioned before, *Konka* does not represent memory through sentimentality or kitsch nostalgia. Rather, the sound world of the work is fractured and alienated. Indeed, traces of sentimentality appear only as broken caricatures in the piano part. Speaking about the origins of the work in the discussion with Muller and Kaganof, Herbst recalls that he wrote *Konka* in response to the proliferation of musical settings of Afrikaner poet Ingrid Jonker's works, which he felt did the poet's memory 'a grave injustice'.¹⁹ In this sense, *Konka* started out as a response to ways of remembering Jonker. Yet aside from references to Jonker's poetry, which I will return to at length below, there is very little in the piece to suggest that her legacy is the subject of the work. I read the piece instead as thematising memory, and more specifically its inverse, forgetting. The shift here from remembering the poet Jonker to focusing on forgetting, I argue, offers a more productive way of grappling

¹⁸ Daan Vandewalle, 'Konka-Klanke (Tunguska) Score', email to the author, 9 January 2018.

¹⁹ Theo Herbst, unpublished interview with Stephanus Muller and Aryan Kaganof, n.d.

with the complexities of memory in the post-apartheid era. Thinking back to the TRC, the forms remembering and forgetting encoded in this modernity, and which I also hear resounded in *Konka*, require a move beyond memorialisation to a form of remembering that also recognises the fundamental work of forgetting.

Modernism and Memory

Before turning to the piece, it is useful to consider briefly the relationship between memory and musical modernism, since it is on these grounds that *Konka* most clearly differentiates itself from other works of musical memorialisation in post-apartheid South Africa. This relationship is predicated upon a dialectical tension between *modernity* (as an ideological frame of society) and *modernism* (as an artistic response to this frame). Christopher Ballantine has usefully reconfigured this tension in terms of memory. ‘Since modernity forgets’, he writes, ‘modernism of necessity seeks to remember’.²⁰ His argument is based on the idea that the founding condition of modernity can be located in ‘mass commodification’ and the relentless expansion of capitalist markets. These conditions, however, are also those of modernity’s rupture: as commodification and capitalist expansion hurtles us forward, so modernity cuts its mooring to a bygone time. ‘Modernity’s attitude to its own history is reckless, even destructive’, he writes, ‘its sense of continuity is always in jeopardy; in a word, it forgets.’²¹ For modernity, forgetting is structural; it is an imperative that permeates

²⁰ Ballantine, ‘Modernism and Popular Music’, 201.

²¹ *Ibid.*

culture as the manifestation of the modern impulse; it pervades its material conditions and it binds its ontological architecture. Conversely, modernism, which Ballantine suggests can be understood as a ‘dissident critique’ of modernity, riles against these conditions by using processes of estrangement, fragmentation, and disarmament to expose a faithfulness to the past. Thus, instead of breaking with the past, the disruptions of modernism ‘strengthen resistant subjectivities, kindle memory, [and] create bulwarks against forgetting’.²²

As it stands here, Ballantine’s framing of modernism’s remembering does not match neatly with the theme of forgetting that I want to argue can be heard in *Konka*. However, this is less a fault of Ballantine’s general observation and more perhaps because what is needed is a clearer understanding of the work memory does in modernist music. It is useful in this regard to turn to Harper-Scott’s theorisation of the relationship between truth and musical modernism.²³ I will not rehearse Harper-Scott’s argument in its entirety here. Rather, I will focus on his reading of Martin Heidegger’s use of the Greek term for truth, *aletheia* (ἀλήθεια).

Harper-Scott posits late Heidegger’s argument for the truth claim of great art as a model for understanding how the reactive subject of musical modernism (discussed in the introduction to this thesis) might make present a truth that could liberate people from the emptying-out effect (‘desolation’) of modernity.²⁴ This is effectively the same argument as Ballantine’s but there is a crucial shift in focus here to the truth claim of memory, rather than

²² Ibid.

²³ Harper-Scott, *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism*.

²⁴ Ibid., 205.

a focus on the act of remembering itself. Central to Harper-Scott's argument is Heidegger's multi-staged process of how truth comes to be.

First truth must emerge as meaning of some kind, by being disclosed, unconcealed through a human engagement of some kind; then comes the normal everyday use that is made of such an appearance of truth (in the way humans go about the everyday lives in a basic understanding of things); and only after that do we arrive at a scientific or philosophical idea that propositions and statements must correspond to things in the world to be 'true'.²⁵

Aletheia describes the first step in this truth process. While the term can be translated merely as 'truth', Heidegger argues that it should rather be understood as 'unconcealment', as a disclosing of something that wants to remain hidden, thus making it part of a truth process rather than a self-contained correspondence of facts to objects that we generally understand as the definition of 'truth'.²⁶ It is in this sense of 'truth as unconcealment' that Harper-Scott adopts *aletheia* as part of a complex strategy for the reactive subject of musical modernism, mentioned in this thesis's introduction, to act against the forces of techno-capitalism, which, by commodification and the subversion of humans into larger bodies that only serve capital production (machines), conceal truth.²⁷ The reactive subject of modernism as a producer

²⁵ Ibid., 207.

²⁶ It is important to note here that this conception of *aletheia* is found in Heidegger's late writings, and differs significantly from how he understood the term in *Being and Time*. In his earlier work, *aletheia* translated to truth as a whole, rather than a step toward truth. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010 [1953]), 210–11.

²⁷ Harper-Scott, *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism*, 214.

of *aletheia* can draw into the foreground something that lies hidden by the untruth produced by modernity's processes of commodification. It should be stressed that art as *aletheia* does not constitute Harper-Scott's entire description of how the reactive subject of modernism comes to escape the desolation of modernity, but it does hold a fundamental mechanism—that of disclosure or unconcealment—which is needed in such a project.

While his argument for the disclosure art produces a powerful model for understanding how the reactive subject of modernism might fend off the techno-capitalist conditions of modernity, what goes missing in Harper-Scott's use of *aletheia* is how the word is bound up with its etymological root. *Aletheia*, as Herald Weinrich has shown, comprises a negative prefix (*a-*) and the component *-leth-*.²⁸ The latter, Weinrich continues, 'designates something covered up, concealed, or "latent", so that on the basis of the meaning of the word [once negated by *a-*] truth [*aletheia*] appears [...] to be the uncovered, the unconcealed, the nonlatent.'²⁹ Indeed, this is the sense in which Heidegger (and later, Harper-Scott) uses the term *aletheia*. But, Weinrich, continues, 'since the semantic element *-leth-* negated by the alpha privative, also occurs in the name of Lethe [*Λήθη*], the mythical river of forgetting, on the basis of the construction of the word *aletheia* one can also conceive truth as the "unforgotten" or the "not-to-be-forgotten".'³⁰ Understood in this way, *aletheia* does not only mean disclosure, but it simultaneously is bound up with issues of memory. Heidegger, in his later work, seems to acknowledge this. In his lecture on the pre-Socratic Greek

²⁸ Herald Weinrich, *Lethe: The Art and Critique of Forgetting*, trans. Steven Rendall (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004), 3.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 3–4.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

philosopher, Parmenides, Heidegger posits that ‘every endeavour to think *ἀλήθεια* [*aletheia*] in a somewhat suitable manner, even if only from afar, is an idle affair as long as we do not venture to think the *Λήθη* [*lethe*] to which, presumably, *ἀλήθεια* [*aletheia*] refers back’.³¹ Like many of his concepts, these terms’ theoretical bearing on memory and forgetting requires careful explication.

Forgetting is a theme that determines much of Heidegger’s project of finding a way for modern humans to escape the emptiness of their time. Indeed, *Being and Time* starts with the proposition that ‘[the question of Being] has today been *forgotten*’.³² Far from merely being a conceit, this line indicates Heidegger’s commitment to develop forgetting as the core problem of metaphysics (by which he means philosophical thought that forecloses the possibility of conceiving of an authentic Being). Yet it is only in his later work that he develops a term for this forgetting: *Seinsvergessenheit* (the forgetfulness of being). Heidegger sums the term up usefully in *Holzwege*: ‘the forgetfulness of being is the forgetfulness of the difference between Being and the being’.³³ *Seinsvergessenheit* thus designates for him the threat (the ideology) by which the modern condition (Being) is concealed from how an entity (the being) is made present in the world. Forgetting, in this form, is the forgetting that Ballantine speaks about above: it is a forgetting that is

³¹ Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, trans. André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 11.

³² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 2. Emphasis mine.

³³ ‘Die Seinsvergessenheit ist die Vergessenheit des Unterschiedes des Seins zum Seienden’. Martin Heidegger, *Holzwege*, vol. V, Gesamtausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977), 371. Translation adapted from Martin Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 275. It is worth mentioning that Young and Haynes translate ‘*Vergessenheit*’ as ‘oblivion’, which more directly relates to *lethe*. I have, however, opted for the more literal translation of ‘forgetfulness’ for the sake of clarity.

destructive and ultimately incurred by the founding conditions of modernity. Musical modernism's truth, thus, is a form of remembering, an unconcealment (*aletheia*), that will work against this ideological forgetting.

There is, however, another proposition in Heidegger's earlier work that productively complicates this understanding of the mnemonic nature of modernity and modernism. The thought is central to Herbst's composition, as I will show later in this chapter, and can also help to clarify Ballantine's assertion as a frame for thinking about the work. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger writes that 'just as expectation is possible only on the basis of awaiting, *remembering* is possible only on the basis of forgetting, *and not the other way around*'.³⁴ In this sense, forgetting does not resemble *Seinsvergessenheit* in its destructive form. Rather, Heidegger, in the lines leading up to this passage, makes a case for forgetting as a constitutive force. 'This forgetting is not nothing', he writes, 'nor is it just a failure to remember; it is rather a "positive", ecstatic mode of having-been, a mode with a character of its own.'³⁵ In other words, forgetting is not only a negation; it does not only act to relegate its object to oblivion. Rather, it reveals something of a world that is historically conditioned (which is what is implied by the term 'having-been'). Indeed, Heidegger goes even further by stating that 'in the mode of forgottenness, having-been primarily "discloses" the horizon in which Dasein, lost in the "superficiality" of what is taken care of, can remember'.³⁶ This conception of forgetting stands in remarkable contrast to the *Seinsvergessenheit* described before: not only is it not

³⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 324. Emphasis in original.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

primarily destructive, but it is framed as a founding condition for Dasein's own historical consciousness. Paradoxically, perhaps, forgetting is also then its own inverse: *aletheia*. That is not to say, however, that works such as Schonken's or Miller's reflect a sense of *aletheia*. These works, by concealing memories within their orchestral fabrics or sentimental cladding, espouse a form of *Seinsvergessenheit*. The founding function of forgetting works instead in a different way, which can be discerned upon a closer consideration of the paradox offered by Heidegger.

Memory Made Possible by Forgetting

In *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Paul Ricoeur addresses this paradox at some length.³⁷ For him, the paradox calls for an understanding of the survival of memory, by which he means the ways in which memories become present despite the fact that they indicate a form of absence (the absence of the thing that is remembered). Ricoeur argues that memories, in very simple terms, are related to their objects (and thus become meaningful) by a three-part process in which (1) an *appearance* of the object (2) *disappears* as it passes and then (3) *reappears* as a memory.³⁸ This process creates what he terms the presence of absence enigma in that in the moment of reappearance there is a making present of something that has disappeared, or become absent. Yet this enigma is mitigated by what Ricoeur calls recognition, which occurs when there is a superimposition of the image present to the mind onto

³⁷ Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 429.

the impression left by the object of memory.³⁹ Recognition thus enables the movement across the disappearance that lies between appearance and reappearance. It is, however, a movement that can only be achieved in retrospect and is contingent upon the very fact that there was a disappearance in the first place. ‘Something of the original impression’, writes Ricoeur, ‘has to have remained for me to remember it now. If memory returns, *this is because I had lost it*; but if despite everything, I recover it and recognise it, this is because the image had survived.’⁴⁰ The return of memory, thus, is predicated on the absence, the disappearance, that divides memory and its object.

Here, disappearance is not a negation, but a making latent (recall the etymological connection to *lethe*) of the memory image by relegating it to the unconscious. Once in the remit of the unconscious, the memory image can again be recalled into consciousness and effectively be brought back into existence. Ricoeur usefully sums up this relationship in a conceptual chain: ‘survival equals latency [...] equals unconscious equals existence’.⁴¹ This string of equivalences is important because it is the basis on which Ricoeur will explain Heidegger’s paradox. It suggests that forgetting can not only be destructive, but that it has a functional role in the survival of the memory image in that it makes possible the gap between appearance and reappearance and thus occasions the possibility for recognition. ‘Forgetting’, he argues, ‘designates the *unperceived* character of the perseverance of memories, their removal from the vigilance of consciousness.’⁴² In this sense,

³⁹ Ibid., 429–30.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 430. Emphasis mine.

⁴¹ Ibid., 435.

⁴² Ibid., 440.

forgetting creates a latent reservoir (or a reserve, in Ricoeur's lexicon) from which memories are drawn in the moment of recognition, thus making it a necessary resource of memory.⁴³ Conceiving of forgetting as a resource of memory is for Ricoeur the productive condition opened up by Heidegger's paradox. And it is an exceedingly important condition because it enables, in turn, a way to think in non-contradictory terms of the content of forgetting.

What then of *Seinsvergessenheit*, which for late Heidegger represented a fundamentally destructive force? Can it be reconciled with Ricoeur's notion of forgetting as constitutive of memory? And if not, is there yet another paradox whereby forgetting is both destructive and generative? To answer these questions, it is useful to consider another key term in Ricoeur's mnemonic lexicon: the trace. Traces are the impressions (or inscriptions) left by things in the past which act as the vessels that, broadly speaking, transport the past into the present.⁴⁴ They can be organised into three types: the material or physical trace, the affective trace, and the cortical trace.⁴⁵ The latter refers to the neurological impressions in the brain, and largely deals with the mechanisms of recall (what allows one to remember).⁴⁶ Material traces take the form of external markings of the past, the concrete inscriptions through which history is accessed. These are the traces that, in the traditional sense, make up the archive and are grappled with by historians.⁴⁷ The last type of trace is the most problematic for Ricoeur.

⁴³ Ibid., 442.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 13–15.

⁴⁵ The division of traces differentiates Ricoeur's theory from other more general theories of the trace, such as Badiou's. In *Logics of Worlds*, for instance, Badiou only refers to a general trace as something left over from the event, which in turn delinks it from trace as a component of memory specifically: the trace for him need not be linked to memory. See Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 33.

⁴⁶ Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 427.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Affective traces, or affection-impressions as he sometimes refers to them, emerge as the lingering residue of striking or marking events.⁴⁸ They are not external markings in the sense that their materiality can be indexed. Rather, they are the impressions created by experiences. Yet these are also the traces that are made latent until recalled through the process of recognition described above. Together with the material trace, the affective trace will be my primary concern in reading Herbst's composition.

The question of *Seinsvergessenheit* and a constructive form of forgetting has to do with the treatment of the trace. Ricoeur posits two main ways in which traces can be affected: either they can be destroyed or they can survive. The survival of the trace is what was detailed above: traces (especially affective traces) survive through the processes of latency and recognition. The destruction of traces—what Ricoeur calls the 'effacement' of traces—can be gleaned with regards to material traces. Elsewhere, Ricoeur writes that 'the destruction of an archive, a museum, a town is equivalent to forgetting. Where there was a trace there is oblivion'.⁴⁹ In this case, the town and the archive constitute material traces; their destruction occasions a form of forgetting. The same, however, can be extended to the affective and the cortical trace. In these cases, forgetting can be considered pathological. It is for Ricoeur a 'denial of memory', by which he means that access to the memory through the traces has been foreclosed in some way.⁵⁰ This denial can come about in various different ways (with cortical traces, it could be a result of injury or disease), whether by substitution (creating a new memory

⁴⁸ Ibid., 14.

⁴⁹ Ricoeur quoted in Jean Greisch, 'Trace and Forgetting: Between the Threat of Erasure and the Persistence of the Unerasable', *Diogenes* 51:1 (2004), 80.

⁵⁰ Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 453.

to suppress another), trauma (which creates the psychological or physiological inability to access the original trace), or any other manner of negation.⁵¹ With these two treatments of traces (their survival or destruction), Ricoeur sets up two different forms of forgetting: on the one hand, there is what he terms a founding forgetting which is the result of the survival of the trace; on the other, there is a destructive forgetting (he sometimes refers to this form as amnesia) which is a result of the effacement of traces. *Seinsvergessenheit* belongs to the second category of forgetting. It is not a constructive forgetting, but nor is it the only form of forgetting.

It is perhaps useful at this point to return to Ballantine's assertion about the mnemonic nature of modernism. As I have tried to show (via Heidegger and Ricoeur), the statement that 'modernism of necessity seeks to remember' now no longer precludes forgetting, since memory (and by extension remembering) is made possible by forgetting. This same inversion, however, cannot be made in the case of modernity: modernity's forgetting does not imbue it with a will to remember. Rather, the type of forgetting that modernity occasions in Ballantine's reading is the destructive type of forgetting, which, in Harper-Scott's model, is also a type of concealment. This is the type of forgetting that is occasioned by works such as Miller's and Schonken's mentioned before. Erased by sentimentality, the horrors of the apartheid and post-apartheid eras are concealed and there occurs a type of amnesia, in Ricoeur's sense of the word. In musical terms, Heidegger's notion of *Seinsvergessenheit* is useful: the Being of these memories,

⁵¹ Ricoeur, however, is particularly interested in the psychoanalytical understanding of the effacement of traces. He considers Freud at length on this topic. See *Ibid.*, 444–8.

expressed in the musical languages of the works, is seen as inauthentic in relation to their objects in history; kitsch sentimentality allows Being to forget itself. Herbst's work, in contrast, disarms this form of sentimentality, and can be productively read through the terms of forgetting that I have outlined here.

***Konka* and the Poetry of Forgetting**

Written for tape and live piano, *Konka* in some ways shares substantial technical grounds with European traditions of electroacoustic music. In particular, the fact that the work's tape part comprises electronically manipulated sound recordings means that it can be understood as a form of *musique acousmatique* (acousmatic music), which has its origins in the *musique concrète* movement of mid-twentieth century France. This earlier school of composition was largely defined by the work of Pierre Schaeffer, who began experimenting with the manipulation of recorded sounds in the late 1940s, and would later become a founding figure in the Groupe de Recherche de Musique Concrète (GRMC), which was the central locus of experimentation with recorded sounds during the 1950s. Schaeffer's experiments were concerned with harnessing advancements in recording and sound processing technology to bypass traditional mediations of notation and performance in the compositional process in order to work with sound more directly.⁵²

⁵² Schaeffer details his early thinking with regards to shifting the focus of composition in Pierre Schaeffer, *In Search of a Concrete Music*, trans. Christine North and John Dack (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2012), 14–15.

With this shift in focus, Schaeffer became increasingly interested in what he termed the ‘sound object’. This term, for him, designates a ‘sound event or phenomenon [...] perceived in its material, its particular texture, its own qualities and perceptual dimensions’.⁵³ That is, a sound object is a sonic phenomenon that is not heard in connection to its source, but as a sound that is heard in terms of its own intrinsic qualities. It is a product of a form of listening, and more particularly a form of ‘reduced listening’. This second Schaefferean term describes a ‘listening attitude’ in which the auditor listens to the ‘sound for its own sake, as a sound object, by removing its real or supposed source and the meaning it may convey.’⁵⁴ ‘In “ordinary” listening’, Michel Chion explains, ‘the sound is always treated as a vehicle’.⁵⁵ Sound carries information of its sources and points us in its direction when we are listening ordinarily. Reduced listening, however, requires a bracketing (*epoché*) of the need to link a sound to its cause, thus ‘stripping the perception of sound of everything that is not “it [the sound] itself”, in order to hear only the sound, in its materiality, its substance, its perceivable dimensions’.⁵⁶ This form of listening then could arguably be applied to any sonic event thus turning any sound into a sound object. Yet it could also be conceived of as a type of forgetting: a forgetting of the origin and context of the sound, but also a forgetting of the very idea that a sound has an origin in the first place. In this sense, it is perhaps akin to Heidegger’s

⁵³ Michel Chion, *Guide Des Objets Sonores: Pierre Schaeffer et La Recherche Musicale* (Paris: INA/ Buchet-Chastel, 1983), 34. Translation by John Dack and Christine North.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Seinsvergeessenheit in that conceiving of a ‘sound object’ is also to conceal its ideological framing in the world.

I interpret *Konka* as following the Schaefferean conception of sound only to a certain degree. For me, the work is less concerned with severing the sound object from its source and therefore is less concerned with reproducing *Seinsvergeessenheit* as such. While the live piano, which forgoes the disconnect between world and sound object by its very presence, works against the Schaefferean school of thought, the tape part also departs from this approach in an important way: it contains sounds which have a discernible source. In particular, the tape part features words, which open up vast systems of reference outside of themselves. The words in *Konka* are drawn from two poems by Ingrid Jonker, ‘L’art poétique’ and ‘Ek het gedink...’ (‘I’d thought...’) (shown in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 in their original Afrikaans, in isiXhosa translation, and in English translation).⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Theo Herbst, interview by the author, 22 August 2017. The English translation of ‘Ek het gedink...’ is by the author. The English translation of ‘L’art poétique’ is taken from Ingrid Jonker, ‘L’art Poétique’, in *Black Butterflies: Selected Poems*, trans. André Brink and Antjie Krog (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 2007), 94.

<i>L'art poétique</i>	<i>L'art poétique</i>	<i>L'art poétique</i>
<p>Om myself weg te bêre soos 'n geheim in 'n slaap van lammers en van steggies Om myself te bêre in die saluut van 'n groot skip Weg te bêre in die geweld van 'n eenvoudige herinnering in jou verdrinkte hande om myself weg te bêre in my woord</p>	<p>Ukuze ndizifihle okwehlebo, kubuthongo bezinvu namasetyana. Ukuzifihla, ekukhahleweni kwesikhephe esikhulu. Ndizifihle, kubundlobongela benkumbulo engeni; kwizandla zakho ezixhakazelayo ukuze ndizimele kwintetho yam.</p>	<p>To stow myself away like a secret in a sleep of lambs and of cuttings To stow myself away in the salute of a great ship To stow away in the violence of a simple memory in your drowned hands to stow myself away in my word</p>

Table 3.1: 'L'art poétique' (translations).

Ek het gedink...	Bendiba...	I'd thought...
<p>Ek het gedink dat ek jou kon vergeet, en in die sagte nag alleen kon slaap, maar in my eenvoud het ek nie geweet dat ek met elke windvlaag sou ontwaak:</p>	<p>Bendiba ndingakwazi ukukulubala, ndilale ndedwa kobo busuku buzolileyo, kodwa kubuyatha bam andazanga ukuba ngesivuthe-vuthe ngasinye somoya ndakuvuka:</p>	<p>I'd thought that I could forget you and in the soft night sleep alone, but in my naivety I'd not known that I'd awaken at each stirring breeze:</p>
<p>Dat ek die ligte trilling van jou hand weer oor my sluimerende hals so voel— Ek het gedink die vuur wat in my brand het soos die wit boog van die sterre afgekoel.</p>	<p>Ukuba ukubhreshesha kwesandlana sakhho ndakuphinda ndibuve esifubebi sam-- Bendiba umlilo ovutha ngaphakathi kum usuke wacima okwenkwenkwezi</p>	<p>That I would feel the light shudder of your hand over my slumbering neck again-- I'd thought the fire that burnt in me had cooled down like the stars' white arc.</p>
<p>Nou weet ek is ons lewens soos 'n lied waarin die smarttoon van ons skeiding klink en alle vreugde terugvloei in verdriet en eind'lik in ons eensaamheid versink.</p>	<p>Ngoku ndiyazi ukuba ubomi bethu bufana nengoma kuyo kuvakala ukugixa kokwahlukana kwethu lonke ulonwabo luphenduke lube lusizi isiphelo nesigqitho ibe bubulolo.</p>	<p>Now I know our lives are like a song in which resounds the grief-note of our parting and all joy flows back into sorrow and in the end in our loneliness be submerged.</p>

Table 3.2: 'Ek het gedink...' (translations).

Jonker, who was a dissenting voice in Afrikaans literature during the middle years of apartheid,⁵⁸ is perhaps best known for her poem ‘The Child’, which was read by Nelson Mandela at the opening of parliament shortly after the advent of democracy. Her relatively small output is dominated by themes of death, motherhood, and love, which are approached and articulated in explicit and raw language. For this, her work was often threatened with censorship and criticised by the right-wing literary community.⁵⁹ Caught in an increasingly oppressive environment and plagued by her rapidly deteriorating mental health, Jonker committed suicide on 19 July 1965, at the age of thirty-one, by walking into the sea.

The two poems used in *Konka* confront issues of memory in different ways. ‘Ek het gedink...’ deals with the memory of a lost lover and the inability to forget, which inevitably and pervasively turns all forms of joy into loneliness. The poem starts with the speaker’s declaration that she had thought that she would be able to forget her lover and sleep ‘alone’, presumably without memories haunting her. This, however, proves to be a false hope and with each rustling of the breeze she awakes to feel her lover’s hands caressing her, reminding her that her desire, like her memory, has not

⁵⁸ Jonker was part of the group of Afrikaans writers known as the *Sestigters* (Sixties-ites), a group that included André Brink, Breyten Breytenbach, Jan Rabie, and Adam Small, among others. In their writing, they attempted to appropriate Afrikaans as a language that could be used against the state’s conservative inclinations and racial indoctrination by penning transgressive work on themes such as explicit sex (Brink) and racial mixing (Rabie), but by also including non-whites such as Small within their ranks. Jonker’s contribution to this group was her articulation of existentialist fears, musings on death, and writings on the taboo topic of female sexuality. As the daughter of a member of the Censorship Committee, her affiliation to the group attracted much attention. See Jack Cope, *The Adversary Within: Dissident Writers in Afrikaans* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1982), 79–92; 100–1.

⁵⁹ This was especially the case with ‘The Child’, which was rejected for publication by two major Afrikaner news outlets. See Petrovna Metelerkamp, *Ingrid Jonker: ’n Biografie* (Cape Town: Penguin Random House South Africa, 2018) 171–2.

faded. The last stanza is resigned in its dry irony. The speaker says that she knows her and her lover's life together is like a happy song, but it is also a song that is ultimately corrupted by the fact that they have parted; it is a song in which joy must recede into grief and, prefiguring her own suicide, eventually drown itself in loneliness. Thus, unlike Heidegger's *Seinsvergessenheit*, it is the very fact that she cannot forget that leads to the negation of self.

In the second poem, 'L'art poétique', remembering is also destructive, but concealment, which could be read here as forgetting, is not seen as its existential Other. The speaker wants to 'stow away' (taken here to mean hiding) in various positive recollections; she wants to hide in a sleep bearing the symbols of new life ('of lambs and of cuttings') or in symbols of achievement and affirmation ('the salute of a great ship'). Yet negation returns in the third set of images: the speaker is hidden (the pronoun 'myself' is dropped, perhaps as an indication that this instance of hiding is not of her own volition) in 'the violence of a simple memory'. That memory is of her addressee's 'drowned hands', which again speaks to the theme of a watery death. The last line, however, is curious if read in terms of memory. The poem is resolved by returning the pronoun 'myself', which makes the act of hiding active again, but here the hiding place is the speaker's own 'word'. Understood in one way, this can be seen as an act of seeking refuge in her creative work. Yet read in terms of memory, another meaning arises. Harald Weinrich has commented extensively on tropes of writing, remembering, and forgetting, and, using the example of Immanuel Kant who wrote down his servant's name to forget him, suggests that the act of externalising a memory might not only be understood as representing an act of memory (by helping

one to remember in this case), but by relegating the memory to paper there is an attempt to create distance between the author and the memory.⁶⁰ To hide away in one's own word, then, might mean exactly to try to create an existential distance between the self and the 'violent' memory image encountered in the previous line. It is thus a form of forgetting, but one that stands in contradistinction to the *Seinsvergessenheit* represented here again by drowning.

In both of these poems, forgetting can be read as an imperative, akin perhaps to the type of forgetting envisaged by the Amnesty Committee of the TRC. That is to say, forgetting is necessary for the truth to be revealed and reconciliation to be achieved. I interpret something of these connotations in *Konka*, but for me the work suggests a more ambiguous valence with the theme of forgetting. This is in part because only minute fragments of the poems are reproduced in the piece. Small samples of the original Afrikaans text are heard alongside isiXhosa translations by Mhlobo Jadezweni (summarised in Table 3.3). The work starts with three fragments of the isiXhosa word *andazanga* (I did not) taken from the third line of the translation of 'Ek het gedink...', followed by iterations of the infinitive *ukuze* (to), which is the first word of the translation of 'L'art poétique'. At 3'43" the last two words of 'L'art poétique', *my woord* (my word), are heard, followed a little under two minutes later at 5'33" by the word *steggies* (cuttings), taken from the same poem. At 7'30" fragments are heard of the word *nesiqqitho*, which is a noun form of the word *ukuqqitho*, meaning to 'move beyond' or to 'transgress'. Shortly after these fragments, and almost as if emerging out of

⁶⁰ Weinrich, *Lethe*, 67–78.

them, the word *vergeet* (forget) is heard, which is taken from the first line of ‘Ek het gedink...’.

Unlike the confined presentation of the other words, *vergeet* is sounded periodically in different forms over the course of the next minute, marking the longest sustained sounding of a sample taken from the poems. Indeed, I hear the word *vergeet*, both in how it is emphasised through its length and in the way that it emerges out of the previous fragments, as the central textual focus of the piece and the point toward which the other textual fragments move. As such, I would like to suggest that the final fragment of spoken text⁶¹ can be understood as a thematic terminus for the work: forgetting becomes the culminative mark of the other textual fragments’ meanings.

Word	Entry	Poem
<i>Andazanga</i> (I did not)	0’06”	Bendiba...
<i>Ukuze</i> (to)	0’12”	L’art poétique
<i>My woord</i> (my word)	3’43”	L’art poétique
<i>Steggies</i> (cuttings)	5’33”	L’art poétique
<i>Nesigqitho</i> (transgression)	7’30”	Bendiba...
<i>Vergeet</i> (forget)	7’42”	‘Ek het gedink...’

Table 3.3: Appearances of Jonker poem text in *Konka*.

⁶¹ There is more text that appears after this point but it is sung, rather than spoken, a point to which I shall return.

That said, only fragments of the original texts are resounded in *Konka*. The clear desire for the ability to forget in the original poems is not carried over into its musical setting. Nor is the existential threat of not forgetting retained. Instead, I hear in the work's textual fragments only a thematic focus on forgetting. In what follows, I use this focus as the basis for interpreting the more straightforwardly musical forces at work in the piece: those captured in the tape part as well as those produced by the piano. Analyses of these parts, in turn, will provide a more detailed understanding of the forms of forgetting I want to argue can be heard in the work.

Tape I: The Material and Its Transformations

Reading through the frame of forgetting prompted by the text, I now turn to the work's tape part. It is an intricate tissue made up of hundreds, if not thousands, of sonic fragments of samples, which have been manipulated, transformed, and distorted to varying degrees. Despite the multitude of sounds, it is possible to discern seven main sources from which the samples are derived. Four of these are vocal sources: spoken isiXhosa voice, spoken Afrikaans voice, Afrikaans singing voice, and isiXhosa singing voice. The two spoken voice sources present the fragments of the two Jonker poems as mentioned before. The Afrikaans singing voice are samples of a recording of mezzo-soprano Minette du Toit-Pearce singing settings of the Jonker poems by Herbst.⁶² The origins of the isiXhosa singing voice are less clear. One possible source could be David Dargie's recordings of the isiXhosa bow music

⁶² Theo Herbst, interview by the author, 22 August 2017.

master, Nofinishi Dywili. Herbst drew on these for another composition, *UMhala Wasetywaleni (Wat Maak Jy?)*, which was completed in the same year as *Konka*.⁶³ However, given the extent to which the samples have been distorted it is impossible to ascertain the exact source.⁶⁴

Herbst uses three instrumental sources: recordings of a piano, *uhadi*, and *umrhubhe*. The latter two instruments are musical bows used to accompany solo and group isiXhosa songs. The *uhadi* consists of an arched stick with a wire strung between its tips.⁶⁵ The bow has a hollow gourd attached to it that acts as a resonator, which amplifies the overtones produced when the wire is struck with another stick. The wire can be stopped with the index finger and thumb or played unstopped to produce two fundamental tones, usually a whole tone apart. The first six partials above these two notes are heard when the wire is struck, resulting in two chords being sounded, which form the harmonic fabric of many traditional isiXhosa songs.⁶⁶ The *umrhubhe* is a smaller bow that does not use a gourd resonator for amplification. Rather, the player's mouth is used as a resonating chamber when the bow's tip is placed against it. Unlike the *uhadi*, sound is produced on the *umrhubhe* by scraping the wire with a stick, rather than striking it. These organological

⁶³ The subtitle of this work, '*Wat Maak Jy?*' translates as 'what are you doing?' For this work, Herbst extensively uses samples of a recording of Dywili singing *UMhala Wasetywaleni*, which is a traditional isiXhosa beer drinking song. In *Konka*, at 6'58", there is a barely audible trace of the G#-F#-B melodic descent that characterises Dywili's own version of *UMhala Wasetywaleni*. However, the fragment has been filtered to leave behind only the lower partials, making the original voice unrecognisable.

⁶⁴ Asked whether these were indeed samples of Dywili, Herbst ironically said that he had forgotten the exact sources of the sounds.

⁶⁵ David Dargie, *Xhosa Music: Its Techniques and Instruments, with a Collection of Songs* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, 1988), 46.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 50.

aspects of the instruments feature strongly in the work, and become identifiable markers of the samples' sources.

Herbst employs five main techniques in manipulating these samples: time stretching (manipulating the duration of a sample), transposition (manipulating the frequency content of a sample), retrograde (inverting the sample horizontally), frequency equalisation (the manipulation of the amplitude of the frequency content of a sample), and polarity inversion (the vertical inversion of a sample).⁶⁷ These techniques do not appear in isolation, but are constantly combined and reapplied, compounding or fracturing their effects on the samples. At times, Herbst transforms hundreds of instances of a sample in minutely varying degrees, stacking them to form a single, more complex version of the same sound. These techniques also, as I will show, become the basis for understanding these samples as Ricoeurian traces.

The first technique, time stretching, is audible in the first few seconds of the work. After descending cascades of indeterminate fragments of sounds, the *ukuze* sample is heard at 0'19". It is followed in quick succession by reiterations of the same sample, each played back slower than the last for roughly seven seconds. When a sample is stretched temporally, however, the frequency content of it is also lowered (unless a pitch correction algorithm is applied that compensates for this phenomenon by transposing the sound up as it is slowed down). This can be seen in Figure 3.1, where a spectrogram of this section of the piece shows a descent in frequency content from 324Hz to 32Hz, suggesting that the sample, from its initial sounding has been slowed down by a factor of ten. This initial moment in the composition for me

⁶⁷ Theo Herbst, interview with the author, 22 August 2017.

reflects strongly Ricoeur’s model of the survival of the memory image in the way that the sample seems to audibly recede into latency; the sample, effected by the drag of time, loses its verisimilitude.

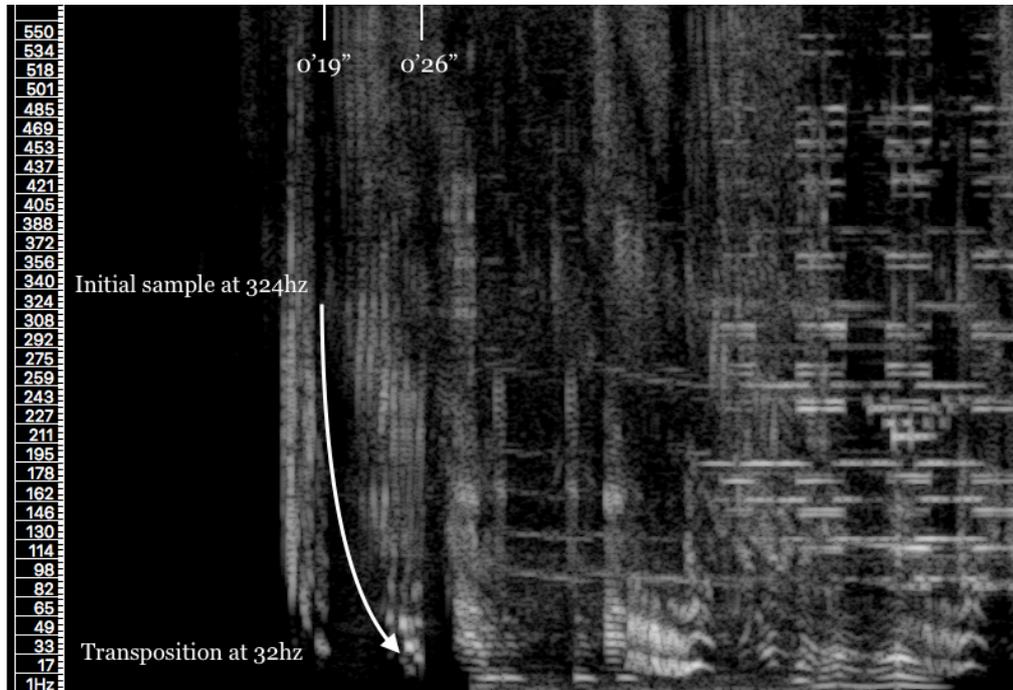


Figure 3.1: Descending frequency as a result of time stretching, *Konka*.

Aside from time stretching which causes transposition, a form of transposition that does not rely on altering the sample’s duration can also be heard in the work.⁶⁸ This form of dissociative transposition can be heard in the cascading sonic granules that appear alongside the descending samples of the word *ukuze* at the start of the piece. Each granule or fragment here, although similar in duration, is sounded fractionally lower than the last, giving the impression of one continuous croaking sound that moves down

⁶⁸ On the historical development of this technique, see Daniel Teruggi, ‘Technology and Musique Concrète: The Technical Developments of the Groupe de Recherches Musicales and Their Implication in Musical Composition’, *Organised Sound* 12:3 (2007), 217; 223.

along a curve set out by the vocal samples, further emphasising the idea of a vertical recession into a latency.

Like transposition which occurs throughout the piece, Herbst uses another basic technique in the manipulation of sampled sounds: retrograde. With this technique he reverses the sample's sonic envelope, allowing the decay of the sound to emerge first before moving toward its attack. It is also heard at the start of the composition. During the downward transposition of the *ukuze* sample, one hears the word spoken in reverse. Shortly after this, at 0'57", there is a descending line of pitches, possibly produced by manipulating piano tones, that have a marked attack and a moderate decay (Figure 3.2). These are then reversed, starting with each sound's decay, which moves rapidly to the attack. Yet it is not only the envelope of the sound that is set in retrograde here; the retrograde piano sounds then also move in an ascending gesture, signalling the reverse of their initial descending contour. In doing so, it further builds on the downward trajectory of the memory image receding into a latent state, but it also starts to suggest a horizontal temporal ordering indicative of Ricoeur's sense of the progression of a memory moving into and again out of the unconscious. I thus interpret retrograde here evoking a sense of directionality which, against the processional trajectory of time, is indicative of the recall and recession of the memory image.

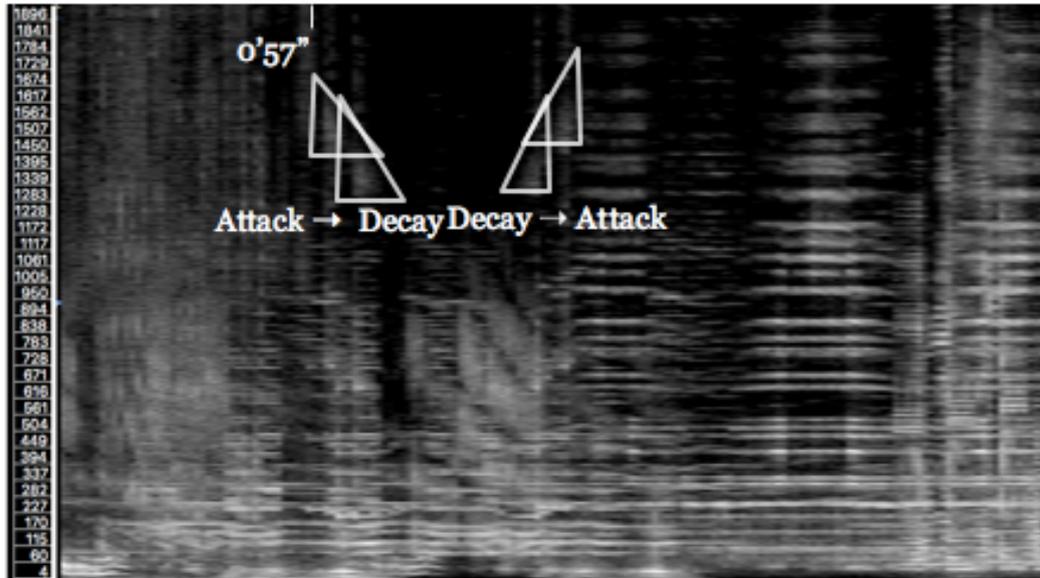


Figure 3.2: Retrograde, *Konka*.

While retrograde in the work signals for me the temporality of memory, I interpret the use of equalisation, the fourth technique employed by Herbst in *Konka*, as affecting the fidelity of the memory image.⁶⁹ Altering the amplitude of only certain frequencies of a sample, this process can be heard clearly after the exposition of voices at the beginning of the work. After the exposition of voices at the start of the piece, a sustained sonority can be heard, which is followed by a descending set of sonic granules (similar to those heard at the very start of the piece). The utterance of the word *ukuze* is then heard again, yet this time it is accompanied at 0'45" by a sonority that shifts between roughly C4 and B3 (Figure 3.3). This semitone movement could be produced by applying an equalisation process to an *umrhubhe* sample. When the bow's wire is scraped, it produces two fundamental tones

⁶⁹ Equalisation, as I use the term here, refers broadly to any procedure that adjusts a sample's magnitude frequency response. Vesa Välimäki and Joshua D. Reiss, 'All About Audio Equalization: Solutions and Frontiers', *Applied Sciences* 6:126 (2016), 25.

(the second is produced by stopping the wire with one's finger), usually a tone apart, which each produce a set of overtones equivalent to the first six partials of the harmonic series. While the fundamental tones are a whole tone apart, there is a semitone between the sixth partial of the first tone and the fifth partial of the second tone. For example, if the first fundamental tone is an F and the second is a G, then the semitone movement between the sixth and fifth partials of each tone would be a movement between C and B. It is possible to understand the shifting semitone sonority here as these upper partials which were filtered out of the original *umrhubhe* sample. The result of this equalisation process is that, while some of the frequency content is retained (the upper semitone partials), there remains only an impression of the *umrhubhe* sound. In this sense, and similar to the process of time stretching, I interpret the use of equalisation as resounding what Ricoeur called the disappearance of the memory image. Decreasing the amplitude—and thereby the fidelity of the sample—this process suggests the becoming invisible of the imprint of the initial event. Yet it might also be heard as the memory image caught in the state of latency: here it is only a partial image, neither present enough to be recognised as a memory, nor eroded enough to be entirely forgotten.

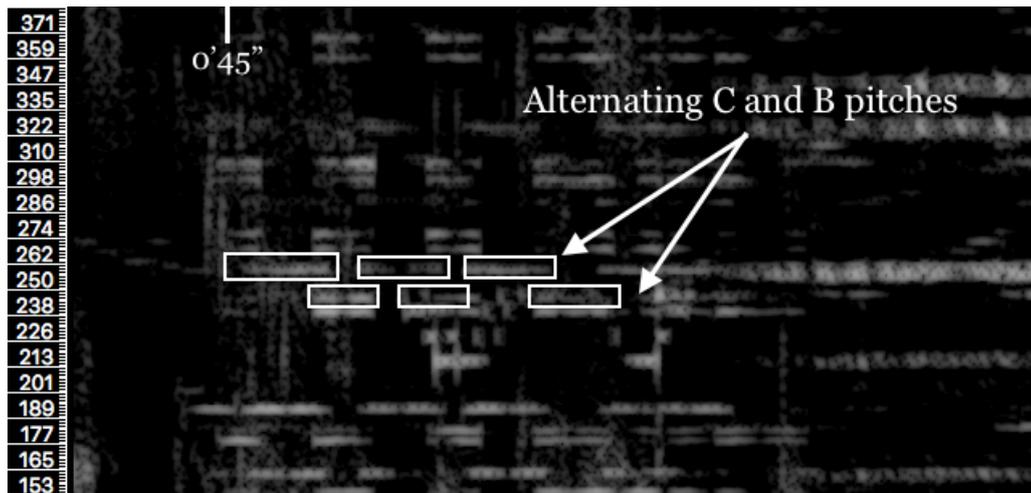


Figure 3.3: Alternating sonorities produced through equalisation, *Konka*.

The last technique, polarity inversion, does not on its own change the sampled source significantly. Indeed, to invert a sound's polarity means simply to invert its wave form around the line $x=0$, which does not affect the net amplitude of the wave. (If the positive range of a wave is 1 and the negative range is -1 then the net amplitude is still 2). However, when a sound is duplicated with the polarity of only one of the copies inverted, phase cancellation occurs, which is a complete cancellation of the output sound.⁷⁰ If the sound is not exactly duplicated by, for instance, changing its position in the auditory field through panning, the overall sound seems to double itself. Yet if this same procedure—duplicating a sound, inverting the polarity of one of the sounds, and then panning the two sounds in different directions—is reinscribed onto a sound with a high levels of low frequency content, the misalignment of the samples' phases is emphasised. Rendered 'out of

⁷⁰ If two wave forms, of which the one is the inverted form of the other, are played simultaneously, then the amplitude of the one will cancel out the amplitude of the other. This is because to invert a sound is to multiply its wave form by -1. Put differently, if you have one wave form with the amplitude of 1 against a wave form with the amplitude -1, the output will be an amplitude of 0.

phases', these sounds can be heard as eerie and decentred or hollowed out versions of the original sound.⁷¹

The hollowing out of samples by means of polarity inversion is central to Herbst's work more generally⁷² and occurs throughout *Konka*. It can be heard in the moment exactly following the alternating C and B sonorities described before. Here, at 1'16", the sonorities settle on a C₄-centred sound, which gradually gains a series of upper partials. However, when compared to the shifting chords heard just before, this sonority seems less distinct. Indeed, a spectrogram of this moment reveals that the C₄ tone heard here ranges sixty-five cents from C₄ -49 cents (which is almost C₃) to C₄ +14 cents (marked B in Figure 3.4), whereas the spectrum band of the C heard in the sonority before only ranges seventeen cents from C₄ -21 cents to C₄ -4 cents (marked A in Figure 3.4). Broadening the frequency range of the sound could be an indication of polarity inversion, which creates the sense that the sound becomes aurally obscure, moving it away from a central, clear fundamental tone. I interpret this cavernous, echoing sound as perhaps most literally reflecting Ricoeur's memory model in that what is presented is both the event and its affective imprint in close proximity. That is, I hear memories as samples that are 'out of phase' with their corresponding moments in reality; memories that resemble their appearance, but are marked by disappearance, and properly are a reappearance.

⁷¹ With the term 'out of phase', emphasis is placed on the phase relation between the wave forms of the duplicated sounds that has been altered in some way.

⁷² In *UMhala Wasetywaleni (Wat Maak Jy?)*, for instance, Herbst extensively treats both samples of isiXhosa singing and the *uhadi* bow in this way, at times creating swathes of decentred sonic material as a backdrop against which more discernible samples are heard.

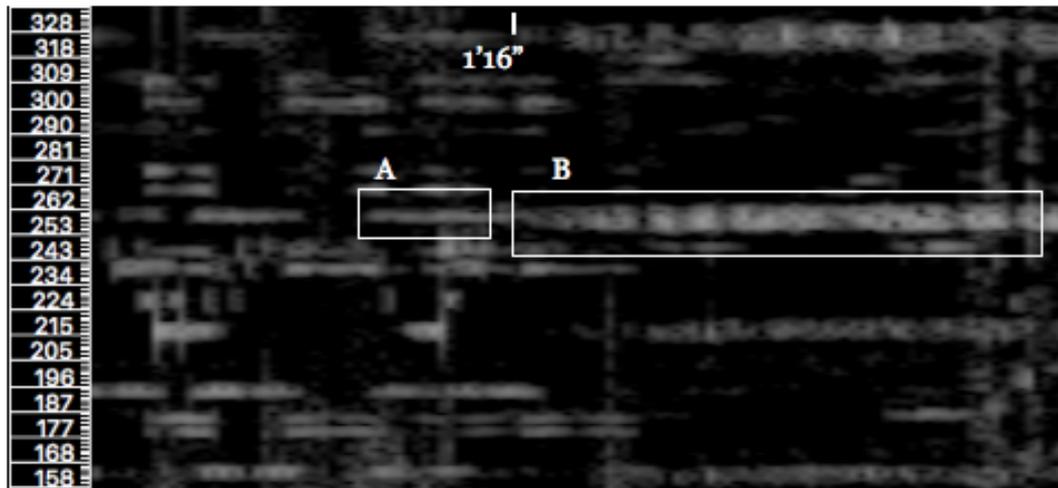


Figure 3.4: Expansion of frequency content through polarity inversion, *Konka*.

Tape II: Sound Objects and Traces

While the ways in which the samples *in* *Konka* are manipulated can be interpreted as reflecting aspects of Ricoeur’s model of memory, there is a sense in which they could also be construed in contradistinction as sound objects that ‘forget’ their links to the world. Such an argument would proceed by suggesting that, through the various transformational techniques mentioned before, the internal qualities of the samples are foregrounded. The transformations obscure the causal relationships that the sounds might have with their sources. In this sense the sounds created in *Konka* would be understood as Schaefferean sound objects and, recalling my argument before, would therefore enact a form of *Seinsvergessenheit*. Take for instance the sound that starts at 2’16”, shown in Figure 3.5. Centred on A4, the sound is a sustained pitch, but, owing perhaps to it being ‘out of phase’, its frequency band ranges almost twenty-five cents on either side of 440Hz

making it sound hollow, almost like it is being emitted from a cavity. This frequency band then slowly contours downward over the course of twelve seconds before ascending again. The sound does not comprise evenly held frequencies, but each frequency in the band oscillates up and down quickly over the range of around four cents, creating the sense that the frequency is vibrating slightly.

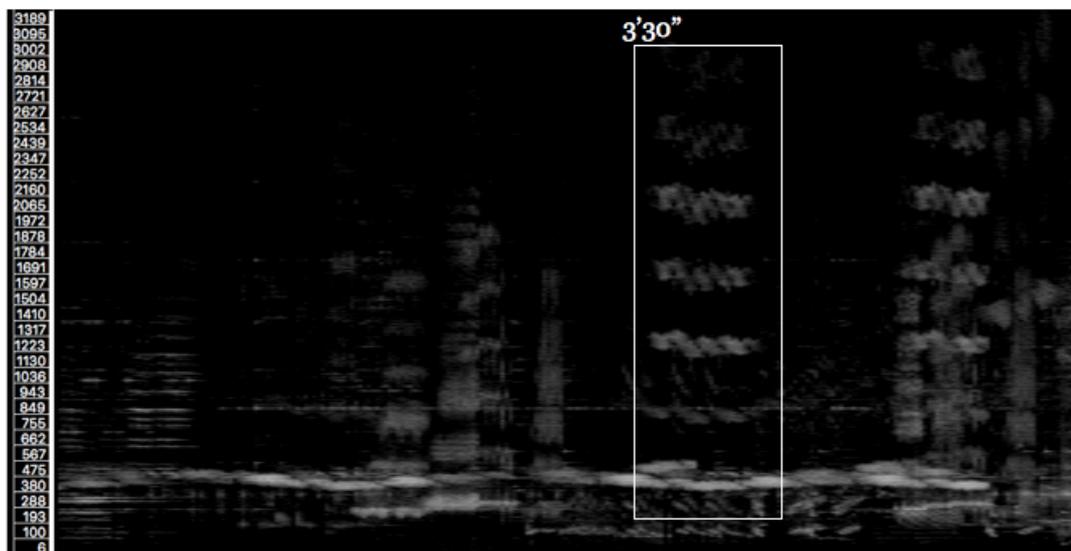


Figure 3.5: High-pass filtering lifted, *Konka*.

While these internal characteristics of the sound are initially heard, the source of this sound is revealed at 3'30". When the high-pass filtering (a form of equalisation) is lifted and the sound's sympathetic higher partials become audible, it becomes clear that the sound source is a singing voice. This realisation then shifts the understanding of the disparate elements of the sound heard before. The vibrating frequencies become understood as vibrato and the cavernous quality signals the projection from the mouth and the other resonating chambers of the body. In other words, the sound starts as a sound object, focusing the listener's attention on its internal properties by

stripping away those parts that would make the sound easily recognisable, thus provoking a reading in terms of reduced listening. With the return of the part of the sound that had been filtered out (the sympathetic higher partials), however, the source of the sound is made present again, allowing it to be identified as a singing voice. This process of return or making present again, which is present throughout the work at every moment where a source becomes determinable, negates the possibility of conceiving these samples purely as sound objects. That is, against the work of *Seinsvergessenheit*, then, the tape part of *Konka* can be read in a way that is more suggestive of the memory process than the process of *Seinsvergessenheit*.

In this sense, the work can be read in terms beyond reduced listening. As I read it, it sustains a form of listening that is sensitive to the connection between sound object and sound source.⁷³ Such a reading is substantiated in moments in the composition such as the treatment of the singing voice discussed above, but also in the tentative links that the other sounds I have described retain to their sources. For me, there is a movement here between the indiscernible and the discernible that highlights the need to hear the voice both in terms of its internal qualities and as a singing voice of the

⁷³ Of course, Schaeffer was not entirely unaware of this predicate in his own experiments. Despite strongly advocating for reduced listening, he also concedes that sounds never truly lose all their associative meaning. This concession is evident in his reflection on one of the earliest experiments with sound that he conducted: 'I have obtained some quite remarkable transformations by playing a fragment [of a train sound] recorded at 78rpm at 33rpm. By playing the record at rather less than half speed, everything goes down a bit more than an octave and the tempo slows at the same rate. With this apparently quantitative change there is also a qualitative phenomenon. The "railway" element at half speed isn't the slightest bit like a railway. It turns into a foundry and a blast furnace. I say foundry to make myself understood and because a little bit of "meaning" is still attached to the fragment.' Schaeffer, *In Search of a Concrete Music*, 14-15.

world. In shuttling between these two modes, however, the sounds inevitably retain a residue or a marking of their original sources.

In hearing the sounds used in the work as some form of residue of their sources rather than purely considering them as sound objects, the samples can be understood as Ricoeurian material and affective traces. In the first instance, as material traces, the sounds in the work can be understood literally as documents or inscriptions of the events from which they originate. They are recordings of events in the world, captured by microphones and preserved as digital files. The singing voice discussed above, for example, is a material trace of an instant in time when Du Toit-Pearce sang settings of Jonker's poems, which was recorded by Herbst. In this sense, the samples act like vessels which afford access (however effectively or not) to the historical content of their sources. This historical content, however, extends beyond the moment of inscription. The fragments of the Jonker poems, for instance, are suggestive not only of the moment in which they were captured by Herbst's microphone, but they are suggestive of a particular moment in South Africa's apartheid history when the poet wrote as a dissenting voice against the strictures of the regime. Similarly, the *uhadi* and *umrhubhe* fragments are suggestive of the sonic history of isiXhosa music traditions. And while the traces are suggestive of broader historical moments, they are also affective. Consider the hollowness and decentredness of the out-of-phase *umrhubhe* samples, or the unfamiliarity of the singing voice that has had its upper partials filtered out. These are as much traces of particular sounds in history as they are traces of the effects of emptiness and alienation that can be recognised, to use Ricoeur's term, in them.

Understanding the samples as traces is useful not only because it allows for a type of reading that is cognisant of the worldly nature of the sounds used in *Konka*, but also because it reveals the type of forgetting that is being thematised in the work; the particular character of forgetting, as I argued via Ricoeur earlier in this chapter, is made present at the level of the trace. The samples that sound out of phase because of their inverted polarity serve as particularly strong examples. In these cases, at least two sounds can almost simultaneously be heard: the original sound and the sound that has had its polarity inverted. Where these wave forms overlap, the frequency content of the sample is cancelled out, which as a form of negation can be understood as the initial moment in which the trace becomes latent or forgotten. However, because these two sounds do not exactly overlap, something of the original sample is retained (or returned) when it is played back. The played-back version, the version that is heard, has survived the negation, and can be understood as having been drawn out of its latent (forgotten) state. But this re-presented sound is marked by its negation; it has been hollowed out and is no longer in phase with its original presentation. That is, it can be read as temporally displaced: there is a gap between the original sound event and its inverted duplicate.

This process of displacement and re-presentation is particularly striking at the end of the work. At 10'38", the words '*van jou*' (of you), taken from the first line of '*Ek het gedink...*', are heard in a singing voice. While the sample has been stretched and transposed, it comes across as overwhelmingly out of phase. It is a haunting gesture; haunting because it makes a textual reference to a 'you' which is sounded out of time with itself, after itself. The 'you' is turned into a past tense 'you', one that is out of phase with the present tense

'you' to which it refers and which now is clearly gone. Yet what this haunting sound suggests is that the trace of the 'you' has persisted, or survived, and as an affective trace is available to memory. Against the decay of time, the trace retains its faithfulness to the poetic subject. What can thus be heard in the tape part of *Konka* is the positive function of forgetting, the one that, through affording recollection, acts as the condition for memory.

Piano I: Structural Erasure

Even though I have argued that the work's tape part presents something more than forgetful Schaefferean sound objects, a destructive form of forgetting can be read in the work's piano part. Cast in a late Romantic idiom and the locus of sentimentality in the work, the piano part of *Konka* in many ways provides a sensuous counterpoint to the work's distorted vocal and instrumental electronic fragments, as well as to the memory work of these fragments. This form of destructive forgetting, as I argue below, can be discerned through a structural reading of the part.

The part comprises five sections (labelled A–E) that are to be played at specific moments in the piece. The entries of the sections are arranged in a palindromic form in a mirror image around the 6'00" mark.⁷⁴ Section A, for instance, is to be played at 1'43" and 10'17" where section B is played at 2'00" and again at 10'00". While the entries of each section are arranged in a palindrome, the individual sections are not reversed in their second

⁷⁴ This theoretical midpoint is visible in the composer's sketches for the work.

presentation, which means the part does not actually sound an exact palindrome.

These sections are bound together by a B \flat tonal centre, which is obscured by a high degree of chromaticism, the avoidance of strong cadential gestures, and the absence of clear pronouncements of a tonic chord. Indeed, the B \flat minor chord around which the first three sections gravitate is often coloured with either an added ninth (C) or eleventh (E \flat) and never appears in root position. In section D, all the material seems to be based on or set against a repeated B \flat -A dyad, which is interrupted by a scalar passage cast in B \flat minor but which starts and ends on A. The strong presence of the A does not have a leading tone function in that it does not ever resolve directly onto a B \flat triad. Rather, it seems to act as a pivot which sets up the possibility for alternative harmonic movements (that is, harmonic movements not dictated by or related to B \flat). Toward the end of this section, for instance, one such bitonal scalar passage lands on a G \sharp seventh chord with a diminished fifth, which could be understood as a dominant function in relation to A but is not directly related to B \flat . However, the chord then moves, via a common F \sharp , to a dominant seventh chord on A \flat which, in turn, moves by semitone movement to a major seventh chord on D \flat before returning to B \flat (now, however, as a major chord). Section E then starts with a repeated B \flat major chord in first inversion in the left hand against which one hears a small melodic fragment in B \flat minor. This sense of bi-modality is further exploited when the chord in the left hand shuttles between B \flat minor and B \flat major in the second half of the section. Rather than affirming the B \flat tonal centre, the section ends in E \flat minor, which is arrived at after a climactic phrase based on a G \flat augmented triad.

Top Staff:
 System A: $b\flat_4$
 System B: $b\flat_{11} \text{ } ^6_4$
 System C: $b\flat_6$ $G\flat_6$ $b\flat_{11}$ $G\flat^+_6$
 System D: $b\flat^2$ $b\flat_7$ $B\flat^+_7$ $G\sharp_7 \text{ } ^5_5$ $f^{(\uparrow)}$ F $b\flat_4$
 System E: $B\flat_6$ $(b\flat)$ $G\flat$ $G\flat^+_4$ $e\flat_6$

Bottom Staff:
 System E: $B\flat_6$ $(b\flat)$ $G\flat$ $G\flat^+_4$ $e\flat_6$ $b\flat_7$ $B\flat^+_7$ $G\sharp_7 \text{ } ^5_5$ $f^{(\uparrow)}$ F $b\flat_4$
 System C: $b\flat_6$ $G\flat_6$ $b\flat_{11}$ $G\flat^+_6$ $b\flat^2$ $b\flat_7$ $B\flat^+_7$ $G\sharp_7 \text{ } ^5_5$ $f^{(\uparrow)}$ F $b\flat_4$
 System B: $b\flat_{11} \text{ } ^6_4$ $b\flat^2$ $b\flat_7$ $B\flat^+_7$ $G\sharp_7 \text{ } ^5_5$ $f^{(\uparrow)}$ F $b\flat_4$ $B\flat_6$ $(b\flat)$ $G\flat$ $G\flat^+_4$ $e\flat_6$
 System A: $b\flat_4$

Figure 3.6: Harmonic reduction of piano part (register normalised), *Konka*.

While the piano part is chromatic, it is restricted in its tonal range (see Figure 3.6). Aside from the E \flat minor ending, there is no sustained modulation away from the B \flat tonal centre. In fact, it is only in section C that there is a significant triadic shift, which is first to a G \flat major chord, then to an augmented G \flat chord. This shift is relatively small (and smooth) if one considers that it is only a major third down from B \flat . Even the chord that appears to be the least commensurate with the B \flat tonal centre—the G \sharp seventh chord in section D—is not as tonally distant from B \flat if it is read in terms of what Richard Cohn has called Weitzmann regions.⁷⁵

A Weitzmann region, as Cohn explains, is a group of five consonant triads that are each related by a semitone displacement of the same augmented triad. The transformations of triads in a Weitzmann region, while they may seem harmonically distant, produce syntactically close relationships. These chords can be related by specific combination of *Leittonwechsel* (leading-tone exchange, **L**, indicating the relationship between two consonant triads which are transformed by means of only exchanging the root of the first triad for its leading-note), relative (**R**, indicating the relationship between relative major and minor triads), parallel (**P**, indicating the relationship between two consonant triads which share a root), *Nebenverwandt* (next related, **N**, indicating the relationship between a major triad and a minor triad a perfect fourth above it), or slide (**S**, indicating the relationship between two consonant triads that share a third (e.g. C-E-G and C \sharp -E-G \sharp))

⁷⁵ Richard Lawrence Cohn, *Audacious Euphony: Chromaticism and the Consonant Triad's Second Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 59–82.

transformations. Specifically, Weitzmann regions contain the transformations **LP**, **PL**, **R**, **N**, **S** (Figure 3.7).⁷⁶

$C \xrightarrow{LP} E$ $C \xrightarrow{PL} A \flat$ $C \xrightarrow{R} a$ $C \xrightarrow{N} f$ $C \xrightarrow{S} c\sharp$

Figure 3.7: Possible transformations in a Weitzmann region.⁷⁷

Something akin to these transformations is heard in section D of the piano part. Reduced to its core triadic content, the moment of the G \sharp seventh chord can be expressed as:

$$G\sharp (\mathbf{R}) f [\mathbf{P}]^{78} F (\mathbf{N}) b\flat$$

Throughout the first half of the palindrome, the tonal logic can be understood as one of minimal transformations, which create a smooth triadic surface. This logic can be discerned until the end of section E, which ends on E \flat minor as an **N** transformation of the B \flat major triad with which the section started. Yet the smooth triadic surface breaks with the return of the second half of the palindrome, first tonally and then structurally. When section E

⁷⁶ Ibid., 61.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ **P** on its own is not a transformation between chords in the Weitzmann region and as such I indicate it here with a square bracket.

returns at 7'20", the first chord that is sounded is B \flat major. With only one common tone (B \flat) with the preceding chord (E \flat minor), the chord at the start of the second iteration of section E does not match the smooth transformations heard in the first half of the palindrome.

What then follows is a structural erasure of the piano material detailed in Figure 3.8. While section E plays out in full starting at 7'20", section D, the longest section, cannot be fully realised. Considering that this section should last around ninety-two seconds starting at 9'00", it should overlap with section C, which starts at 9'36", and with section B, which starts at 10'00". This is not only an issue with section D, but with each of the ensuing sections until the final section A. Section C should overlap with the entirety of section B, and section B should overlap in part with section A. These overlaps are also not isolated to the second half of the palindrome. In the first half there is a considerable overlap between section A and B, with section A lasting approximately thirty-two seconds starting at 1'43" and section B starting only seventeen seconds later. However, it is less noticeable in the first half because material is often shared between the end of a section and the start of the next section (the second half of section A, for instance, is exactly the same as the first part of section B). However, when the order of the sections is reversed and this overlap no longer occurs, the omission of material becomes far more noticeable.

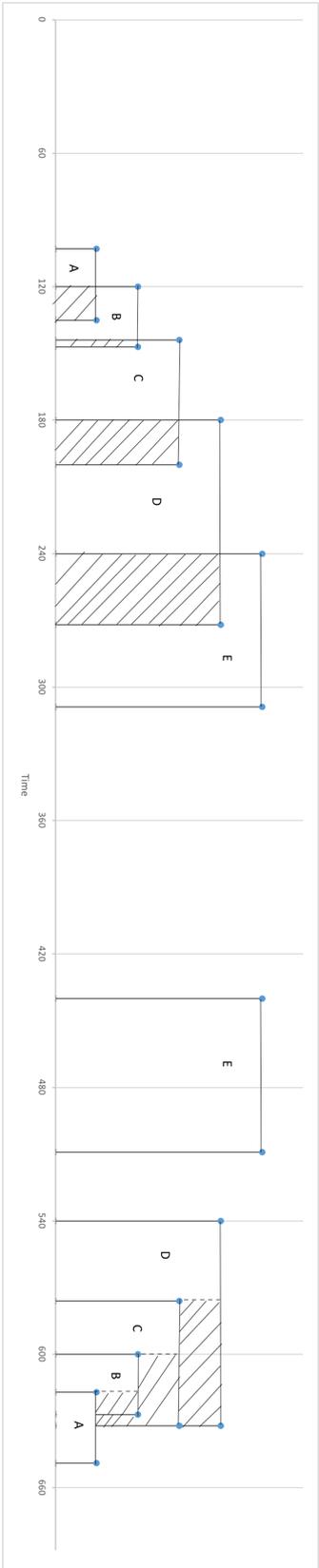


Figure 3.8: Section durations for piano part, *Konka*.

Piano II: The Effacement of Traces

I read the negative form of forgetting in this process of structural erasure, but also in the piano part's smooth triadic design. The latter, reminiscent of late Romanticism, suggests a sense of nostalgia in which a more uncomfortable and fractured historical memory is replaced with a tenor of seamless transformation and uninhibited expression. In this sense, the piano part could be thought of as a form of *Seinsvergessenheit*. Yet because the smooth tonal design cracks once section E returns, such a reading only holds for the first part of the palindrome and moments of the second half that are not destroyed by the part's structural design. Instead, reading the palindrome as a whole suggests an even more pernicious form of forgetting.

Such a reading, again, depends on thinking about the part and its various sections in terms of Ricoeur's traces. However, these sections are not traces in exactly the same manner as the sounds in the tape part did. The crucial difference is perhaps that, in its live performance, the piano part can be understood as undermining its historicity in the way that it predominantly manifests its own presence (my interpretation of course draws it out of such a present, but that it does, does not negate the presence emphasised in the juxtaposition of live piano and recorded tape samples). One cannot, for instance, say that any single note played in the performance is a marking or record left by the moment in which it was composed; at least, not in the same direct way that the samples constituted inscriptions of their historical

moment.⁷⁹ Nor do I understand all the sections of the piano part as traces. Rather, when not considered in its materiality (as a score), but in terms of affect, the sections of the second half of the palindrome can be understood as the proper trace. These sections are traces of their initial presentations in the first half of the palindrome in that they function as a return of their initial manifestations, as inscriptions of the historical event of their initial sounding in the piece separated by time. In this sense, they can be read as what Ricoeur terms elsewhere re-presentations, re-enactments, or re-tracings that enable a return to the present of the past event.⁸⁰

Yet if the sections of the second half of the palindrome are to be considered traces, they perhaps differ from the traces in the tape part in another important way: they constitute ‘effaced’ traces. Of course, the traces in the tape part of *Konka* do not entirely escape effacement; they are after all transformed and distorted versions of the original samples. Yet there is something strikingly different between the way in which the tape traces have been transformed and the transformation of the piano part’s traces. In the latter, we are systematically presented with a break down in (tonal) logic and a subsequent erasure of the original material. And it is not only erasure in the sense that the material erodes out of existence, but it is an erasure by rendering the presentation of the material impossible and inaccessible; the material cannot be performed by its very own architecture. For Ricoeur, this form of effacement—the rendering of the memory-image inaccessible—

⁷⁹ Of course, the score of the piano part could be seen as a material trace, but such a designation lies outside the interpretative—rather than strictly historical—project I am pursuing here.

⁸⁰ Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer, vol. III (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 146.

constitutes the destructive form of forgetting mentioned earlier in this chapter, one that can never be reconciled with memory.⁸¹ ‘In the matter of definitive forgetting, indicating an effacement of trace’, he writes, ‘[forgetting] is experienced as a threat: it is against this forgetting that we conduct the work of memory (*oeuvre de mémoire*) in order to slow its course, even to hold it at bay.’⁸² In this sense the piano part can be read as enacting something more than the form of Heideggerian *Seinsvergessenheit* in that it is not only a concealment, but a form of destruction.

Such a reading gains further substantiation when considering Ricoeur’s conception of this form of forgetting in psychoanalytical terms as a pathological dysfunction of memory. Following Freud, he argues that destructive forgetting is induced by the repetition that substitutes remembering and in the repression of the traumatic event that is rendered inaccessible.⁸³ These two aspects of definitive forgetting can be read in the harmonic structure of the piano part. Despite the structural negations, the tonal terrain never strays too far from B \flat in the second half of the palindrome. In this sense, the return to and pervasion of the B \flat acts as the substitute that blocks any meaningful tonal development. This becomes apparent as the second half of the palindrome returns: the B \flat major chord that is heard as a crack in the smooth tonal design negates the possible E \flat minor development or the return to B \flat minor. Yet repetition also feeds structurally into repression in the part’s palindromic form. The very return of the second half of the palindrome is a repetition, but it is one that is devoid of

⁸¹ Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 445.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 426.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 445.

rationality and that self-destructs under the force of its own malformed return.

Yet repetition as the substitute for remembering can also be read on the surface of the trace. Aside from the scalar passages in section D and the melodic fragments in section E, most of the piano part only consists of repeated chords which never achieve a change in texture. Similarly, the majority of the first three sections are dominated by the same dotted rhythm presentation. Yet I do not read the rhythmic repetition as functional here (as it might be thought of functional in, for instance, minimalist music). For me, this repetition constantly hints at change, without ever achieving it. A shift in texture is achieved in section D with the intervention of scalar passages, but these also become a form of repetition by never leading the music out of the B_b-A dyadic zone in which this section is cast. Indeed, the shift out of repetition suggested by these passages is a ruse which is quickly betrayed by a return to repetitive stasis. The last section, section E, is particularly interesting in this regard. Unlike the chordal texture heard before or the scalar passages of the section preceding it, this section is the only one with clearly defined melodic content. Yet the melodic line here comprises a series of fragments that internally make use of a repeated pedal B_b. These fragments are repeated without ever being spun out into longer melodic lines. Indeed, the longest of the fragments only comprises six notes of which three are B_b pedal tones. Thus these fragments also seem to suggest to me repetition as a substitute for remembering in that with each pronouncement, the potential for the eventual realisation of a fuller melodic line is negated. Put differently, the repetition of these fragments seems to block any full expression of a melodic line.

Read in this way, the piano part of *Konka* can thus be understood as reflecting something more than a mere smoothing out of historical memory in the form of nostalgia, or even a form of *Seinsvergessenheit* in the way that the conditions of Being are concealed. What I read in this part is amnesia as a pathological form of forgetting. For Ricoeur, amnesia constitutes the negative form of forgetting that can never be constitutive or positively functional in relation to memory. Amnesia, as was mentioned earlier in this chapter, is the denial and foreclosure of memory. Yet it is not to say that repression and repetition (present in the part's harmonic and surface design) necessarily cause amnesia. Rather, amnesia is revealed when these are coupled with the structural erasure of the overlapping sections. Such a coupling (and the resultant exposure of effacement) is only possible when the part is read as a whole. It requires the repression of development which I read in the negation of a movement away from the B \flat tonal centre and the repetition induced by the melodic and textural content. Realised fully in the first half of the palindrome, these aspects of the part are the destroyed by the structural failure of the second half of the palindrome. Put differently, what occurs in the piano part is a double effacement: on the levels of melody and harmony, memory is blocked; on the level of structure that blocked memory is erased.

The Structure of Forgetting

Thus far I have considered the piano and tape parts in isolation, which has allowed me to read two different forms of forgetting in *Konka*. While these two parts do stand in stark aural contrast to one another in the piece, reading

them together offers a larger and more complex matrix of forgetting, which is structural but that also suggests that the two forms of forgetting are intimately bound up with one another. Listening to the global design of the work, the infinitive *ukuze*, which engenders some form of expectation or anticipation, is heard at the start. The voices are couched in distorted instrumental samples which create a thick aural tapestry through which the piano must emerge. However, the tape texture thins when the piano is heard for the first time. Both because of the low surrounding dynamic level and because of how alien the romantic piano idiom is in the context of the distorted electronic traces heard up until this point, the first sets of chords sound exceedingly out of place. That is, the chords sound in the wrong place, almost like a different piece in the back of the listener's mind that is intruding on the tape's performative terrain. Yet it proves to be a subtle and almost non-invasive intrusion that is soon absorbed (to some degree at least) into the background fabric of the tape part. With the entry of section D at 3'00", the two contrasting parts sound more consummate, though still with the piano in the background. At this point the singing voice shown in Figure 3.5 before comes into focus and draws close to the piano part, almost as if suggesting momentarily a lied-like duet.⁸⁴ It is within this intimate context between tape and piano that the words *my woord* (my word) are heard, which suggest perhaps that the tape and piano parts are not divorced entities, but as part of the same creative utterance.

This close proximity, however, is not retained. At 5'33" the word *steggies* (cuttings) is heard, which could be interpreted to be a marker of new or

⁸⁴ This point is bolstered by the fact that the voice part is pitched at around an A and the piano part at section D also makes extensive use of an A tonal centre.

young life as in the original Jonker poem when the word is coupled with the imagery of lambs. Yet what follows musically does not entirely support this reading. The piano stops playing shortly after this pronouncement and a form of aural liminality ensues in which the tape sounds are exceedingly abstract with only the upper partials of indiscernible samples surfacing through a murky and nebulous aural texture. Heard retrospectively, ‘cuttings’ could be read in a more literal way, marking a moment of lysis in which the listener is unmoored from the safety of discernible traces for over a minute.

It is only with the sounding of the *uhadi* and the isiXhosa singing samples at 6’33” that there is a return to a more distinct sonic world. The isiXhosa singing and *uhadi* sustains much of the musical content here until the piano enters again at 7’20”, cracking its own smooth triadic design with the B_♭ major chord. Unlike before, the piano enters in the textural middle ground, balanced equally with the other samples and thus creating a sense of equivalence that for the first time makes it sound invasive. This sense of invasiveness is compounded by the fact that the isiXhosa voice has stopped singing and the piano is playing alone, only to be joined by a sample of the isiXhosa voice speaking the word *nesiqitho* (transgression).

In the context of the invasive piano entry, the spoken voice here can be understood as functioning as a commentator who labels the piano entry as transgressive. Such a reading seems substantiated by the entry of the Afrikaans spoken voice, which for the first time presents traces of the word *vergeet* (forget) in brief duet with the isiXhosa spoken voice. It is as if the isiXhosa voice names the piano part as a transgression and the Afrikaans voice specifies it as the transgression that is forgetting. Once named, the piano part seems more exposed, a sense that is engendered by the

reiterations of the B, minor chords that constitute section D's cadential close. Indeed, in this moment, the texture of the tape part thins dramatically and only the piano's cadence is heard in isolation. When the piano part reaches its terminus, the tape part re-enters with a judgement or proclamation. Still set in the thin tape texture, two clear pronouncements again of the word *vergeet* are heard at 8'30". Not only can these pronouncements be understood as extensions of the naming of the transgression heard before, but their clarity and singularity, amplified by the moment of closure reached by the piano, lend to them a sense of climatic referential arrival, as if to say that this is what everything up until this point has been about; it has been about forgetting.

With the naming of forgetting the piece turns toward a coda-like section. Exposed as a form of forgetting, the piano part plays out the structural erasure mentioned before with the various sections overlapping and thus negating each other. While the nature of the piano part's forgetting has perhaps been revealed, it no longer enjoys the foregrounded position it held during section D's cadence and is again relegated dynamically to the background. Yet unlike in the first part of the work, the piano does not sit contently within the background position and tries to play out above the tape part. Indeed, there is a renewed sense of urgency here that emerges as the part starts erasing itself as the tape part also increases in density and dynamic level. The three ascending stepwise notes of the singing voice at 9'50" signal the start of an apotheosis of frantic and densely layered samples. Against these samples, the piano hammers out the dotted rhythm chords from section B before it recedes into the background. At the same time, the tape part breaks off and the final textual reference, *van jou* (of you) sung over

an ascending octave leap, is heard. The conclusion to this apotheosis is striking in its discernibility, reflecting the proclamation of forgetting heard before. Read across the interruption of the piano's structural effacement, this second pronouncement seems to suggest the object of forgetting that is condemned as a transgression earlier: it is the forgetting of the 'you', which is also the forgetting of Being, or, quite literally, the *Seinsvegessenheit*.

Conclusion

Konka suggests in my reading a radically different approach to post-apartheid memory to what emerged in the works mentioned in this chapter's introduction. By drawing on samples of the Jonker poems, the piece does make some type of memory claim. Yet by shifting the focus to the affective trace by obscuring the relationship between the trace and its origin in the world, there is also a shift to focusing on the processes of remembering and forgetting rather than the objects of memory. However, this shift in focus does not only occur at the level of content—at the level of individual samples and their respective effacements—but it can also be considered as the grounds for interpreting the larger structural unfolding of the work. It is at the level of structure, then, that I read a differentiation between two forms of forgetting: one that is necessary for memory and another that is destructive.

By drawing these two forms of forgetting into the same sonic terrain, *Konka* presents for me the dangers inherent in memory work. During the TRC it was said that remembering would be crucial to the process of healing required after apartheid. Yet the type of remembering, to recall the epigraph which opened this chapter, sought here is carefully caveated: it had to be an

inclusive remembering, and not merely a *respectful* remembering. That is, the remembering needed is not of the type that clads itself in sentimentality in the hope of minimising the chances of disrespect but that, at the same time, effectively substitutes a false memory. Rather, inclusive remembering might be understood here as one that is cognisant of the forgetting it is predicated on, while remaining aware of the *Seinsvergessenheit* that lurks in the background. Indeed, this is what I hear in *Konka*: the piano part, which is the manifestation of *Seinsvergessenheit* and the destruction of memory in the work, literally lurks in the background of the tape part. At the same time, I read the tape part as a trace, which despite its effacement makes the past accessible.

Aletheia, the term that for Harper-Scott (via Heidegger) designates the type of unconcealment of modernist music, manifests for me in the tension between the threat of *Seinsvergessenheit* and the process of forgetting offered in *Konka*. It is thus not only a term that has to do with the verisimilitude of the memory image in the moment of remembering. Instead, my reading of *Konka* suggests that this sense of unconcealment can also emerge in the negative zone of forgetting. However, such a reading requires a reframing of forgetting, presented in this chapter through the work of Ricoeur, which considers it as an integral part of remembering. Furthermore, it requires conceiving of forgetting in relation to the trace. Indeed, the work of forgetting in *Konka* starts at the level of the trace through the various processes by which samples are manipulated, but also in the way that the piano palindrome eventually effaces itself. It is in the treatment of these traces that the type of unconcealment offered in the piece is revealed as animated by forgetting rather than remembering.

Shifting the focus in this way is crucial because it creates a different set of coordinates for reading the work against the post-apartheid mnemonic condition, and suggests that the work might indeed disquiet such a condition. The remit of the 'grave injustice' that Herbst set out to rectify, namely the way in which Jonker's legacy has been abused musically, is radically expanded in this forgotten piece. In my reading, *Konka* is no longer a work about remembering Jonker. Indeed, that possibility has largely been foreclosed by the degree of abstraction with which her work has been treated. Rather, I read the piece as grappling with memory and remembering reflected in post-apartheid South Africa more broadly. And it is this grappling that makes the piece such an important artefact in the discussion of post-apartheid musical modernism. *Konka* shows that the necessary remembering of modernism that Ballantine posits is one that, through a disarmament of sentimentality and the disclosure of memory's inherent connection to forgetting, becomes functional not in its specific framing of the object of memory, but in the fundamental questioning of memory itself. That is, *Konka*, as a form of post-apartheid musical modernism, suggest not only the need to remember but for me posits the interrogation of the very architecture of memory as it defines the post-apartheid condition.

Chapter 4

Spectral Resistance

Decay and Its Failures in Andile Khumalo's *Bells Die Out*

This thesis has in the preceding chapters considered the music of white composers as they grapple with the conditions of post-apartheid modernity. While their works, as I have argued, can be read within broader issues of post-apartheid protest, economy, and memory, the composers' own racial identities seldom form part of these considerations. What happens, however, when the same act of modernist disquieting is offered by a black composer? Do the same unquestioning conditions remain? Or is there another layer of identity politics that emerges around their work? In trying to understand these questions, I am sensitive to the implicit burdening that is imposed by this discussion. Why is it that the black composer must again bear the load of investigations into identity? Is there not a trace of racism that manifests here in the assumption that white composers can have their works discussed without scholars interrogating their identity, whereas the black composer must first be marked as such before they can be considered as creative

subjects? There is no easy defence against these questions, and in the following chapter they may be legitimately raised.

Yet I am also aware that by not considering the identity politics to which black composers in post-apartheid South Africa are subjected,¹ whether it be in academic or popular media, I, as a commentator in this field, will be complicit in producing a stilted discourse that relies on continuously consigning black composers to the position of the Other. This discourse is reproduced in the limited reception of Andile Khumalo, the composer whose work will be discussed in this chapter. An anecdote from his early compositional career serves as a powerful point of departure in addressing these issues, which I will return to again at the end of this chapter.

In 2002, Khumalo won a number of awards at the South African Music Rights Organisation's (SAMRO) Overseas Scholarship competition for composition in the 'serious' music category.² Melissa van der Spuy received the overall prize in 'jazz/popular' music. For one observer, it was ironic that a black composer received accolades for writing 'Central European intellectual music' while a white composer won for writing 'Zimbabwean folk music'.³ While finding irony in this situation will leave many uncomfortable, it was a striking statement on the skewed cultural configuration of South Africa's apartheid regime, which had ended less than a decade earlier. Such an

¹ For a detailed discussion of this issue, see Koapeng, 'I Compose What I Like'.

² 'Serious music' is still widely—although not unproblematically—accepted in South Africa to refer to Western art music, and was popularised by the SABC through its distinction between 'light' and 'serious' music. It was later taken up by SAMRO. This designation implies an artificial hierarchy of value, which was often contested even within institutions such as the SABC. See Schalk van der Merwe, *On Record: Popular Afrikaans Music & Society: 1900-2017* (Stellenbosch: SUN Press, 2017), 67.

³ Mzilikazi Khumalo, "'Serious' Music in an African Context', *NewMusicSA Bulletin* 3 (2004/2005), 15.

occurrence would have been impossible under the white supremacist dispensation.⁴ During the preceding half century, as I argued in the introduction to this thesis, European art music was seen as the ‘bounteous heritage of the Whites’ and artificial racial-cultural demarcations attempted to prohibit composing across the colour line: African music was for Africans and European music was for whites.⁵ The irony remarked on by the commentator was thus perhaps a happy one, borne by the astonishment that, for a brief moment at least, the promise had been attained of a non-racial society in which a black composer could freely compose in a style of his choosing. Yet irony here, however, also contained its own inversion: despite the promise of a non-racial society, there remains an expectation for the black composer to write African music. Indeed, it was this inversion that seemed to linger in a review of Khumalo’s music a little more than a decade after the scholarship competition. Writing about a performance of Khumalo’s *Shades of Words* (2011) at Carnegie Hall’s 2014 Ubuntu Festival, Lukas Ligeti posits that

the relevance of [Khumalo’s] Eurocentric music to the cultural situation in South Africa is debatable, and newly-created music in this idiom is almost inevitably derivative. Perhaps Khumalo, now back in South Africa after many years of studies in Germany and the United States, will yet develop a

⁴ Indeed, a New York Times article reports that in 1971, ‘four non-white young people were barred’ by the SABC from participating in a Beethoven bicentennial music competition because, according to them ‘different races perform best in their own idioms’. Harold C. Schonberg, ‘Music’, *The New York Times*, 3 January 1971, accessed 5 July 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/1971/01/03/archives/of-humpback-whales-those-seven-veils-and-other-tales.html>.

⁵ SABC quoted in Hinch, ‘Stravinsky in Africa’, 73.

South African slant to this style of music, leading to a more individual voice.⁶

Racialised expectation rears its ugly head. While it is important to take the author at his word, the evasive language here invites a more critical reading. Undoing the doublespeak, the passage could have read: the African composer can only ever imitate when writing in a European style; he should compose African music to express his authentic self. Clearly Khumalo's music offered something defiant of this expectation in the work of his that was staged in Carnegie Hall. This same defiance, however, has in other contexts been heard more positively. Writing about Khumalo's *Cry Out* (2009) performed at the Fourteenth Forum for New Music (*Forum Neuer Musik*) in Cologne, Georg Beck remarks that it is 'music that, despite our postcolonial expectations, does not produce the grand gesture of the raised black fist'.⁷ Rather, Beck hears in Khumalo's music a more subtle resistance against views such as Ligeti's, one which lies 'hidden under a whispering, constantly tense surface'.⁸ Similarly, this resistance is articulated eloquently by Chris van Rhyne when he suggests that by not adopting an Africanist aesthetic, Khumalo is able to 'challenge persisting notions of the African as primitive (natural, tonal) compared to the [West] as modern (universal, abstract)'.⁹

⁶ Lukas Ligeti, 'Juilliard Concert Review', *NewMusicSA Bulletin* 14 (2014), 9.

⁷ *Musik, die (gegen die Erwartungen unseres 'postkolonialen' Bewusstseins) gerade nicht die große Geste sucht, keine schwarze Faust zeigt [...]*. Georg Beck, 'Cry Out in Verschiedener Gestalt', *Neue Musikzeitung*, 2013, accessed 6 February 2017, <https://www.nmz.de/artikel/cry-out-in-verschiedener-gestalt>. Translation by the author.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Chris Van Rhyne, 'Towards a Mapping of The Marginal: Readings of Art Songs by Nigerian, Ghanaian, Egyptian and South African Composers', (PhD Thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2013), 178.

In my reading, however, Khumalo's work offers something more than this challenge. Exactly because it is cast in the Western idiom of spectral music, his work is able to speak back to the style's Eurocentricity. In this chapter, I argue that his work can be interpreted as eschewing a comfortable espousal of the compositional tenets of spectral music. To do so, I provide a close reading of Khumalo's *Bells Die Out*.¹⁰ This eight-minute work was premiered in New York by the Wet Ink Ensemble on 13 April 2013. It is scored for woodwinds, brass, strings, piano, and percussion (marimba, wood blocks, tam-tam, bass drum, and guiro), and has been aligned with the French school of spectral music.¹¹ Although the piece uses spectral compositional techniques, I argue that it can be read as challenging the notion of the infinitely generative capacity of sound upon which many of the style's early proponents relied. *Bells Die Out* brings into focus the tolling bell, a symbol, as Jonathan Cross has argued, which 'for the "spectral" composers of the later twentieth century, [...] offered infinite possibilities for [...] the contemplation of sound'.¹² Yet unlike conventional representations of the bell's eternal tolling, and as the work's title suggests, *Bells Die Out* can be read as resounding the very finitude of sound: bells in the work succumb to a loss of their kinetic energy and they do indeed die out. It is in the representation of the bell sound as limited or terminal that Khumalo's work cuts against the

¹⁰ The score for *Bells Die Out* is available as part of Khumalo's DMA portfolio. Andile Khumalo, 'Glissando as a Metaphor in Beat Furrer's *FAMA* and *Cry Out, Shades of Words, Bells Die Out*' (DMA Portfolio, Columbia University, 2014).

¹¹ Khumalo's music has not received sustained critical attention, with the exception perhaps of *Bells Die Out* in Harm Roché van Tiddens, 'A South African Spectral Composer, Andile Khumalo' (MMus Thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2016). In this thesis, the author situates Khumalo squarely within the spectralist school.

¹² Jonathan Cross, 'Introduction: Spectral Thinking', *Twentieth-Century Music* 15:1 (2018), 5.

assumed guise of spectral music. However, in doing so, it also prompts a critique of spectralism's Eurocentricity, which, as I will show, is coupled in discourse to the infinitely generative capacity of sound upon which early proponents drew in their works. This critique, read against the racially coded expectations prevalent in the reception of Khumalo's music, then provides a frame for understanding how, despite not explicitly performing it, blackness can be understood in the work as an absence or remainder. My argument, in other words, is that, while Khumalo does not employ an Africanist aesthetic in *Bells Die Out*, I read the work as evoking blackness as the ghost of colonial modernity.

Khumalo the Spectralist

Before turning to the work, it is perhaps useful to outline briefly how Khumalo came to write spectral music because it provides the contextual association between his work and his supposedly Eurocentric style of composition. Khumalo was born in 1978 and raised in Umlazi, a township located south-west of Durban in the coastal province of KwaZulu-Natal. South Africa's second largest township after Soweto, Umlazi has been a crucible for many important musical developments in the country. It might be known best today for producing the infamous hip-hop and Gqom¹³ producer Smiso 'OkMalumKoolKat' Zwane or gospel and R&B star, Khaya

¹³ Gqom is a minimalist electronic dance music genre that developed in KwaZulu-Natal during the late 2000s and gained international traction in the early 2010s. See Adam Harper, 'Get To Know Gqom, South Africa's Slow-Burning Club Music', *Fader*, 2015, accessed 12 April 2017, <http://www.thefader.com/2015/10/02/gqom-durban-south-africa>.

Mthetwa, but it has long been an important site for many South African music genres.¹⁴ During the 1970s and 1980s, men's hostels in Umlazi served as venues for two important forms of artistic expression that developed among its large population of migrant workers, *isicathamiya* and *isicathulo* (gumboot dancing).¹⁵ The former, an a cappella choral style which I referred to in Chapter 2, would in later years enjoy international recognition through the work of one of its most successful exponents, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, but in Umlazi and other townships it formed the 'core of black, isiZulu-speaking migrants' social practice'.¹⁶ Beyond folk and popular music, jazz and art music (both Western and endogenous) also flourished, particularly through training provided at the Siyakhula community music centre. The centre was started in 1986 by one of South Africa's foremost jazz trumpeters, Brian Thusi, to provide students in the surrounding township with brass instrumental lessons. It has since expanded to include a wide range of instrumental tuition, music theory classes, and ensemble classes, with the aim of preparing students for entry into tertiary degree programmes.¹⁷ Indeed, students from the centre occasionally continue their studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.¹⁸

¹⁴ Smiso Zwane was arrested in 2015 in Tasmania on charges of indecent assault, despite fans professing his innocence through the #FreeMalumKoolKat social media movement. Sihle Mthembu, 'OkMalumKoolKat: The Case of an Escape Artist', *Mail & Guardian*, 30 January 2017, accessed 12 April 2017, <https://mg.co.za/article/2017-01-30-00-okmalumkoolkats-album-that-our-post-truth-world-deserves>.

¹⁵ Carol A. Muller, *Focus: Music of South Africa*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 102; 130.

¹⁶ Erlmann, *Nightsong*, xv.

¹⁷ Nhlanhla Brian Thusi, 'Challenges for Artists in Performing and Visual Arts: A Critical Appraisal of Their Impact to South African Tourism' (PhD Thesis, University of Zululand, 2005), 43.

¹⁸ Thabile Duma, 'Discipline, Classical Music and All That Jazz', *Journalism Iziko*, 2013, accessed 12 April 2017, <http://journalismiziko.dut.ac.za/feature-review/dicsipline-classical-music-and-all-that-jazz/>.

It was in this rich musical environment that Khumalo received his early training. At age fourteen he started trumpet lessons with Thusi, then his neighbour in Umlazi, before joining the Siyakhula centre. Khumalo later joined his local church ensemble and the Salvation Army band, and through the Siyakhula music centre gained access to the Durban Music School and the KwaZulu-Natal Youth Wind Band. Upon finishing his secondary education, he enrolled for a music degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal where he studied composition with Jürgen Bräuninger, an alumnus of the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Stuttgart (HMDKS).

While Khumalo's early music education was dominated by gospel and marching band music, his tertiary education set him on a drastically different aesthetic course. Bräuninger's teaching, as well as masterclasses by other HMDKS affiliates such as Ulrich Süße and Erhard Karkoschka, exposed Khumalo to the avant-garde traditions of Western art music. Recounting these days, Khumalo speaks not only of the struggle to enter this musical world, but of the profound effect it had on him.

We were studying [Alban Berg's] *Wozzeck*, and for me it came across as such a difficult piece to follow simply because up until that point I had not seriously engaged with anything of the twentieth century. In fact, until that point I probably hadn't even seriously worked on Debussy or late Romantic music, so it was a stretch to listen to *Wozzeck*, you know. But at the same time it opened my ears. I was listening to this music not in terms of pitch relationships, but in terms of colour.¹⁹

¹⁹ Andile Khumalo, interview with the author, 27 January 2017.

Indeed, timbral aspects of music became important for Khumalo, especially in his earliest compositions. He recalls how he composed his first works for Bräuninger as explorations of ‘chord progressions as colour and sound, beyond traditional [harmonic] progressions’.²⁰

It was only during Khumalo’s postgraduate studies, however, that he systematically began to explore timbre as a generative compositional source.²¹ Upon completing his undergraduate studies, Khumalo was awarded an Erasmus scholarship to attend HMDKS, where he enrolled for a Master’s degree in composition. There, he studied with Marco Stroppa, an Italian composer known for his use of spectral music techniques, but who is seldom identified as a spectralist composer.²² With Stroppa, Khumalo began exploring spectral analytical and compositional techniques, opening the possibilities to employ timbre as a compositional parameter. His training included analyses of music by the founders of the French spectral movement, Gérard Grisey and Tristan Murail. Furthermore, he became adept in the use of software such as OpenMusic, which allowed him access to the analysis and synthesis of different spectra and their realisations on acoustic instruments.

If Khumalo’s studies in Stuttgart had equipped him with the various compositional and technological apparatuses of spectral composition, it was his doctoral studies at Columbia University that provided him with the tutelage of composers who were actively invested in composing spectral music. At Columbia, Khumalo studied with Murail and one of Grisey’s former

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Andile Khumalo, interview with the author, 27 January 2017.

²² Vincent Tiffon and Noémie Sprenger-Ohana, ‘The Creative Process in *Traiettorìa*: An Account of the Genesis of Marco Stroppa’s Musical Thought’, *Contemporary Music Review* 30:5 (2011), 378.

students, Fabien Lévy,²³ composing works such as *Cry Out*, *Shades of Words*, and *Bells Die Out*, all of which strongly draw on conventional techniques of spectral composition.

Three spectralist techniques stand out particularly in Khumalo's work. First, the above-mentioned compositions all rely to a certain extent on analyses of spectra as the generative foundations of the works.²⁴ That is, these compositions are based on conceiving sounds as frequency complexes, rather than discrete units (such as notes), which are accessed through spectral analysis. Gaining access to this type of frequency information, as Joshua Fineberg has argued, was integral to the development of the spectral movement in France in the 1960s and 1970s.

If [spectral] analyses had not been available to [Grisey and Murail], and if some knowledge of acoustics, psycho-acoustics, and the mathematical models they used to describe sounds were not also available, neither of them could have written anything like their early influential pieces (*Partiels*; *Ethers*; *Jour, contre-jour*, etc.). Spectral music is not really music based on pure tone colour (*Farben*) [sic], nor is it based solely on sensitivity to timbre and a desire to pay attention to it. While these elements are all present, what really distinguishes spectral work is something additional:

²³ Lévy is often considered a major proponent of the spectral style and is often programmed with Joshua Fineberg, Murail, and Grisey in spectral 'showcase' concerts. Such was the case at the inaugural 'Spectral Summer Professional Performance Workshop' at Boston University's College of Fine Arts in 2011. 'Spectral Summer', *Thump News*, 2011, accessed 15 April 2017, <http://www.callithumpian.org/spectral-summer/>.

²⁴ Andile Khumalo, interview with the author, 27 January 2017.

knowledge of the inside of sound and the desire to create forms by using this knowledge to work with sound from the inside.²⁵

What Fineberg refers to as ‘the knowledge of the inside of sound’ is an understanding of which frequencies, occurring as either a fundamental tone or harmonic partials, compose a given sound, and how dominant those frequencies are in terms of amplitude or volume. For example, if one analyses an E2 played on a trombone, as Grisey famously did in composing *Partiels*, one would see that the sound comprises a fundamental tone (E2) and integer multiples of it creating a near-perfect harmonic series. In other words, spectral analysis shows how single sounds are made up of a range of frequencies that are in some way related to the main frequency that is perceived. Access to such a set of frequencies thus allows a composer to draw musical material from a sound’s interiority.

Second, and as I will show in more detail below with reference to *Bells Die Out*, Khumalo often generates tension and release through the interplay of harmonicity and inharmonicity in his works. Rather than producing only a fundamental tone and its harmonic series, sounds often contain partials that are not integer multiples of the fundamental. These are referred to as inharmonic partials.²⁶ Percussive sounds, for instance, contain predominantly inharmonic partials and are thus considered sounds that produce a greater sense of inharmonicity. Conversely, sounds such as the trombone tone mentioned before comprise more harmonic partials and thus

²⁵ Joshua Fineberg, ‘What’s In a Name?’, in *Spectral World Musics: Proceedings of The Istanbul Spectral Music Conference*, ed. Robert Reigle and Paul Whitehead (Istanbul: Pan Yayıncılık, 2008), 32.

²⁶ François Rose, ‘Introduction to the Pitch Organization of French Spectral Music’, *Perspectives of New Music* 34:2 (1996), 9.

engender a greater sense of harmonic stability. In terms of perceptible and affective difference, harmonic spectra are considered more stable, whereas inharmonic spectra are less stable.²⁷ Indeed, it is this sense of stability and instability, as Chris Arrell argues, that is harnessed by composers such as Grisey to generate an interplay between tension and release, where the increase of inharmonicity builds tension and the return to harmonic stability constitutes a release.²⁸

Unlike traditional harmonic relations, however, the generation of tension and release in spectral music is often deployed to create a continuous process of transformation rather than discrete structural units. Of course, thinking of form as a process of transformation is not unique to spectral music, but it has become one of its defining features. This is in part due to the way that acoustic spectra not only generate pitch material, but form the basis of all the musical parameters in many of these compositions. As Viviana Moscovich explains,

in spectral music, [spectra] replace harmony, melody, rhythm, orchestration and form. The spectrum is always in motion, and the composition is based on spectra developing through time and exerting an influence on rhythm and formal processes.²⁹

²⁷ Jonathan Harvey, 'Spectralism', *Contemporary Music Review* 19:3 (2000), 13.

²⁸ Chris Arrell, 'The Music of Sound: An Analysis of "Partiels" by Gérard Grisey', in *Spectral World Musics: Proceedings of The Istanbul Spectral Music Conference*, ed. Robert Reigle and Paul Whitehead (Istanbul: Pan Yayıncılık, 2008), 320.

²⁹ Viviana Moscovich, 'French Spectral Music: An Introduction', *Tempo* 200 (1997), 22.

What thus sets processes of transformation as formal determinants in spectral music apart from those in, for instance, minimalist music, is the fact that they are not relegated only to certain musical parameters such as pitch or rhythm. Instead, these processes often permeate various levels of a work, consolidating, in a sense, ‘the perceived musical movement and evolution’.³⁰

The process of transformation in spectral music has been described by Murail as a process of anamorphosis.³¹ He recalls with this term the medieval painting technique in which an object is distorted based on the perspective of the viewer.³² ‘The idea behind this technique’, writes Fineberg, ‘is to present a single object from different perspectives, which distort the object in various ways—sometimes even making it appear to be a different object altogether’.³³ In this way, spectral composers distort the perception of certain sonic phenomena while still maintaining a recognisable sense of relatedness between them. Indeed, a form of structural stability through variation seems to be the attraction here. Grisey, for instance, uses anamorphic transformations as a means of varying rhythmic sequences in a way that

³⁰ Joshua Fineberg, ‘Guide to the Basic Concepts and Techniques of Spectral Music’, *Contemporary Music Review* 19:2 (2000), 108.

³¹ Claude Ledoux and Joshua Fineberg, ‘From The Philosophical to The Practical: An Imaginary Proposition Concerning The Music of Tristan Murail’, *Contemporary Music Review* 19:3 (2000), 54.

³² Though it is not clear when Murail first employed this term, it is possible that he would have been aware of Jacques Lacan’s theorisation of it. However, Murail’s use seems to differ from Lacan’s in that anamorphosis does not present ‘the subject as annihilated’ and thus does not create an encounter with the Real. Rather, Murail seems to be interested in anamorphosis as a process in which the perceived object—whether the Real or not—undergoes a form of continuous transformation as the perceiver’s perspective is shifted. Put differently, where Lacan is interested in the finite characteristics of the object that is revealed once the viewer comes into the right position, Murail is interested in the change that occurs in the object as the perceiver moves into that position. For Murail, then, whether the object’s truth is ever revealed is irrelevant. See Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York and London: Norton, 1981), 88.

³³ Fineberg, ‘Guide to the Basic Concepts’, 109

creates a perceived rhythmic symmetry, despite such a symmetry not being evident in the original sequence.³⁴ In this sense, transformations of sound in spectral music take on a certain sense of heteronomy, relying at once on the autonomy of musical structure and the autonomy of the listener's psycho-acoustic perspective. It is an acknowledgement, according to Grisey, that both music and listener are moving independently in time.³⁵ Khumalo's works also employ the notion of anamorphic transformation as a formal strategy. George Lewis, for instance, writes that *Shades of Words* 'exemplifies the resonances of remembrance', in that Khumalo frames a sonic phenomenon in a certain way, and then proceeds reiteratively to transform it, much like a memory that slowly changes or distorts as it is considered from different (temporal) vantage points.³⁶ Similarly, Khumalo suggests of *Bells Die Out* that 'the structure of the whole piece really is about how to look at the same object in many different ways, without necessarily changing the object itself'.³⁷

While these three techniques are present in Khumalo's works, there is a danger in oversubscribing to the importance of spectralist approaches more generally when reading a composition such as *Bells Die Out*. This is evident in Harm Roché van Tiddens's analysis of the composition. In his study, Van Tiddens attempts to argue that *Bells Die Out* is clearly representative of the spectralist approach by artificially superimposing onto the piece structural devices found in, among others, Grisey's and Murail's work. He suggests, for

³⁴ Gérard Grisey, 'Tempus Ex Machina: A Composer's Reflections on Musical Time', *Contemporary Music Review* 2:1 (1987), 243.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ George E. Lewis, 'Andile Khumalo: Shades of Words', *Ellipses [...] Journal of Creative Research*, 2016, accessed 11 May 2017, <http://www.ellipses.org.za/project/shades-of-words/>.

³⁷ Andile Khumalo, interview with the author, 27 January 2017.

instance, that the work should be understood as cast in a structure of repose, inhalation, and exhalation similar to Grisey's *Partiels*.³⁸ However, in doing so, Van Tiddens neglects the middle-level structuring of the work, which, as I argue below, emerges out of successive iterations of a tolling bell. Indeed, the bell sound is entirely absent from Van Tiddens's reading. In what follows, I offer an interpretation that refocuses the importance of the bell tone in the work. Rejecting Van Tiddens's premise, I argue that it is in the musical treatment of this sound that, rather than reproducing them, Khumalo's work diverges from spectralist approaches.

Bells Die Out

The centrality of the bell can already be discerned in the work's title, which is drawn from a seventeenth-century haiku, 'Temple Bells Die Out', by the Japanese poet, Matsuo Bashō. In its English translation by Daniel C. Buchanan, the haiku reads as follows:

Temple bells die out.

The fragrant blossoms remain.

A perfect evening!³⁹

While Khumalo clearly draws the title of *Bells Die Out* from this translation, it is useful also to consider David Landis Barnhill's 2004 translation of the same poem. His translation does not use the phrase,

³⁸ Van Tiddens, 'A South African Spectral Composer', 77.

³⁹ Matsuo Bashō quoted in Daniel C. Buchanan, *One Hundred Famous Haiku* (Tokyo: Japan Publications, Inc., 1973), 16.

‘temple bells die out’, and is thus not as close to the title of Khumalo’s composition, but it does articulate more accurately the contrasting sonic forces of decay and sustain at work in the haiku.

the bell fades away,
the blossoms’ fragrance ringing:
early evening⁴⁰

The haiku plays on the contrasting imagery of death and the ‘impermanence of all things’ against the life-affirming, spring-time symbol of the blossom.⁴¹ Yet rather than dialectically opposing these images, the haiku suggests a sense of synaesthetic transference in which the bell’s ringing hum is given over to the blossoms. This sense of transference is for me the structural basis of *Bells Die Out*, which I read in terms of the emergent possibilities (both aesthetic and critical) of the terminal decay of the bell’s toll. In this sense, my primary lens for interpreting the work is the haiku. It is useful thus to turn briefly to haiku theory before I present a deeper analytical reading of the work.

Bashō’s haiku, or, to use the historically more accurate term, *hokku*,⁴² ‘Temple Bells Die Out’, was written during the Tokugawa era as part of a

⁴⁰ *kane kiete / hana no ka wa tsuku / yūbe kana*. Matsuo Bashō, *Bashō’s Haiku: Selected Poems by Matsuo Bashō*, ed. and trans. David Landis Barnhill, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 32.

⁴¹ Haruo Shirane, ‘Matsuo Bashō and The Poetics of Scent’, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 52:1 (1992), 109.

⁴² What we know today as a haiku was during Bashō’s lifetime referred to as a *hokku*. I follow Barnhill’s suggestion to use the term *hokku* when speaking about Bashō’s work and ‘haiku’ when I refer to haikus in general. See David Landis Barnhill, ‘Introduction to Bashō’, in *Bashō’s Haiku: Selected Poems by Matsuo Bashō*, 5.

broader configuration of poetic practices grouped under the term *haikai*. A cross-media genre, *haikai* included *haiga* (*haikai* painting), *haibun* (*haikai* prose), and *haikai no renga* (*haikai* linked verse). The *hokku* is an offshoot of the latter *haikai* form. Based on the medieval linked verse, *renga*, *haikai* linked verse comprised groupings of semi-independent stanzas which alternated in syllabic rhythm. The first stanza in such a linked verse is referred to as the *hokku* and, though largely independent from the other stanzas, prepares the ensuing verse in two ways. First, the *hokku* includes a *kigo* (a season word), which records the season in which the verse is composed. The insertion of such words has become a defining aspect of the *hokku*. As Barnhill explains, these are ‘by definition poems about the [...] season’ in which they were written.⁴³ However, the *kigo* is not necessarily an explicit statement of the season, but rather a word which indicates the season. In ‘Temple Bells Die Out’, for example, the season word is *hana*, or blossom, which indicates spring. Second, while the *hokku* is a ‘complete statement’ that is not dependent on the stanzas that follow it for its semantic or even syntactic closure, it could be used as a statement to which the other stanzas respond.⁴⁴

Haikai, however, does not only refer to a configuration of art forms in different media. As Haruo Shirane has argued, it also refers to ‘a particular mode of discourse, an attitude toward language, literature, and tradition’.⁴⁵ Particularly, it refers to an interaction in the sixteenth and seventeenth

⁴³ Ibid., 4.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Haruo Shirane, *Traces of Dreams: Landscape, Cultural Memory, and the Poetry of Bashō* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 2.

centuries between vernacular cultural practices and the ‘residual classical traditions’ of earlier eras.⁴⁶

While *haikai* art was adapted by various schools of practice and transformed in significant ways over time, these two characteristics—the interaction between diverse languages and the reconfiguration of the established—remained intact. Indeed, as Shirane explains, *haikai* is rooted in ‘defamiliarization, in dislocating habitual, conventionalized perceptions; and in refamiliarization, in recasting established poetic topics into new languages and material cultures.’⁴⁷ Nowhere is this more apparent than in the following *hokku* written by Bashō in 1686:

an old pond...
a frog leaps in,
the sound of water⁴⁸

As Shirane argues, Bashō deploys the frog ‘against a specific horizon of expectation’.⁴⁹ The frog, which in classical verse was admired for its singing voice, is rendered silent. Instead, the pond becomes the sounding object. Against the expectation engendered by classical verse that the frog be the locus of sound, Bashō reconfigures traditional imagery, shifting the focus away from the frog toward its surroundings. Yet in enacting this shift, Bashō allows another reconfiguration, that of the seasonal. Traditionally, the frog is seen as a figure of spring, and as such is paired with sparkling streams and

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 8.

⁴⁸ Bashō quoted in Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

the life-giving essence of fresh water. However, in Bashō's *hokku*, the frog leaps into a stagnant pond. Here, two contrasting images are brought into dialogue. As Shirane explains, 'the sudden movement of the frog, which suggests the awakening of life in spring, stands in contrast to the implicit winter stillness of the old pond'.⁵⁰ Spring is thus inculcated with the associations of its preceding season, winter. Bashō's *hokku* thus does not only subvert classical imagery, but opens up the possibilities of the seasonal lexicon.

It is then in these terms that the *hokku* at the basis of Khumalo's *Bells Die Out* must be understood. Indeed, I have already suggested a reconfiguration of the sensorial 'horizons of expectation' present in the poem. As in the frog *hokku*, 'Temple Bells Die Out' offers the reader a sensory transference in which the bell's ringing is given over to the blossoms, shifting the aural association from the expected site of the bell to the unexpected site of the blossom. Beyond synaesthetic commixing, this shift also functions to reconfigure the traditional spring imagery by drawing decay into an otherwise nascent index of associations. That is, while the blossom functions to situate the poem in spring, the decaying bell sound, as Shirane argues, conjures the 'impermanence of all things' and a sense of loneliness.⁵¹ With this insertion, Bashō again—in a similar vein to his frog *hokku*—expands the possibilities of traditional seasonal associations: spring now is no longer only

⁵⁰ Ibid., 15.

⁵¹ Shirane, 'Matsuo Bashō and The Poetics of Scents', 109. Even though there existed a poetic ideal of the beauty of loneliness in medieval *renga* and *waka* poetry, Bashō, along with others during the Genroku period (1688-1704), was an exceedingly important figure in introducing this aesthetic, properly referred to as *sabi*, into *haikai* poetry. The reconfiguration here thus is both one of seasonal associations and one in which an aesthetic ideal of earlier poetry is reintroduced into a form that had its origin in the comic, the vulgar, and the everyday. See Shirane, *Traces of Dreams*, 77–81.

the season of life, but also of its concomitant, death. Following Shirane, then, ‘Temple Bells Die Out’, and the broader *hokku* tradition in which it participates, thus suggests a reconfiguration, via defamiliarisation, of the traditional, which I want to argue here is also reflected in Khumalo’s work. The traditional here, however, is not the *haikai* tradition, but, as I read it, the tradition of spectral music evoked in the work through the *hokku*’s focus on the bell. The bell has been the compositional focus of many of the style’s most influential works. Famously, it manifests as the subject of Jonathan Harvey’s 1980 composition, *Mortuos Plango Vivos Voco*, which is based on a spectral analysis of a tenor bell at Winchester Cathedral. As Cross has shown, the bell tone pervades much of Grisey’s work, from earlier compositions such as *Périodes* and *Partiels* to his last pieces such as *Vortex Temporum*.⁵² Cross also hears tolling bells in the opening of Murail’s *Winter Fragments*, which the composer wrote in memory of Grisey,⁵³ and which have their own precedent in *Gondwana* composed twenty years earlier.⁵⁴

There are strong similarities between the openings of *Gondwana* and *Bells Die Out*, but rather than occurring only as an initial instance as in Murail’s piece, the bell sound pervades *Bells Die Out* both as a generative source of musical material and as a structuring element. Indeed, the bell tone envelope, comprising an attack that has a dense acoustic spectrum, a rapid decay of inharmonic partials, and a slower decay of the fundamental and harmonic partials, can be understood as a structural unit in the work. That said, I do

⁵² Cross, ‘Introduction’, 3–5

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 5

⁵⁴ Rose, ‘Introduction to the Pitch Organization’, 31.

not read this structural unit as a mimetic synthesis of the bell tone.⁵⁵ Rather, a more abstract exploration of the various components of the bell tone can be heard in the work. Instead of reproducing exactly the sound of a bell, what is foregrounded in my reading is the bell tone construct in which the fundamental tone and harmonic partials seem to emerge out of the chaotic, inharmonic attack transient. Metaphorically, the work can be read as presenting the disaggregation of the bell tone as it is passed over to the blossoms. Through this process of disaggregation, Khumalo's *Bells Die Out*, in my reading, offers a form of defamiliarisation and dislocation, but, as I will argue, it also can be understood as an act of reconfiguration similar to that of Bashō's *hokku*.

i) Bell Tone Construct

To understand how this disaggregation works in *Bells Die Out*, it is instructive to consider more closely the smaller permutations of the bell tone construct that make up the work's larger structure. These permutations can be heard clearly during the first twenty-six bars of the piece. In its initial manifestation, the attack transient is arrived at after ascending glissandi in the violin and flute (see Example 4.1). The attack transient sonority is highly inharmonic, comprising the first three notes of incommensurable harmonic spectra of E and E_b and rendered by pizzicati in the strings, which further

⁵⁵ The idea of a mimetic synthesis as such might arguably not exist in any spectral composition. However, key to the development of spectral music (at least in France during the 1970s) was the attempt to recreate—or synthesise—certain spectra by deconstructing them into various partials and then reproducing them on a collection of instruments. The proper term for this technique is instrumental synthesis. See Fineberg, 'Guide to the Basic Concepts', 85.

adds to the chord's inharmonicity (marked by the solid-line square in Example 4.1). This attack transient chord can be interpreted as the initial striking of the bell, out of which emerges a hum tone created by a tremolo E₄ in the viola, which decrescendos until dissipating in bar 4 on an E_{♭4} (marked by the broken-line square in Example 4.1).⁵⁶ The tremolo tone can be considered as the fundamental tone—and thus a form of root—for the inharmonic attack transient. Yet it is not clearly analogous to the dying sound of the bell in the *hokku*. Instead, given the stark timbral shift between the pizzicato chord and the tremolo sustain, it might be heard as the ringing that has been transferred to its new vessel, the blossom. Unlike the blossom whose fragrance seemingly rings on indefinitely, the hum tone in the viola dissipates into silence in bar 4.

⁵⁶ I use octave indications here to acknowledge the importance of register and the way it changes timbre in spectral music.

Musical score for *Bells Die Out*, bars 1–5. The score is in 2/4 time with a tempo of quarter note = 54. The instrumentation includes Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, Horn in F, Trumpet in C, Trombone, Percussion (W. bl., Guiro), Piano, Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The score features various dynamics (pp, p, mf, mp, f, ppp) and articulations (pizz., loco, ord., extr. S.P.). A vertical black bar highlights the first five bars of the score.

Example 4.1: Bell tone construct, *Bells Die Out*, bars 1–5.

This same bell tone construct is repeated four times during the ensuing twenty-one bars, but each time it returns in a slightly altered guise. The second iteration appears in bars 6 to 8 in a condensed form without the

glissandi, followed by a third iteration of the construct in bar 9, now with an emergent hum tone that starts a semitone lower on E \flat ₄. In its fourth manifestation, starting in bar 18, the preparatory glissandi return with the addition of a tremolo F \sharp ₄ in the marimba. However, unlike the first three constructs which had highly inharmonic attack transients, the chord arrived at after the glissandi of the fourth iteration comprises, roughly, a major triad on E \flat against a D-A dyad, thus creating a more harmonic sonority than the one heard in bar 1.⁵⁷ At the same time, and again in contrast to the first three permutations, the hum tone is more inharmonic given that the D \flat ₆ in the first violin that constitutes its core is distorted by an ascending and descending glissando in the viola and a tremolo G₅ in the second violin. The fourth permutation thus presents something of an inverse of the bell tone construct's logic: an *inharmonic* hum tone emerges out of a *harmonic* attack transient. Despite this inversion, the overall structure of the bell tone remains. With the repeated presentation of the bell tone, which is deconstructed into its various sonic elements, I hear this first section of the work as setting out formal strategies of permutation and distortion rather than the negation of the dying bell alluded to in the piece's title.

ii) Attack Transient Prolongation

These strategies can be detected to a greater extent in the treatment of the attack transient than in the hum tone, which becomes increasingly prolonged and complex with each iteration. This prolongation can be understood as the

⁵⁷ The major chord and the dyad have roots that are now at a distance of fifteen partials in the harmonic series rather than seventeen, as is the case in bar 1.

a product of the polyphonic design of the attack transient in which material is exchanged between instruments. In bar 69, for instance, a rapid tremolo line in the violin is offset against a longer line of trilled notes in the clarinet outlining a descending movement. In bar 75, the clarinet and flute take over the violin's tremolo line, but in doing so, the intervallic content becomes restricted. Where the violin had leaps of an octave and larger, the flute and clarinet now use smaller movements, not exceeding a fourth. The line in the winds is also presented fractionally slower as two groups of eight demisemiquavers, rather than the two groups of ten demisemiquavers that the violin had before. Against this slightly slower tremolo line in the winds, the strings hold sustained notes, which, in the descent created by their staggered entries, resemble the clarinet trills heard before. However, after three bars, the held notes in the strings splinter into a reiterative descending glissando figure that acts as a rhythmically fractured counterpoint to the sustained material in the winds. In bar 81, the tremolo line is heard in the violin and viola, which now rhythmically shifts back to two groups of ten quintuplet demisemiquavers against short rhythmic fragments in the flute, marimba, and piano.

What seems most significant of this passage, however, is the steady increase in dynamic level marked by crescendos. Whereas the previous two exchanges (between bars 69 and 81) were marked by decrescendos, thus effecting a form of decay, the gradual increase in dynamic level in bar 84 seems to suggest an additive process, possibly resetting the structural trajectory toward another attack transient. This trajectory is affirmed when the crescendo, coupled with the ever-fragmenting counterpoint, culminates in bar 86 in a $D_{\flat}3$ marked *f* in the piano and double bass sounded against $D4$

in the violin and marimba. The concomitant decay of the hum tone then emerges as a decrescendo tremolo D₄ for four bars. What I thus hear in this section is a prolongation of the attack transient through the use of polyphonic voice exchange over the course of seventeen bars. This generates a sense of tension as the attack transient seems to expand disproportionately to the more harmonic hum tone, affording, in turn, a structural development that is not dependent on the permutation of melodic content, for instance, but on the intensification of inharmonicity.

With the exception of the structural break in bar 124, to which I return shortly, I hear continuation of the attack transient's prolongation and the intensification of inharmonicity until these processes reach a climax in bar 154 (see Example 4.2). Leading up to this moment, there is a rhythmically fractured line of two-note slurs in the upper strings and the piano's high register, which accompanies sustained notes in the winds. For the first time, the full wind section is employed. It swells in dynamic level until the horn descends a half-step from G₃ to G_{♭3} in bar 154, initiating a decrescendo that could be understood as signalling the start of the hum tone. But, as I hear it, the sense of decay is not attained. Instead, a simultaneous crescendo in the trumpet and flute negates the decrescendo in the horn and serves to sustain the general *mf* dynamic. The suspension of decay is then affirmed in bar 155 by the *f* F₂ in the trombone, which sets off an interplay of rhythmically fractured figures in the woodwinds, piano and strings, thus further prolonging the attack transient. Indeed, decay is not achieved until bar 163 when an *fp* B_{♭5} in the trumpet signals the start of a general decrescendo.

153

Fl. *ppp*

Ob. *mf*

Cl. *mf*

Hn. *mf*
open

C Tpt. *ppp*

Tbn. *mf*

Mar. *più mp* *mf*

Pno. *mf*

Vln. 1 *mf*

Vln. 2 *pp* *p* *mf*

Vla. *mp*
on the string

Vc. *mp*

Cb. *ppp*
arco

Play randomly high harmonics on III + IV string. The results should be a sound similar to acolian sounds on the flute.

Example 4.2: Horn half-step, *Bells Die Out*, bars 153–4.

If the horn's half-step descent in bar 154 can still be heard as part of the attack transient, then it marks the apex of its permutation. This is because the attack transient, which conventionally comprises multiple inharmonic frequencies generated simultaneously, is temporally deconstructed here. The G and the G_b that might have sounded simultaneously during the attack transient (as the E and E_b fundamentals were sounded against each other in bar 1) are now horizontally separated. The result of this separation is that the vertical and the horizontal axes of harmony and duration are skewed here, tilting precariously to engender a sense of inharmonicity as not only the reserve of sonorities, but of temporality as well. Like the *hokku* that extends sound into the sensory remit of smell and winter associations into the lexicon of spring imagery, this climatic half-tone descent suggests an expansion of the symbolic order of harmonicity and inharmonicity into the horizontal plane of time rather than the restricted instance of its vertical alignment. As I read it, the bell tone has been defamiliarised through a form of prolongation and thereby is reconfigured in such a way as to draw out its temporal structure.

Decay and Its Structural Failure

The building inharmonicity of the bell tone's prolonged attack transient is partially resolved in the last section of the piece. This resolution takes the form of a chorale which unfolds in three phases. In the first phase, starting in bar 180, a series of sustained chords in the woodwinds, brass, and piano are accompanied by short, angular glissandi in the violins. As the fifth of these sonorities sounds in bar 198, there is a rapid, rising passage in the marimba

against descending lines in the clarinet and oboe. These lines terminate in the first chord of the second phase. Here, the string accompaniment shifts to a rhythmic arpeggio on muted open strings. The second phase gradually thins in texture and dynamic, and the chords become more harmonic in nature, with the last chord in this phase predominantly built on the first six partials of a harmonic series on E \flat . The transition to the third phase (shown in its reduced form in Figure 4.1) occurs abruptly after three bars of arpeggiated accompaniment. In bar 208, the accompaniment ceases as an inharmonic chord comprising the first seven partials of the harmonic series on C and E \flat , is sounded by the woodwinds, brass, and piano. A tremolo E 5 in the first violin bridges the first and the second chords in this phase, after which the violin carries on with a C \sharp^5 flageolet in a *ppp* dynamic alongside the third chord in bar 213, bridging the third and fourth chords. The final chord of the phase is sounded in bar 218 by the piccolo, oboe, clarinet, and piano. Placed in the higher registers of each instrument, the chord, which comprises the first six partials of a harmonic series on A, bar a single A \flat in the piano, marks the apotheosis of harmonicity in *Bells Die Out*. In this moment the tension developed earlier in the piece through the composing out of the attack transient is finally resolved.

Figure 4.1: Reduction of the chorale's third phase, *Bells Die Out*.

While the chorale can be understood as a form of resolution, its final chord in bar 218 does not end the work. Instead, another nine bars of the C#6 flageolet in the violins follow, after which two abrupt bars of descending glissandi in the strings and woodwinds, marked pizzicato and quasi pizzicato respectively, close the piece. The glissandi terminate on an ambiguous sonority which resembles the A major-like chord heard in bar 218, but now further distorted with a C₅ and E_{b4} in the piccolo and oboe, again engendering a greater sense of inharmonicity. The ending is puzzling, not least because it defies the progression from inharmonicity to harmonic set out by the logic of the bell tone construct. Why should a work that, as I read it, is dominated by the movement from inharmonicity to harmonic close on such an inharmonic sonority, rather than the harmonic sonority heard before? One might expect that the return to harmonic would coincide with closure, yet it does not. The reason for this, I propose, is that the bell tone construct, as it has been deployed throughout the work, does not actually support a sense of ending. Rather, this construct can be read as emphasising

a structural failure of decay. That is, I want to suggest that like the attack transient which must be sounded again, the decay of the hum tone in the work also does not support closure.

To clarify, I turn to an earlier moment in the composition where I understand the structural failure of decay to be present. Decay's negation of closure is made audible for me in the break in bar 124 mentioned before, which occurs almost exactly at the mid-point of the work. This break follows on four iterations of the bell tone construct occurring after the already mentioned polyphonic development of the attack transient ending in bar 86. The first of these, starting in bar 95, makes use of a series of ricochet bowings, which move between the various strings to engender a similar sense of polyphonic voice exchange heard before, set against a rhythmically fractured line in the piano. The attack transient ends in bar 100 with the hum tone sounded as a chord in the winds for three bars. The second iteration then also makes use of ricochet figures in the strings, but now only lasting a single bar before the hum tone is sounded as a sustained C4 in the trombone and a tremolo G5 in the marimba. Unlike the preceding hum tones, which were seldom accompanied by any substantial material, this one's decay is interrupted by a rhythmically fractured line in the piano, similar to the one heard in the lead up to bar 100. Rather than only occurring as a brief interjection, however, the piano's line is soon joined by a quintuplet figure passed as fragments between the upper strings.

Rather than a polyphonic prolongation of the attack transient, this interjection can be understood as the overlapping of the attack transient of the third iteration and the decay of the second iteration. Indeed, this seems to be corroborated by the fact that the hum tone for this iteration starts in bar

112 as a flageolet E_b5 in the violin, which completes the bell tone construct. However, almost as soon as the hum tone starts, there is a second interruption, this time by the flute and clarinet. This interruption is not polyphonic in nature and the lines here more closely resemble written-out glissandi, echoing the preparatory glissandi heard at the start of the piece. These lines quickly terminate in an attack transient in bar 118 which starts the fourth bell tone construct. Without any form of polyphonic prolongation, the attack transient is superseded immediately by a long decay, comprising a rhythmically disintegrating line of repeated E_b major chords against a rhythmically fragmented, repeated F_#5 in the cello and a sustained E_b5 flageolet in the violin. The decay ends in bar 124 as an eight-second break at the centre of the work (see Example 4.3).

I read this break as the marker of the decay of the bell tone's structural failure. Throughout the larger structural unfolding of the work, I have outlined the general rise of tension until the climax in bar 153. This gathering tension is achieved through the development of the inharmonicity inherent to the attack transient. However, intrinsically coupled to the attack transient is its hum tone as a form of decay, which signals a return to harmonicity, and thus creates a paradox at the level of the work's most basic structural unit. This paradox holds that, given its developmental role in the work, inharmonicity must always be produced again, but its very production requires its negation through an immediate return to harmonicity. I have read the prolongation of the attack transient as a mitigation of this paradox in that it extends the state of inharmonicity in the work, rather than resolving it. Furthermore, as I observed in the lead up to the break in bar 124, there has also been an attempt to superimpose a new attack transient onto the previous

construct's decay, thereby diminishing the distinction between harmonicity and inharmonicity.

Both strategies—that of attack prolongation and commixing attack transient and decay—culminate in the break in bar 124. But this break is not a form of closure: what emerges instead is another attack transient in bar 125, now in the winds and the strings without any preparation and marked *f*. While this reiteration suggests for me that decay alone is not enough to create closure, it does instigate the shift in timbre which builds to the climax in bar 153. That is, I read the break as a moment in which the timbral quality of the ensemble is significantly changed and the first half's dry tone colours of the piano's high register, ricochet bowings and pizzicati in the strings, and tremolos in the marimba are replaced by the harmonically rich timbre of the brass instruments and a fuller orchestration. In this sense, there is a return to sounding the bell in its original, and highly harmonic, form in bar 125. It is this sense of return or reiteration which then becomes the timbral ground upon which the climatic horn half-step in bar 153 unfolds. Yet read as a modulatory device rather than a cadential moment of respite, the structural break suggests that the decay of the hum tone does not support closure. Reading this moment within the piece more broadly then suggests that although in *Bells Die Out* decay is terminal, it cannot sustain structural closure. Decay in this sense is a false form of closure which can end the sound to which it is immediately attached, but cannot extend itself to the global design of the work. It thus marks the containment of the bell sound, rather than its greater structural significance.

$\text{♩} = 64$

The musical score for Example 4.3, titled "Bells Die Out", covers bars 123 to 126. The tempo is marked as $\text{♩} = 64$. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with the following parts:

- Flute (Fl.):** Starts with a rest in bar 123. In bar 124, it plays a sustained note with a dynamic of *f*. In bar 125, it continues with a dynamic of *f*. In bar 126, it plays a note with a dynamic of *ppp*.
- Oboe (Ob.):** Starts with a rest in bar 123. In bar 124, it plays a sustained note with a dynamic of *mf*. In bar 125, it continues with a dynamic of *ppp*. In bar 126, it plays a note with a dynamic of *ppp*.
- Clarinet (Cl.):** Starts with a rest in bar 123. In bar 124, it plays a sustained note with a dynamic of *f*. In bar 125, it continues with a dynamic of *f*. In bar 126, it plays a note with a dynamic of *ppp*.
- Horn (Hn.):** Starts with a rest in bar 123. In bar 124, it plays a sustained note with a dynamic of *mf*. In bar 125, it continues with a dynamic of *ppp*. In bar 126, it plays a note with a dynamic of *ppp*.
- Trumpet (C Tpt.):** Starts with a rest in bar 123. In bar 124, it plays a note with a dynamic of *p* and a "str. mute" instruction. In bar 125, it continues with a dynamic of *p*. In bar 126, it plays a note with a dynamic of *p*.
- Trombone (Tbn.):** Starts with a rest in bar 123. In bar 124, it plays a note with a dynamic of *p* and a "str. mute" instruction. In bar 125, it continues with a dynamic of *p*. In bar 126, it plays a note with a dynamic of *p*.
- Maracas (Mar.):** Starts with a rest in bar 123. In bar 124, it plays a note with a dynamic of *mf*. In bar 125, it continues with a dynamic of *mf*. In bar 126, it plays a note with a dynamic of *mf*.
- Piano (Pno.):** Starts with a rest in bar 123. In bar 124, it plays a note with a dynamic of *pp* and a "loco" instruction. In bar 125, it continues with a dynamic of *ppp*. In bar 126, it plays a note with a dynamic of *mf*.
- Violin 1 (Vln. 1):** Starts with a rest in bar 123. In bar 124, it plays a note with a dynamic of *p*. In bar 125, it continues with a dynamic of *pp*. In bar 126, it plays a note with a dynamic of *mp*.
- Violin 2 (Vln. 2):** Starts with a rest in bar 123. In bar 124, it plays a note with a dynamic of *p*. In bar 125, it continues with a dynamic of *pp*. In bar 126, it plays a note with a dynamic of *pp*.
- Viola (Vla.):** Starts with a rest in bar 123. In bar 124, it plays a note with a dynamic of *f*. In bar 125, it continues with a dynamic of *pp*. In bar 126, it plays a note with a dynamic of *mp*.
- Violoncello (Vc.):** Starts with a rest in bar 123. In bar 124, it plays a note with a dynamic of *mp* and an "ord." instruction. In bar 125, it continues with a dynamic of *pp*. In bar 126, it plays a note with a dynamic of *f*.
- Contrabass (Cb.):** Starts with a rest in bar 123. In bar 124, it plays a note with a dynamic of *pp* and a "pizz." instruction. In bar 125, it continues with a dynamic of *mf*. In bar 126, it plays a note with a dynamic of *f*.

Example 4.3: Central structural break, *Bells Die Out*, bars 123–6.

The containment of decay to its immediate context can—somewhat paradoxically, as I will argue—be read in terms of haiku poetics. In particular, I understand this containment as reflecting the haiku’s negation of interpretation. Reading the haiku in this way stresses an understanding of the poem as presenting an intense, momentary verisimilitude that eschews all ambiguity and symbolic references. That is, the haiku in this reading becomes

primarily an objective nature poem. It concerns the pure present [...] and so allusions to the past and narrative content are not significant. The poem also presents the object in itself, rather than images with symbolic reference, with the poet writing within the solitude of his encounter with nature. As a result, the cultural context, whether it is the literary traditions or the circumstances of the poem, are unimportant.⁵⁸

This form of reading emphasises the ‘haiku moment’, a term that Kenneth Yasuda, writing in 1957, popularised in Western scholarship. The haiku moment, he writes, is one ‘in which the words which created the experience and the experience itself can become one.’⁵⁹ It is a moment in which mediating ambiguity of language is stripped away through ‘the total implication of the words in the realization of experience’.⁶⁰ The negation of interpretation might best be summarised in Saussurean terms: by closing the gap between signifier (the word) and referent (the concrete object), the haiku precludes the ideation of the signified (the concept) and its connotative

⁵⁸ Barnhill, ‘Introduction’, 6.

⁵⁹ Kenneth Yasuda, *The Japanese Haiku: Its Essential Nature and History* (Boston, Rutland, Vermont, and Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing, 2001 [1957]), 32.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

network of interpretation. Put differently, the ‘thing’ presented in the haiku recalls only its manifestation in reality, and, in doing so, it does not become a place holder for anything else.

Cast in these terms, the ‘haiku moment’ represents a semiotic enigma for Western literary scholars and authors.⁶¹ Most telling in this regard is Roland Barthes deployment of the haiku as the antithesis to the novel in his final lecture series, *The Preparation of the Novel*.⁶² Here, Barthes seeks to conceptualise a form of writing that emerges out of a tension between the minute, condensed aesthetic of the haiku and the immersive text of the *grand oeuvre* exemplified by Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time*.⁶³ In developing this tension, Barthes argues that the haiku epitomises a form of what he terms ‘Notation’, the result of taking note of the unpredictable moment, which then is expatiated into the novel. Notation, for Barthes, is fragmentary and discontinuous but it is simultaneously a reportage of reality, and thus a form of ‘truth’ of the present.⁶⁴ As a form of notation, then, the haiku acts as the ‘conjunction of a “truth” (not a conceptual truth, but of the *Instant*) and a

⁶¹ Ezra Pound is a good example of the latter. Along with others in the Imagist movement which emerged in the early twentieth century, Pound wanted to draw on haiku poetics to inform a sense of sharpness and clarity in his writing by stripping away any ambiguity between sign and referent. See Zhaoming Qian, ‘The Orient’, in *Ezra Pound in Context*, ed. Ira B. Nadel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 335–44.

⁶² Haiku are a topic Barthes addresses on various occasions in his work, most notably in *Empire of Signs*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982).; and *Camera Lucida*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980). Another interesting instance of reading the haiku against the novel occurs in literary critics Ian Marshall and Megan Simpson’s idiosyncratic dialogue on haikus and deconstruction. See Ian Marshall and Megan Simpson, ‘Deconstructing Haiku: A Dialogue’, *College Literature* 33:3 (2006), 117–34.

⁶³ Roland Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, trans. Kate Briggs (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 107–8.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 18–19.

form.’⁶⁵ In this sense, the haiku expresses ‘what is’, evoking a response (the haiku moment) as a recognition of a ‘truth’ of the instance described.

Following the logic of the haiku moment’s preclusion of interpretation, Barthes asserts that the haiku should be understood as a ‘nonresonant account of the real.’⁶⁶ The instant produced by the haiku does not reach beyond itself. It is contained only within itself and thereby offers the reader only the recognition of ‘what is’. Barthes uses the Zen Buddhist term *satori* to describe this recognition. It is an instantaneous recognition of a truth contained in the haiku, to which the ‘only possible’ response is, ‘That’s it!’⁶⁷ This response, the *satori*, is then the moment in which the reader bypasses the signified and is directly confronted with the essence of the referent. It is the simultaneous occurrence of the enunciation of ‘what is’ and the rapture which manifests in the coterminous expression of ‘that’s it!’ The *satori* moment, in this sense, is not dissimilar to Heidegger’s unconcealment or Ricoeur’s own sense of recognition in the process of remembering discussed in Chapter 3. Yet a crucial difference arises, for Barthes, in that the simultaneity of enunciation (the haiku) and recognition (the *satori*) actively blocks interpretation (for Ricoeur, for instance, recognition leads to remembering, which is fertile terrain for interpretation). That is, the haiku, read in this way, is profoundly ‘anti-interpretative’.⁶⁸

I understand the failure of decay in *Bells Die Out* as producing a similar effect. It suggests for me that the bell tone is indeed non-resonant; while its sound lingers momentarily as a hum tone, it ultimately dies out. The way in

⁶⁵ Ibid., 25.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 69.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 78.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

which the decay of the bell tone fails to support a structural sense of closure suggests something akin to the haiku's negation of interpretation. Just as the haiku, in its verisimilitude does not allow for it to be spun out beyond itself in an interpretative reading, so the decay of the bell tone here negates its own structural function. Put differently, decay here does not function beyond itself. It is a sounding of the real that blocks associations of ending and finality in the global design of the work. In this sense, the bell tone evoked in *Bells Die Out* differs remarkably from the one described in Bashō's poem. In the latter, the hum tone rings on and is transferred to the blossoms, thereby gaining an afterlife beyond its moment of enunciation. Yet in this difference, I want to suggest, there is a degree of ambiguity (and indeed contradiction) that is opened up by play on the bell tone both as sonic object and as abstract figuration which provokes again a desire for interpretation.

The return to interpretation here can be accounted for in haiku theory. While haikus, and particularly *hokku* of the Genroku literary period of which Bashō's mature works form a part, do stress verisimilitude, they also afford the reader another reading, one which indeed has to do with the multitudes of associations thrown up by the *hokku*'s rich symbolic nature. Shirane argues that this second level of reading arises from the 'indirections—displacement (such as metaphor, metonymy), distortions (ambiguity, hyperbole, contradiction), and the creation of textual space (symmetry, rhyme)—that threaten' literary representations of reality.⁶⁹ It is a reading in which the words that conjure the haiku's reality start to form 'parts of other networks or systems of signs.'⁷⁰ What is important here, however, is that this slip into

⁶⁹ Shirane, *Traces of Dreams*, 50.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

interpretation does not undo the immediacy of the haiku. Rather, it acts as an alternative to it, one which allows the haiku to participate in the poetics of reconfiguration offered by *haikai* art more broadly. The reader, Shirane continues, is required to create a ‘double vision’ that allows for the ‘disjunction and resonances’ between the haiku as representation of reality and the haiku as a historically situated form.⁷¹ In this sense, the appeal of the haiku resides perhaps exactly in the tension that emerges between its anti-interpretative nature and the way in which it is able to partake in a broader interpretative network.

The duality of the haiku suggests that what is at stake is not so much whether it negates interpretation or not. Instead, it suggests that perhaps there exists a clash between two interpretative modes: one that is partly dependent on non-interpretation and one that needs to resolve such a tension into either anti-interpretation or interpretation alone. Indeed, the latter interpretative mode is apparent in Barthes’s summary of the interpretative process that the reader goes through when confronted by the haiku. He argues that the haiku’s challenge to interpretation arises from a three-fold process in which (1) the reader acknowledges the immediacy of the haiku imagery, (2) they then attempt to interpret this imagery, (3) only to realise that there is no interpretation. This is what Barthes terms ‘the third turn of the screw’, a phrase with which he attempts to detail an interpretative mode that must find a resolution between two irreconcilable readings.⁷² According to Shirane, however, the haiku requires more. Its imperative is that the screw needs to keep turning without finding resolution. *Bells Die Out*, and

⁷¹ Ibid., 51.

⁷² Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, 81.

particularly the return to inharmonicity at the end of the work, suggests this type of irresolution. Indeed, the work's close, along with the broader failure of decay that emerges throughout the piece, simultaneously negates interpretation through the terminus of decay (what is heard is simply a tolling bell) and begs something more (another toll of the bell perhaps) through its inharmonic ambiguity. As such, *Bells Die Out*, much like the haiku, can be read as suggestive of a double vision of the real and the symbolic. It is this provocation of a double vision, however, that affords the work its resistance against an easy classification as 'spectralist'. Yet in resisting this Eurocentric categorisation, the work also does not assume a clear position of its Other in African music as the binary set up in Ligeti's remark cited at the start of this chapter might suggest. Rather, and as I will show in the remainder of this chapter, the work, in its recalcitrant suspension, questions the effortless slippage into either of these categories.

Against Spectralism

The resistance against the spectralist categorisation stems for me from the structural failure of decay in *Bells Die Out*, which can be understood as something that reaches beyond the internal, formal workings of the piece. Like the bell sound in the *hokku* that bleeds out into the surrounding blossoms, the bell sound in Khumalo's work seems to reach out into its own aesthetic-historical context. Considering that the material of *Bells Die Out* can be understood as closely reflecting archetypal spectral techniques (the use of sonic spectra as musical material, the creation of tension through inharmonicity, and the anamorphic transformation of the bell tone construct

as a formal principle) and objects (the bell sound), the context to which it speaks, and indeed the horizon of expectation against which it is read, might productively be thought of as the ideal forms and conceptions of sound employed by proponents of the early French spectralist school. Although such an alignment can partially be gleaned, the work can also be understood as resounding a form of resistance against one of the school's central tenets, namely the idea that sound, once read as a spectrum, contains infinite potential for continual transformation. This tenet has been articulated and deployed by both early spectral music composers and by commentators on their work. Marilyn Nonken, for instance, suggests that spectral music is dependent not on dialectical forces that manifest structure, but rather on the unbroken morphing of a sonic object. 'It is an art', she writes, 'devoted to the dynamism of continuous transitions, rather than dialectical shifts, rather than the assembly of disparate elements in conflict. Its very form is tied to the transformations of its material'.⁷³ That is, sound as a mercurial object becomes the ontological ground on which spectral works can be conceived. For Murail, this notion extends beyond the foundational when he argues that the potential of transformation in a sound itself constitutes the material of spectral music.

My material is not a musical note, nor even a sound, but the sensation (sentiment) created by that note or sound. The material is not, for example, the harmonic spectrum (an object), but the harmonicity of that spectrum (a sense) and, further, the possibilities of transformation that it contains (the

⁷³ Marilyn Nonken, *The Spectral Piano: From Liszt, Scriabin, and Debussy to the Digital Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 160.

flight of the arrow). If the material is transformation, then the material is also form; the two notions unite.⁷⁴

Grisey echoes this conviction when he writes that sounds do not constitute discrete, stable objects, but are ‘bunches of forces oriented in time’ which are ‘infinitely mobile and fluctuating; [...] and tend, above all, to a continuous transformation of their energy’.⁷⁵ For all three of these authors, along with others, the continuous transformation of sound becomes both form and content in spectral thinking. It is the foundation upon which form is conceived, it is the material of the composition, and it is the principle that governs its temporality. Of course, the fact that spectralists such as Murail and Grisey prize this ideal in discourse does not mean that it should be understood as a governing principle throughout their oeuvres. Indeed, Murail departs from this approach in *Désintégrations* (1982). As Julian Anderson proposes, Murail employs in this work the idea of disintegrating sounds as the technical basis for the composition, creating the sense that timbres break down into their component parts, and thereby negate the stability of the infinitely unfolding potential of sound described by Grisey.

Sounds melt before us, revealing their interiors before our ears. But it could equally be an allusion (perhaps unconscious) to the constant flux of the music between moments of order and consonance to moments of disorder

⁷⁴ Tristan Murail, ‘Target Practice’, trans. Joshua Coby, *Contemporary Music Review* 24:2/3 (2005), 149–50.

⁷⁵ Grisey quoted in Paul Griffiths, *Modern Music and After*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 342.

and noise as the primarily harmonic spectra are disintegrated and deformed into irregular and inharmonic ones.⁷⁶

Beyond the notion of disintegration, which seems particularly close to the notion of decay in *Bells Die Out*, Murail also uses interruption—the breaking of the continuous—in the work. In the fourth section of *Désintégrations*, for instance, he inserts what Anderson calls ‘a violent rupture, with prominent noisy, grainy spectra’ akin to the break in the middle of *Bells Die Out*.⁷⁷ Thus although the continuous transformation is foregrounded by these composers, it should be understood as an abstract figure in discourse and an ontological marker in early definitions of spectral music, rather than a trope that plays out in every spectral work. It is against this marker that the decay in *Bells Die Out* can be read as an exploitation of the finite nature of sound and the way that it seizes up and fractures in the work. Indeed, the very title of the piece emphasises the way in which sounds, once activated, inevitably succumb to the loss of their kinetic energy. This loss of energy and the sense of sound dying out are further emphasised in the piece through a perpetual return to the decay of the bell’s hum tone, while continuous transformation is interrupted by the break in bar 124. It is in this sense that the structural failure of decay, which lies at the centre of *Bells Die Out*, can be understood as resisting spectral thinking.

There is, however, a broader geo-political resistance that can be read in *Bells Die Out*’s failure of decay, which for me stems from the way in which

⁷⁶ Julian Anderson, ‘Désintégrations’, *Tristan Murail–Works*, 1996, accessed 17 May 2017, <http://www.tristanmurail.com/en/oeuvre-fiche.php?cotage=28227>.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

sound as infinitely transforming (and thus ranging) has been linked to Eurocentricity. This link can be observed inversely in Grisey's own writing on rupture in later compositions such as *Vortex Temporum*. Here, he achieves a move away from the slow transformational processes heard in works such as *Partiels*. Stephen Lehman observes this when he argues that, 'to a certain extent, the rhythmic structure of *Vortex Temporum* may be directly related to a kind of "eureka" moment that Grisey experienced in 1984, while attending a rehearsal of Murail's *Désintégration*', along with other revealing influences.⁷⁸ Grisey writes of this moment that,

despite the extreme rigor of thought and the completely new treatment of sound that Murail puts forth so abundantly, I am discovering to what extent it is time for me to add rupture and rapidity to the obsession with continuity and slowness of process. Is this the influence of African music, or of the jazz I discovered during my stay in California?⁷⁹

What is interesting in Grisey's pronouncement is that he locates the possible origins of rupture—as it would be deployed in his music—in African music. It is an othering gesture that places the break of the continuous potential of sound in a non-European culture and thereby produces a dialectic opposition between the European (and its symbolic presence as continuous and infinite) and the African (as rupture). The correlation of continuous transformation and Eurocentricity becomes more apparent when

⁷⁸ Stephen H. Lehman, 'Liminality as a Framework for Composition: Rhythmic Thresholds, Spectral Harmonies and Afrological Improvisation' (PhD Thesis, Columbia University, 2012), 11.

⁷⁹ Grisey quoted in *Ibid.*

reading Claude Ledoux's commentary on Murail's work. Ledoux argues that Murail's music, and maybe French spectral music more broadly, 'corresponds to the "other" ear, the one that is trained to listen to musical substance'.⁸⁰ Yet it is not the 'other' ear in the postcolonial sense of the Other. Instead, it is a 'culturally conditioned' ear that has been 'introjected into the occidental conscience'.⁸¹ For Ledoux, then, spectral music and the form of deep listening it engenders holds a special affinity to the 'occidental ear and spirit'.⁸² Yet it is a deep listening that is made possible for Ledoux by the shift occasioned in spectral music from a focus on discrete pitches to sound as spectra; that is, sound as an infinite gradation of frequency.⁸³

The link between thinking of sound as spectra and Eurocentricity is emphasised in many of the key texts that seek to define spectral music by attempting to locate (and embed) its origins ever further back in European music history. Fineberg, in his famous keynote address, 'What's In a Name', associates spectral music, through its focus on spectra, with Schoenberg and Webern.⁸⁴ Jonathan Harvey, in his overview of spectralism suggests that Wagner was a 'proto-spectralist'.⁸⁵ Even as recently as 2017, Julian Anderson, in his keynote address entitled, 'The Map Versus the Territory: Towards a Redefinition of Spectralism', tracks the origins of spectral music back to late Medieval European composers.⁸⁶ These exercises in historical revision point toward a desire among authors to firmly inscribe spectral music practices

⁸⁰ Ledoux and Fineberg, 'From The Philosophical to The Practical', 49–50.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid., 48–9.

⁸⁴ Fineberg, 'What's In a Name', 31.

⁸⁵ Harvey, 'Spectralism', 12.

⁸⁶ Julian Anderson, 'The Map Versus the Territory: Towards a Redefinition of Spectralism' (Spectralisms: An International Conference, University of Oxford, 2017).

into the longer history of European art music, thereby concretising its place within the narrative of Western (European) musical modernity. It is an act of extension whereby a moment in the 1970s in France is sutured to a longer teleology of European progress.

Unwittingly, perhaps, by forging these links, proponents also lay bare their own desires around the place of spectral music within a constructed geopolitical order that still holds Europe at its centre.⁸⁷ While coupling spectral music with Eurocentricity does not explicitly exclude the postcolonial Other from spectral music discourse, it perhaps actively ignores them. This is evident especially in Ledoux's argument, which is tinted by a form of determinism. It is a cultural (if not biological) determinism that seems to enforce a sense of selective blindness (or deafness) to the historical experience of the African subject by suggesting that the ear which developed in such a way as to perceive sound as spectra is uniquely European. He ignores the fact that many non-Western cultures have long listened to and harnessed sound as spectra.⁸⁸ This deafness to a world outside of Europe arises out of the same uncritical sense of history that Grisey betrays in his reference to the different 'races and ethnicities of sound' when speaking about the unique nature of specific sounds.⁸⁹ While, as Eric Drott has suggested, Grisey's intentions with this metaphor is to draw spectral music into the various identity politics surrounding the May 1968 uprisings in

⁸⁷ One might wonder, for instance, what the genealogy of spectral music (and its resultant ideological frame) would look like if *uhadi* bow players, who concern themselves entirely with composing with harmonic spectra, were considered as the originators of spectral music.

⁸⁸ *Khoomei* singing in the region of Mongolia, *Isitolotolo*, *uhadi*, and *umrhube* in Southern Africa, *Kalyuka* overtone flutes in the Ukraine, and Didgeridoos in Australia, to name only a few of these practices, serve as examples.

⁸⁹ Grisey quoted in Drott, 'Spectralism, Politics and the Post-Industrial Imagination', 46.

France, he effectively positions sound in the same experiential field as race. The implication of such a move is that sound and race become ontic equivalents such that the racially designated body is the same as the racially designated sound. In other words, Grisey denies (or at least becomes deaf to) the discrepancy between the visceral experience of race as a tool of oppression and the metaphorical designation of difference. Such a denial suggests that sound as a reified concept could be subjugated to the same forms of oppression as the racially designated body, which of course is not the case. To use an example from Grisey's context, sound cannot be beaten to death and thrown into the Seine like the Algerians on 17 October 1961 in Paris, nor, in Khumalo's context, can it be indefinitely detained and tortured without trial like the black South Africans under apartheid.

Read in this way, the resistance against spectral music offered in *Bells Die Out* in the form of the structural failure of decay extends beyond a critique of spectral music's sonic ideal. It also prompts for me a critique of the Eurocentrism of spectral music and how it has come to create an exclusionary musical tradition that explicitly renders the Other as an intrusive force. Against this form of Eurocentricism, what is suggested in my reading of *Bells Die Out* instead is that the postcolonial Other here cannot be ignored. It is not to say that the body missing in Grisey's 'races and ethnicities of sound' is returned. Instead, this critique, which starts from the point of musical interactions as I read them in *Bells Die Out*, creates a dissensus with the ideals of spectral music which are inherently embroiled in the exclusionary nature of its musical language. In my reading, the work exposes the geopolitics of spectral thinking and provokes a closer consideration of the way in which the Other is rendered mute in this discourse.

Spectres of Blackness

If *Bells Die Out* prompts a critique of spectralism's Eurocentricity and suggests that the postcolonial Other cannot be ignored, it does not do so by explicitly figuring this Other through references, for instance, to endogenous African music. Indeed, Beck and Van Rhyn, who I have already cited in the introduction to this chapter, remark that Khumalo's work eschews an Africanist aesthetic, and especially what Thomas Pooley calls the Africanist aesthetics of accessibility which manifests in mainstream compositional practice around the advent of democracy.⁹⁰ As Pooley argues, and as I suggested in the introduction to this thesis, far from undoing apartheid ideology, many of the resultant compositions during this period paternalistically entrenched the representation of black South Africans and their musical practices as simple and undifferentiated. Pooley argues that 'for several [South African] composers the shift to an Africanist idiom was allied with a move from post-tonal to tonal practices, from abstract high modernism to an "aesthetics of accessibility"'.⁹¹ In short, what emerged was not a perspective that held endogenous music as equal to Western art music. Instead, with the rise of a neo-tonal Africanism, the South African compositional field was inundated with what Davies and Davies call a 'neocolonial trade in safari kitsch'.⁹² I do not read *Bells Die Out* as reproducing this move, even if the work does not neatly or complacently

⁹⁰ Pooley, "Never The Twain Shall Meet", 45.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Sheila Boniface Davies and James Q. Davies, 'So Take This Magic Flute and Blow. It Will Protect Us as We Go: Impempe Yomlingo (2007-11) and South Africa's Ongoing Transition', *Opera Quarterly* 28:1/2 (2012), 68.

employ a spectralist approach. Against expectations such as Ligeti's cited earlier, which holds that a black South African should find his compositional voice through African music, Khumalo opts in *Bells Die Out* for a more abstract idiom.

Yet even as he does so, there is a sense in which blackness is not entirely negated in his work. Responding to charges that his music is not African enough, Khumalo states the following: 'of course, as an individual I count all of my experiences, my experiences define my identity as a composer as well as a human being. So my morals are based on how I grew up in a specific part of South Africa, but also in a very specific historical context. [...] All of that defines who I am, beyond the fact that I am a black person'.⁹³ That is, while Khumalo makes it clear that it is not all that defines his artistic identity, his experience of blackness, along with his experiences that are not coded by it, is not entirely removed from his authorial subjectivity. Similarly, with the prevalence of sentiments like Ligeti's alongside the expectations such as those that emerged when Khumalo received prizes in the 'serious music' category at the SAMRO competition, blackness might be understood as manifesting in Khumalo's work in its very absence. Indeed, that pieces such as *Bells Die Out* work against the horizon of expectation which calls for blackness to be read into his work requires first, even in the reluctant listener, that blackness be conjured so that it can then be negated. Thus between his own reluctance to use blackness as a marker of his musical subjectivity and the negation of blackness in his reception, blackness, ironically perhaps, again manifests. Yet

⁹³ Andile Khumalo, interview with the author, 27 January 2017.

if it does, it does so not as an explicit figure, but as a remainder, as a residue of its own absence.

Following this argument, I want to suggest that blackness can be read in *Bells Die Out* as a ghost, as a residual spectre left behind in the wake of undoing expectation. In this sense, I want to suggest that the work as such is not as distanced from blackness even though it does not figure a material manifestation of blackness through the use of, for instance, endogenous African music. On the contrary, I understand the work as reflecting a longer historical narrative around blackness and modernity. In particular, I hear in the piece the African that becomes the unnamed casualty of modernity and the spectre that haunts its coterminous emergence with colonialism. Writing about the ‘nocturnal economy’ of the slave trade, Achille Mbembe argues that the invention of blackness and the subsequent commodification of the African can be understood as the founding mechanism of the first era of capitalism that provided the resources for imperial expansion of Europe.⁹⁴ While the argument has been proffered by a number of scholars in postcolonial and decolonial studies,⁹⁵ Mbembe’s concern is with the negative manifestation of slave trade labour, the untold and untellable inverse of early capitalism, and the way its power is not exercised on the living, but on the dead. For him, ‘the Black Man is in effect the ghost of modernity’.⁹⁶ That is, the figure at the heart of colonial expansion and production is one that is

⁹⁴ Achille Mbembe, *Critique of Black Reason*, trans. Laurent Dubois (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017), 129–30.

⁹⁵ See Enrique Dussel, ‘Eurocentrism and Modernity (Introduction to the Frankfurt Lectures)’, *Boundary 2* 20:3 (1993), 65–76; Aníbal Quijano, ‘Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality’, *Cultural Studies* 21:2/3 (2007), 168–78; Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

⁹⁶ Mbembe, *Critique of Black Reason*, 129.

situated in an exchange not governed in terms of life and the living, but in terms of death and the dead, or, what Mbembe terms necropolitics elsewhere.⁹⁷

This spectre of blackness manifests when reading *Bells Die Out* against Khumalo's reception. It is situated between the resistance against spectralism's Eurocentricity that I understand as prompted in the use of decay and the unsatisfied expectation of hearing something African in his music. In this sense it is also the product of deliberately not producing a concrete African subject in music, or at least, not in its obvious (and reductive) guise. Indeed, understanding the figure of the African as a ghost in *Bells Die Out* opens the possibility of thinking the work in relation to more subtle forms of expression in African musical practices. Evoking the presence of something that is not there (the ghost), it perhaps gains proximity to the Ghanaian funeral dirges described by V. Kofi Agawu. In his discussion of one such dirge that he recorded in 1986, Agawu shows how verbalised song gives way to humming 'whenever the depth of sorrow experienced by the dirge singers is more than they can bear [and thus humming] embodies a moment of excess'.⁹⁸ The expression of loss is articulated not in the naming of that loss, but instead in the manifestation of the absence of words. Yet, and perhaps more importantly, *Bells Die Out* provokes for me considerations of the erasure of the African Other that is necessitated by a European modernity. It does not do so by performing blackness, by staging the African, but by pointing to the empty space occupied by the absence of the African negated in the establishment of the colonial world order.

⁹⁷ Achille Mbembe, 'Necropolitics', *Public Culture* 15:1 (2003), 11–40.

⁹⁸ Agawu, *Representing African Music*, 111.

Conclusion

In my reading, Khumalo's music does not sit comfortably within assumptions around identity in post-apartheid South Africa. In this chapter I have argued that the failure of decay in *Bells Die Out* can be read as posing a challenge to a fundamental concept within the early spectralist school. While techniques used by these composers are heard in the piece, the ideological framework within which they have been deployed in other contexts is called into question here. Reading the failure of decay in the work prompts a critique of the Eurocentric assumptions that have been inscribed onto spectral music, especially through attempts of historical revision and claims of biological determinism. This reading, however, can be extended to consider the figure relegated to the dark side of European modernity to which certain commentators have sutured spectral music as a logical extension: the African as the ghost of modernity. This spectre, however, becomes a way of understanding the absence of an explicit manifestation of an Africanist aesthetic in the work. It is a remainder suspended between, on the one hand, the undoing of racialised expectation and the critique of Eurocentricity on the other. Conjuring this ghost, *Bells Die Out* reconfigures, much like the *hokku* on which it is based, the coordinates of its relevance. For commentators such as Ligeti, the work's relevance within the post-apartheid cultural arena hinges on how African it sounds. However, by considering the African as an absence, my reading of the work perhaps suggests that its relevance should rather be considered within the critiques of the global order of colonialism, in which it speaks to the way in which the African has been negated in imperial modernity.

Similarly, it is hard in this sense to hear the work as simply derivative of a European style. Nor does the piece neatly place Khumalo within a spectralist school as Van Tiddens's argument suggested. Although he clearly does make use of spectralist techniques, there emerges in Khumalo's work a resistance—albeit subtle—to the spectral figuration. Of course, resistance to generic labelling is not unknown to many composers who are today widely considered key figures in the development of this compositional approach. Both Grisey and Murail found the designation of 'spectral' 'insufficient'.⁹⁹ In Khumalo's case, the stakes of a challenge to such a categorisation, however, are compounded by the racially coded expectations that lurk in his reception. To passively assume a Eurocentric compositional identity, to simply identify as a spectralist composer, would perhaps be a form of deafness to the uneasy place held by European art music within the longer histories of apartheid and colonialism in South Africa. Yet there is a similar deafness in the supposition which holds that Khumalo, as an African composer, must be bound to composing Africanist music. The critical potential of *Bells Die Out* lies perhaps, then, in the way that it subtly disrupts these categorisations and expectations.

To return to the question posed at the start of this chapter: what happens when it is a black composer who creates a work of disquieting modernism in the context of post-apartheid South Africa? Of course, the answer to this question, if the promise of a non-racial society held any credibility, should be that such a work should hold the same potential for interpretative critique as a work by a white composer; indeed, that the race of the composer should not

⁹⁹ Murail, 'Target Practice', 149.

require comment. However, as Khumalo's reception shows, the answer is more complex. His work, and the forms of defiance it offers, asks of the interpreter to interrogate lingering racialised expectations. Working against these expectations, the black composer is faced with a double burden: first, to create work that is brought into the same symbolic order as their subject position, and second, to create work that then addresses something more than their own subjectivity. In my interpretation, *Bells Die Out* carries both. Not only does it negate expectations such as Ligeti's, but it also speaks out against a broader context of art music practices (in particular, spectral music practices) in the West, and the colonial world order they perpetuate.

Conclusion

Cracked Heirlooms

Throughout this thesis, I have interpreted selected musical works as modernist responses to post-apartheid modernity. In Chapter 1, I read Kevin Volans's *Dancers on a Plane* as intimately bound up with the transition to this modernity. In this transition, but that also as a work that marks a transitional moment in Volans's own compositional output, it is fraught with contradictions. Its soundscape component and its non-teleological form resound in my reading a sense of bondage, whereas a second teleological structure evokes a move to interiority. Between bondage and interiority, which I understand as markers of a tension between anti- and post-apartheid critical approaches in art, a crisis emerges which challenges the very binary upon which it is premised. That is, as a work of inbetweenness, *Dancers on a Plane* reflects the ambiguity of the process of transition in which a 'bad' apartheid modernity was not simply replaced by a 'good' post-apartheid modernity.

Yet exactly because this work can be read as caught up in the crisis of transition, it is perhaps suggestive of an impermanence which stands in contradistinction to the settling into a basis of permanence of art that either

documents atrocities or that uncritically (and ahistorically) imagines the emancipated subject is to reproduce a form of instrumentalisation which is incommensurate with the emancipatory promise of the post-apartheid era. In refusing either of these options, the conditions of possibility for a critical musical response to a post-apartheid modernity can be read in the work. These conditions suggest that music here could be argued to mediate its context in uncertain terms, negating the possibility of mimetic figuration of the world while also not fully subscribing to an attempt at total abstraction that ignores the density of the scar tissue left by the wound of apartheid. *Dancers on a Plane*, in the way that it is sutured to notions of transition and inbetweenness, raises questions about the critical capacity of modernist music after the interregnum. Put differently, my reading of Volans's work suggests that transition is perhaps tied to the negation of permanence, but what happens after this point when transition has formally been achieved? What happens when music is asked to mediate a form of modernity that is clearly situated within the post-apartheid realm?

In attempting to answer these questions, I turned in Chapter 2 to the Marikana miners massacre as an instance within this modernity. Moving beyond issues of literal representation, I interpreted two compositions by Clare Loveday, which, although they do not reference Marikana, I argued can be read within the economic and historical conditions of post-apartheid neoliberalism that made the massacre possible. The two works under consideration here, *Johannesburg Etude No. 1* and *City Deep* offered two important mediations of this context: (1) by thematising the city as a double world of surface and subterranean, these works can be interpreted as foregrounding the idea that capital exploitation in this modernity manifests

in the invisible order of underground mining infrastructure, and, (2) that, in these works, this form of exploitation has to do with the technological subsumption of the mining subjectivity. In my interpretation, these works re-centre the African figure of modernity—the migrant mineworker—as a subject caught between the hyper-visible and the invisible. Presented with the aural trace of the miner, rather than a scopic figuration, these works are able to represent the miner without necessarily having to jettison the contradiction of visibility and invisibility. In drawing these two interpretative mediations together, I suggested a third in which a historical continuity—in the form of disciplining mining practices—between the colonial/apartheid modernity and the post-apartheid modernity came to be read as part of the disquieting modernism in the works.

If Loveday's *Johannesburg Etude No. 1* and *City Deep* could be read as grappling with the historical continuities of modernity, then my reading of Herbst's *Konka* drew attention to the mechanisms of historical rupture in the form of forgetting. Indeed, forgetting becomes a key feature—if not a necessity—of post-apartheid modernity through the work of the TRC's Amnesty Committee. It is against this backdrop that I read Herbst's work in Chapter 3. For my interpretation of the work, I deployed as an analytic Ricoeur's notions of the affective trace (supplemented by Heidegger's notion of *Seinsvergessenheit*) to argue that *Konka* can be read as thematising memory and forgetting itself, rather than attempting the memorialisation of something specific. That is, I read the large degree of abstraction created by the treatment of the traces and the structural erasure of the piano part in Herbst's piece as shifting the focus of the memory of Jonker to issues of post-apartheid remembering and forgetting more broadly.

Furthermore, this shift in focus that I read in the work from the object of memory to memory itself was predicated on two forms of forgetting (one that is necessary for memory and a second that is fundamentally destructive) emerge as a compositional focus at the level of structure in the work. By drawing both these types of forgetting into the same sonic terrain, the work produces a form of *aletheia* as an unconcealment or disclosure suspended between destructive forgetting and forgetting as a predicate of remembering. In this sense, *Konka* suggests that unconcealment is animated by forgetting, rather than by remembering. It is in this sense that the work closely reflects Ballantine's assertion that modernism seeks to remember as opposed to modernity which seeks to forget. Yet the form of remembering that I read in *Konka* discloses memory's inherent connection to forgetting. That is, *Konka*, as a form of musical modernism that responds to modernity's historical rupture, does not only enact a form of remembering, but it resounds the very architecture of post-apartheid memory.

While I attempted to draw on issues of struggle, economics, and memory as interpretative frames in the first three chapters of this thesis, I turned in Chapter 4 to perhaps one of the most defining aspects of post-apartheid modernity: identity. Yet identity, like the other aspects of post-apartheid modernity, was approached here again in an indirect way through Khumalo's *Bells Die Out*, which on the surface seems not to speak to issues of identity at all. However, considering the ways in which the work seems to negate any straightforward expression of identity, I read *Bells Die Out* as challenging the suppositions of identity in both post-apartheid South Africa and in a broader postcolonial modernity. Drawing strongly on compositional techniques of this school, the work can be understood as questioning, through the

presentation of a structural failure of decay, the very ideological framework within which these techniques were employed by early proponents of spectralism. I read this challenge against the biological determinism that feeds into a guarded form of Eurocentrism in spectral music discourse. Yet the critique that I read in the work is offered not by way of using an explicit African aesthetic as an Other of European modernity, but instead renders such an Other curiously absent. This absence, I argued, is not merely an omission. It is an absence of blackness that, within the context of a critique of Eurocentricity and further developing the work's title theme of death, suggests the African as the ghost of modernity. Conjuring this ghost as an absence, the work, as I read it, does not attempt to make a claim of relevance to the South African context by resounding blackness, as the racialised expectations in Khumalo's reception demand, but it gains its critical traction in its critique of a global order of coloniality. Read in this way, the work is not simply derivative of a Eurocentric style, as Ligeti in particular would have us believe. It rather seems to defy expectations around identity both within a post-apartheid and postcolonial modernity.

Disquieting Post-Apartheid Modernism

While the four chapters that make up the body of this thesis considered works that differ vastly in terms of stylistic characteristics and that I situate in different interpretative frameworks of post-apartheid modernity, there are certain similarities, continuities, and junctures that are worth drawing out. Most striking perhaps is the sense of dialectical tension that pervades all four case studies. In Chapter 1, Volans's *Dancers on a Plane* can be read as

occupying a space suspended between anti-apartheid and post-apartheid art. I argued for this framing through what I identified in the work as a dialectic of bondage and interiority, but also as the negation of literal representation while being firmly situated in a certain place and time. That is, I interpreted the work as indexical in some ways (indexing Venda and the Kruger National Park, Bantustan politics, and certain theoretical tenets of Venda music), but also as deeply ambiguous (it finds closure in contradictory musical gestures and its form is simultaneously both teleological and non-teleological).

Similarly, Loveday's works considered in Chapter 2 resound for me the dialectical tensions between surface and subterranean, but also between the orders of invisibility and visibility in which the migrant mineworker is situated. In *City Deep* I read a further dialectic across time, drawing early twentieth-century mining practices into the temporal terrain of the post-apartheid neoliberal economy. While this latter tension suggests certain continuities of modernity, it works against the contradictory notions of emancipation articulated in the post-apartheid era and the economic (and bodily, if the two must be separated) oppression of the black working class.

While I interpreted the works in Chapter 2 within the contradictions and tensions that manifest in the materiality of South African modernity, I read in Herbst's *Konka* the dialectical tension inherent in the ontology of memory, especially as it emerges and is defined in the post-apartheid era. I understand memory in the work in relation to the tension between forgetting as constitutive and fundamentally destructive, which were sounded out for me respectively in the work's fractured tape part and the caricature of nostalgia in the auto-erasing piano part. By drawing out these oppositions, however, my reading of *Konka* also complicates the tension between modernity and

modernism framed by Ballantine as a tension between modernity that seeks to forget and modernism that, as a dialectical response, seeks to remember. While this tension broadly remains intact, the work, when read through Heidegger's and Ricoeur's theories of forgetting, suggests a degree of nuance which allows a reconfiguration of this dialectic in such a way as to include forgetting within the remit of modernism, while still maintaining memory's productive resistance against the amnesiac conditions of modernity.

My reading of Khumalo's *Bells Die Out* in some sense disarms a false dialectic deployed in his reception by critics such as Ligeti, which proposes that the tension between the European and its African Other needs to be realised in music through the reproduction of an Africanist aesthetic. In refusing this strategy, *Bells Die Out* can be heard as challenging certain markers of Eurocentricity in spectral music while also negatively producing the absence of blackness. By doing so, the work undermines the spurious designations of the African as the musical pre-modern and the West as the abstract modern. This can be observed in the presence of spectral techniques in the work which can be read against a structural failure of decay which challenges the spectralist ideology of sound's infinite capacity for transformation. As I read it, the tensions in this work arise in the representation of identity both within post-apartheid modernity and in a broader postcolonial geo-politics.

Conceiving of the shared critical terrain in these works, despite the differences in stylistic characteristics, has been possible exactly because of the redrawn ontological coordinates of the expansionist model of musical modernism discussed in this thesis's introduction. By following this model, which broadly considers modernism as a response to modernity, it has been

possible to read these works outside their aesthetic confines without diluting their critical potential. In this sense, modernism, as I have invoked it here, is disquieting within the post-apartheid arena (recall the first reading of this thesis's title which argues for a modernism that disquiets post-apartheid modernity): it upends certainties around the emergence of a 'good' modernity after apartheid, marks the contradictions of economic emancipation, disconcerts the conditions of memory, and unmasks racialised expectations of identity. Yet the works considered here need not only be read in dialectical opposition to society: they might also be understood as resounding tensions *within* the conditions of post-apartheid modernity. Interpreted as responsive to conditions within this modernity, this music drastically departs from the type of modernism that Hartman found attractive in Stockhausen's music and that Blake envisaged in his notion of a new experimentalism. Both these ideas were predicated on a music of the future, a music that can leap ahead of the present by reacting to its own aesthetic past. The type of modernism conceived of here instead is powerful and compelling exactly because it is a music of disquieting contemporaneity. As I read it, these are the works of what Andrew van der Vlies calls the 'present imperfect': the present comprised of a denied future.¹ In other words, this is music that can be read as disquieting the promises of an emancipated post-apartheid modernity in the way that it suggests an interrogation of the very denial of such a future within the present societal order.

¹ Andrew van der Vlies, *Present Imperfect: Contemporary South African Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

If they can be interpreted as deeply rooted in a post-apartheid present, these works become resistant, in some sense, to a reading as cracked heirlooms, which, according to Derek Walcott's assertion that I cited in the introduction to this thesis, are disfigured by the white scars inflicted by colonialism and apartheid. That is, they become resistant to a reading as something inherited or passed down with origins outside their own contemporary moment. Bound up in their post-apartheid present, these works can be understood as challenging in particular the notion that they are heirlooms, whether cracked or not, inherited from the West. This is not music that needs to be heard as derivative of Western art music. Instead, by being interpretatively drawn into an intimate proximity with the conditions of post-apartheid modernity, they should be thought as emergent forms of a post-apartheid musical modernism. That said, they are also not cracked heirlooms in the sense of fragments of a pre-colonial African tradition. This is perhaps made most clear in Volans's *Dancers on a Plane*. While in his earlier works Volans sought to compose a form of invented folklore, which rightly could be understood as a strategy for piecing together a cracked African music heirloom, the fifth quartet is concerned with an inward turn toward subjectivity. Of course, the quartet still makes use of music of African heritage, but its re-composition is no longer the focus.

If these works are to be thought of as cracked heirlooms, I want to suggest that they are the cracked heirlooms of post-apartheid modernity, rather than a Western or European modernity. This shift in perspective is crucial because it accounts for the connections that can be discerned in these works to both Western and African traditions in that post-apartheid modernity bears these connections as well, but it primarily acknowledges the interpretative

potential of reading these works in their present moment. Similarly, thinking of these works in this way allows for the tracing of the white scars that mark Walcott's heirlooms. A reading can be produced that does not make an argument for the total blackness of this music (as would be the case in arguing for its Africanness), nor does it seek to argue for its total whiteness (as would be the case in trying to situate these works as derivative of Western art music). Neither of these options, I want to suggest, would reveal the white scars, which at times trace only hairline fractures and at others cut through the surface in thick bands. Conceiving of this music as a product of post-apartheid modernity is instead to unshackle this repertoire from reductive binaries of the West and its Others, and to carve out a space in which it can be thought in relation to the present against which I read it.

Disquieting Modernism

Yet if the music I have discussed here is not to be reduced to imported goods from the West, it is not to say that it should be wrenched out of a discussion of Western musicology. Indeed, I want to suggest that the opposite should be the case: that, although these cracked heirlooms have become something different from the Western forms they might have resembled, they should be read, from their newly emancipated position, in such a way as to speak back to the Western artistic practices and discourses to which they remain distantly connected. Having read these works in their uniquely post-apartheid contexts, and as suggested particularly strongly by Khumalo's *Bells Die Out*, they need to be further interrogated within broader canons of modernism. Inversely, broader canons of modernism need to be interrogated

through the inclusion of these works. Doing so was not possible for the most part within the remit of this thesis (with the exception of Chapter 4), which primarily focused on establishing a way of thinking about these works within the expansionist model of modernism by interpreting them as responses to the conditions of post-apartheid modernity.

That, however, is not to say that thinking this music within a larger discourse of Western modernism is not imperative. It is. This imperative has a double origin. On the one hand, it is an imperative that stems from the need to guard against the ghettoisation of post-apartheid modernism as the subject only of emic, *recherché* knowledge.² While as I have presented it here, the subject does call for an intimate knowledge of local histories and contexts, it is not to say that this repertoire could not productively be read by others outside of South Africa. After all, the works by Volans and Khumalo have found their performative homes not in a hyper-specialised South African concert scene, but on the stages of European concert halls. And while the works by Loveday and Herbst might not be widely known, they have been analysed here using heuristics drawn from Western scholarship (pitch-class set and neo-Riemannian theories). It is in this sense of accessibility that the imperative's second origin is also found: if this music has a performative presence and analytical language in the West, then it is also to say that it has a bearing, at minimum through reception, on the Western cultural world. To ignore this reception is to reproduce blindly the false assumption that African

² Harper-Scott, among others, makes a similar point when he critiques the way in which Richard Taruskin has torn Stravinsky out of the discussion of Western modernism through asserting an exclusive Russianist knowledge as the only means of studying his music. Harper-Scott, *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism*, 155.

cultural practices cannot have an impact on the West and that there exists an epistemological—if not metaphysical—barrier between the West and its Others.³

Beyond this imperative, there is perhaps another reason for including this repertoire in Western musicological discourse, which has to do with the relationship between post-apartheid and Western modernity. These are by no means two separate worlds, and their deep interconnectedness stretches back to the apartheid era. As Jacques Derrida argued in 1985, apartheid South Africa represented a ‘concentration of world history’.⁴ Apartheid for him was not only an untranslatable appellation (and apex) for the many forms of racism that permeated the world in the wake of European colonial expansion, but Europe’s own ‘internal war, the bottom line of its profits and losses, the double-bind logic of its national and multi-national interests’ were mappable upon this ultimate form of state racism.⁵ So intimately was apartheid bound up with Western (and especially European) modernity that it was argued that one of the latter’s foundational concepts—the notion of universal human rights—could not be achieved until apartheid was abolished.⁶

³ This type of separation was the founding condition of many colonial ideologies, but was also articulated by important European thinkers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Recall, for instance, Hegel’s notion of Africa as existing without a self-conscious history, trapped in an alternate temporal unfolding to Europe. It is an assertion that requires a metaphysical separation between Western and African society. See Ronald Kuykendall, ‘Hegel and Africa: An Evaluation of the Treatment of Africa in The Philosophy of History’, *Journal of Black Studies* 23:4 (1993), 571–81.

⁴ Jacques Derrida, ‘Racism’s Last Word’, trans. Peggy Kamuf, *Critical Inquiry* 12:1 (1985), 297.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 298.

⁶ This was the view of Amnesty International, which Derrida quotes in substantiation of his argument that, if the world attempts to forget that apartheid was deemed a crime against humanity by the United Nations in 1973, it is because the world has reached the limits of humanism. *Ibid.*

In a less drastic sense (and less drastic perhaps only because it has become diffuse in its normativity), this connection remains and much of post-apartheid modernity could be mapped onto post-Cold War Western modernity. Thinking especially about the issues addressed in this thesis, uncanny parallels can be drawn between the neoliberal order of the South African mining industry (and the way it subsumes the migrant mineworker into a form of technology) and the emergence of the Big Data economy that turns people into user information (a form of technology) for generating profit.⁷ Similarly, the issues around identity politics raised in Chapter 4 can be detected not only in other postcolonial peripheries, but also within Western countries.⁸ This is perhaps most apparent in the United States, where debates about the performance of race permeate most aspects of musical life.⁹ In this sense, post-apartheid modernity is not exceptional; it is a modernity that contains many of the same epistemological challenges encountered in the West. The difference is perhaps that in the context of post-apartheid South Africa, these challenges lie either exposed on the

⁷ This point is made eloquently in Ronald E. Day, *Indexing It All: The Subject in the Age of Documentation, Information, and Data* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2014).

⁸ I have argued for turning the decolonial lens inward on Western centres elsewhere. See William Fourie, 'Musicology and Decolonial Analysis in the Age of Brexit', *Twentieth-Century Music*, 2020, 1–15.

⁹ These debates range from the blackness of the authorial voice (e.g. George E. Lewis, 'Too Many Notes: Computers, Complexity and Culture in "Voyager"', *Leonardo Music Journal* 10 (2000), 33–39; or Nina Sun Eidsheim, 'Race and the Aesthetics of Vocal Timbre', in *Rethinking Difference in Music Scholarship*, ed. Melanie Diane Lowe, Jeffrey Kallberg, and Olivia Ashley Bloechl (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 338–65.) to issues of concert programming and the canon (e.g. William Robin, 'Great Divide at the Concert Hall', *The New York Times*, 8 August 2014, accessed 8 August 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/10/arts/music/black-composers-discuss-the-role-of-race.html>; or Micaela Baranello, 'Welcoming a Black Female Composer Into the Canon. Finally.', *The New York Times*, 9 February 2018, accessed 8 August 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/09/arts/music/florence-price-arkansas-symphony-concerto.html>).

surface of society or are only thinly veiled. Derrida's designation of a 'concentration' might then still be applicable: South Africa today could be thought of as a compression chamber in which modernity's pathologies are exacerbated and distilled.

Read as responses to this concentrated modernity, the repertoire discussed in this thesis could provide Western music scholarship with a foil for drawing out an intricate calculus of race, economics, and memory, within discussions of the critical potential of musical modernism. Yet to do so would require the same reconfiguration of the analytical language witnessed in my readings of these works. Drawing strongly on context, but also on longer historical trajectories and tensions, has afforded me the opportunity to reconfigure the remit of the analytical tools I have used here. Pitch-class set analysis and neo-Riemannian theory have been brought into contact with the Marikana miners massacre and the Amnesty Committee's work of unearthing the atrocities of apartheid. In sharp contrast to some of the ways they have been deployed in the Western academy, these analytical tools have here been confronted with the inescapability of the post-apartheid present, and, crucially perhaps, have survived. Of course, that is not to say that the answers to difficult questions around modernity and racism, for instance, will be revealed in prime form pitch-class sets, but it is to say that these analytical tools need not be relegated to the propping up of ahistorical or apolitical agendas within musicology.¹⁰

¹⁰ A similar point has been made by Martin Scherzinger, although in reference to indigenous rather than modernist music. See Martin Scherzinger, 'The Return of the Aesthetic: Musical Formalism and Its Place in Political Critique', in *Beyond Structural Listening?: Postmodern Modes of Hearing*, ed. Andrew Dell'Antonio (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2004), 233–77.

This type of reconfiguration might be given another name, a name I have purposefully avoided in this thesis because it designates the process that comes after the clearing of critical terrain which I demarcated as the scope of this study: decolonisation. To be sure, what I have done in the preceding four chapters has not been an attempt to decolonise musicology, or even to decolonise musical modernism in post-apartheid South Africa. However, arguing for a post-apartheid musical modernism that is not merely a derivative (a cracked heirloom) of European modernism is perhaps a necessary first step in this direction. The second step would be to consider this repertoire, replete with the histories that can be read in it, within or against Western modernity. To do so would be to turn these works upon Western modernity in the same way that I have here turned them on a post-apartheid modernity. Yet it would also be to hear this modernity from the geo-political position of the Global South. Heard from this vantage point, modernity is inextricably linked to colonialism in what scholars of decolonial theory have called the ‘coloniality/modernity’ bind.¹¹ Something of this perspective has been implicit in many of my readings here. It was present in the tension felt by Volans in his struggle between an African and European identity, while also informing my understanding of the politics of early twentieth-century mining practices which framed my reading of *City Deep*. This perspective was adopted perhaps most explicitly in my understanding of the absence of blackness in *Bells die Out* as resounding the ghost of the colonial world order. Yet the form this perspective has taken in this thesis has

¹¹ This term was first used by Aníbal Quijano and later developed extensively by Walter Dignolo. See Quijano, ‘Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality’, 168–78, and Walter D. Mignolo, ‘Delinking: The Rhetoric of Modernity, the Logic of Coloniality and the Grammar of de-Coloniality’, *Cultural Studies* 21:2–3 (2007), 449–514.

been admittedly inchoate, if not inarticulate. It is not because it is an impossible project. It is only to say that it is a project that must now be undertaken. Such a project would be one that not only disquiets modernism, but that decolonises it, and in so doing radically reframes how musical responses to modernity can be understood.

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